

Virtual Internship Experiences of Library and Information Science Students During the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to discover the notable experiences of Library and Information Science students in a virtual internship program. It employed qualitative descriptive research design by thematically analyzing the monthly internship journal of the interns. Using Colaizzi's method to identify themes from their experiences, the study revealed that interns expected to gain knowledge and skills on operations, services, and new information communication technologies in libraries. Orientation was found helpful in identifying the things interns needed to prepare. The interns faced issues from procrastination and technical difficulties, which they coped with employing avoidance strategies. Overall, the internship was viewed as an opportunity to learn and navigate the online digital system of the library despite the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. They realized their capacity and reflected on which competencies need improvement. In conclusion, students still learned the necessary knowledge and skills of a librarian; experienced the challenges faced in an actual library and were provided with various opportunities and realizations regarding the practice of librarianship. This study proposed a three-stage framework that outlines the involvement of the supervising instructors, librarians, and interns in the internship program from the preparation to the process and post-assessment.

Keywords: library schools, in-service training, library science, models, educational

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1. INTRODUCTION

Internship is an important aspect of professional education. It enables students to get exposure with professionals, to experience their day-to-day activities, and to encounter the challenges faced in an institutional environment (Bird et al., 2015). Especially in the field of librarianship, it is a professional learning experience that takes place in an actual library for aspiring students to undergo various tasks involving library operations (Malik & Ameen, 2010). In fact, the development of the profession traces its origin to internships, apprenticeships, and in-service training in great libraries (Mukherjee, 1966). As added by Dotson and Doston-Blake (2015), internships are clinical experiences intended for students to bridge theoretical foundations of librarianship into practical application. Bird et al. (2015) argue that internships provide a professionally guided experience compared to any other experiential learning activities for students. Besides experiencing the professional world, students are able to reflect with deeper learning than a course-based assignment could ever grant. Malik and Ameen (2010) used the terms practicum, internship, apprenticeship, and field work to refer to these field-based activities where students engage in professional learning experience under supervision of a professional librarian. Searing and Walter (2012) also used the term field experience to cover any work experience in a library that occurs because of one's status as a Library and Information Science (LIS) student.

In Benguet State University (BSU) in La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines, the internship is a required subject to be taken by students enrolled in the LIS program to fully immerse themselves in learning the professional practice of the theories they have learned in their previous coursework. Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order No. 24, Series of 2015 sets the highest level of quality desired for the education and training of library and information professionals. The program was designed to provide students with on-the-job experience in academic, government, school, and special library environments. Based from the syllabus and course description, the practicum equips students for the demands of the shifting paradigm of library service by strengthening and supplementing the theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom in a real work setting. It also prepares students for the modern and automated delivery of information services through completing actual activities in the different aspects of library service. During the pandemic, internships could only be done virtually; that is why the supervising instruc-

tor, librarians, and especially students, adopted changes to adjust to the online internship set-up.

The shift in the conduct of internships from a physical to online set-up was one of the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic had a great impact not only on internships but on the whole aspect of education and training (Bugis, 2021). It brought the education sector to go through necessary changes for students, teachers, and educational institutes to abide by government guidelines and protocols (Dani et al., 2020). The adaptation of virtual or online internships became the common strategy used by various learning institutions in training students from the medical, education, business, hospitality and tourism, and information communication technology (ICT) fields (Bilsland et al., 2020; Bugis, 2021; Dani et al., 2020; He et al., 2021; Theelen et al., 2020; Yıldırım et al., 2021).

Virtual internship is not a novel idea. In fact, many institutions have already been offering online LIS programs and virtual internships have been well established (Juarez & Blackwood, 2022). However, both the teaching department and the library department of BSU is new to this kind of internship. This paper will describe the experiences of LIS interns during the pandemic and identify the advantages and disadvantages of the virtual internship program.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Iradel et al. (2021) revealed several themes that described the lived experiences of pre-service teachers during their internship. The first of the themes showed that interns set their expectations towards their internship. According to Hruska et al. (2022), it is important for virtual interns to have a clearly defined expectation towards the internship program. That is why internship satisfaction studies include expectations as integral to revealing interns' experiences (Vo et al., 2022). As added by Cannon and Arnold (1998), as cited by Păceșilă and Popescu (2022), employers and academics believe it is important to understand students' expectations towards internships. These expectations reveal what students hope to experience and their intention to be able to identify things needed to be arranged or prepared for their internship. Iradel et al. (2021) discussed a theme where students were able to receive support from various sources ranging from financial, moral, and emotional support. In this part of their study, it revealed various arrangements made by students before the internship, especially its online mode. Hruska

et al. (2022) recommended establishment of a virtual work environment resulting in productivity and collaboration among interns. The online internship required vast adjustments for students and educators, so determining the preparations made would provide better understanding of online internship experiences during the pandemic. In fact, the preparedness of both the mentors and interns are factors in achieving internship goals, especially when it is conducted remotely (Wickramasinghe & Jayawardane, 2022).

With these drastic changes and preparations needed, virtual internships are not immune to challenges. Iradel et al. (2021) discussed the roadblocks faced by interns during the online internship as a part of the whole internship experience. Paired with these challenges were the coping strategies employed by interns to survive and succeed with their internship. Quinco-Cadosales (2022) inquired of virtual interns how they coped with the challenges of an online teaching internship. Iradel et al. (2021) revealed how these challenges affected the interns, and they were mostly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is interesting to also document these challenges to know if it would differ in the context of a developing country. As concluded by Aucejo et al. (2020), less advantaged students felt more negative economic and health impacts during the online mode of classes.

However, studies did not only focus on the negatives, as there were also opportunities that the virtual internship offered. Iradel et al. (2021), on one of the themes of internship experience, revealed that interns considered the virtual internship as an opportunity for skill development, acquisition, and self-improvement. According to Kernan and Basch (2022), students benefited from virtual internship by enabling them to learn and practice skills related to communication with technology, conveniently and with lesser cost. Wickramasinghe and Jayawardane (2022) also revealed that remote internship provides exposure to network and employment opportunities to interns.

Lastly, the whole internship experience can be concluded by the learning and reflections that the interns gained after the immersion. Iradel et al. (2021) dedicated three themes in which interns were able to express what they learned throughout their internship. Specifically, interns exhibited cognitive-social-teaching presence, developed growth mindset, resilience, integrity, and tenacity (GRIT), and were also able to reflect on their online internship experience.

2.1. The Library Practicum in Benguet State University

The library practicum is the final part of the library science education program where students transition from being a student to becoming a librarian. Quijano (2015) previously identified five professional competencies in which the tasks of interns were categorized, namely; (1) cataloging and classification, (2) reference and information work, (3) indexing and abstracting, (4) information technology, and (5) others. For this internship, the assigned tasks added organization and management, and selection and acquisition, to align with the subject areas covered in the exam. In traditional face-to-face internship, all tasks are performed in actual. The interns report to the library and are stationed in various sections of the library to provide reference and circulation services. They are also routinely rotated for them to experience all sorts of library work, including technical work, managerial work, and appraisal functions. Fortunately during the pandemic, most libraries were able to migrate their services online and initiated virtual counter part for all of their services. This made virtual internships for LIS student feasible. Interns could still achieve learning outcomes by performing digital library workloads remotely.

2.2. Internship Model

This study took inspiration from the internship models of Sweitzer and King (2019), Kiser (2015), Woodside (2017), and Quijano (2015) that described the stages of internship. The developmental stage of internship of Sweitzer and King (2019) included interns' expectations and preparations in the anticipation stage up until their reflections in the culmination stage. Kiser (2015) emphasized the bridge between these two stages and dubbed it as the working stage where the bulk of internship work occurs. It is also where most of the issues and challenges arise that interns are expected to handle. Quijano (2015) emphasized the latter stage of internship where reflection bridges experiences into meaningful understanding of the profession. These models highlight the importance of preparation, continuous feedback, new skills and knowledge development, and networking. Additionally, virtual internships may require additional steps such as ensuring that the intern has access to the necessary technology and software, setting up virtual communication tools, and clarifying expectations for remote work. Apart from the stages, the involved parties in the internship could also be included in developing a framework to illustrate the interaction between the instructor, the librarians, and the interns, as exemplified by the model of Bird and Crumpton (2014).

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study aimed to discover the notable experiences of LIS students in their virtual library internship program as extracted from their reflections. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

RQ1. What were the interns' expectations towards their virtual internship?

RQ2. What were the preparations made by the interns for their virtual internship?

RQ3. What were the challenges faced by virtual interns?

RQ4. What were the coping strategies employed by the interns?

RQ5. What were the opportunities available for the interns during their virtual internship?

RQ6. What were the realizations of the interns after their internship?

RQ7. What would be the suitable internship model/framework for BSU LIS students in the new normal?

4. METHODS

The research utilized a qualitative descriptive design and employed diary analysis of the students' internship journals. These journals were monthly entries that documented their accomplishments and insights regarding their internship, with specific prompts for each month centered on their expectations, preparations, challenges, coping mechanisms, opportunities, and realizations. The entries were collected through Google forms and consolidated, analyzed, and coded using Collaizi's thematic analysis to identify prominent themes. To begin the analysis, the journal entries of each participant were combined into a single file for each student, resulting in a comprehensive collection of data. Each transcript was then carefully read and reread to gain an overall understanding of its contents. Significant statements that pertained to the phenomenon under study were then highlighted and recorded on a separate sheet, along with the corresponding code for the student. From these significant statements, meanings were formulated and categorized into subcategories. The findings of the study were then synthesized into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study, which in this case is the students' internship experience. The fundamental structure of the phenomenon was then described. Finally, to ensure the accuracy of the results, the research participants were consulted via follow-up interviews

via chat, email, or messaging to validate the researcher's descriptive findings against their own experiences. The study covered a virtual internship that ran from August to December 2021, followed by a partially virtual internship from January to May 2022, where the 35 students reported physically and performed a mix of virtual tasks.

5. RESULTS

The findings present the percentage of students who expressed the following responses pertaining to their expectations, preparations, challenges, coping strategies, opportunities, and realizations. The responses were extracted and examined from journal entries as shown in the appendix. The tables present statements according to what was experienced by students the most.

5.1. Expectations

Table 1 shows that interns were mostly expecting to gain knowledge and skills on library operations and organization. This includes interns expressing their hopes on learning about the roles and responsibilities of librarians and how are they being translated into practice. They expect to learn the roles of a librarian, the new technologies (e.g., online public access catalog, databases, systems), and new knowledge on the different actual library operations. The interns were already familiar with the library staff, its services, and procedures because they have experienced the library services before. However, because both the internship and the library services went online during the pandemic, interns still expected an orientation or introduction of library services and procedures before starting their tasks. They still needed instructions and briefing on the house rules, policies, and outputs expected from them as interns and not as library users.

The interns also hoped that their co-interns will be helpful, cooperative, and supportive. However, most of them were anxious about the responsiveness and availability of their co-interns during online meetings due to expected delayed communication. Still, some interns were optimistic towards their co-interns hoping they contribute and help everyone patiently, because not everybody knows what to do. The interns hoped for a positive relationship from their co-interns despite the anticipated difficulty in connecting with each other virtually.

The interns were also optimistic about learning from the university library. Results show that 69% of the interns were sure that they could learn a great deal from the university library, whether their internship will be online

Table 1. Library interns’ expectations (n=35)

RQ1: What were the interns’ expectation towards their virtual internship?	n (%)
I expect to gain knowledge and skills on the operation, services, organization, roles and responsibilities of librarians and new information communication technologies.	28 (80)
I am hoping that my co-interns will be helpful, cooperative, and supportive.	27 (77)
I know I can learn a lot from our university library regardless if it will be online or face-to-face.	24 (69)
I am hoping that the internship will be done face-to-face.	23 (66)
I am hoping that our teacher and supervisors will teach and guide us to accomplish our tasks.	16 (46)
I am expecting that the tasks will be challenging.	15 (43)
I expect that our supervisor will provide constructive feedback and other helpful resources that will help us improve our tasks and accomplishment.	13 (37)
I am looking forward to experiencing the actual or and hands-on tasks of a librarian even on an online or physical set-up.	13 (37)
I am expecting that our supervisor will be approachable and responsive to our online queries.	11 (31)
I am expecting to be well-oriented and introduced to the library before starting our tasks.	10 (29)

or face-to-face. One of the reasons cited by the interns includes the geographical accessibility of the library. Because 66% of them also hoped for a face-to-face internship, they also expected that they could easily visit the library physically whenever they need guidance about their tasks. The interns also expressed confidence in the library staff’s competence in training them. The recognition of the library as an outstanding academic/research library was also cited as to why interns were certain they can learn from the library. The interns’ familiarity with the library makes them confident and at ease with their internship. This means that the institution’s recognition and familiarity to the interns affects how students project expectations towards their internship.

Interns also hoped that supervisors would be approachable and responsive when they ask for assistance and guidance from the librarians. Interns were expecting to learn but not from the librarians alone. They were not expecting people to be helping them, because they should learn to do thing on their own. Even if they expected to be guided by supervising librarians and be supported by their co-interns, they knew they had to rely on themselves and not on others. The interns knew it would be challenging to undergo their internship virtually because they had a hard time coping with virtual classes. They associated the challenges of online classes with not being able to experience actual classroom activities. This might also explain why some interns were looking forward to experiencing the actual or hands-on tasks of a librarian even on an online set-up which they were not able to fully experience in

their online classes.

Overall, the interns expected to gain knowledge on library operations and organization while building a positive relationship with their co-interns and receive guidance from supervising librarians. The competence of the librarians and the recognition of the library added optimistic expectations to the interns, reassuring great learning experience from hands-on tasks. Meeting these expectations is crucial for a successful internship experience.

5.2. Preparations

Table 2 shows that 97% of the students were properly oriented with the policies, procedures, rules, services, and staff of the library. They were given instructions and details about the expected outputs and tasks that they shall accomplish in their internship. The interns considered proper orientation as their foremost integration into the library as part of the library workforce, even if temporary. The orientation introduced the tasks they will be doing virtually, therefore giving them an idea what resources, equipment, skills, and knowledge they should have to fully participate in the internship activities. There were also interns who took the initiative and browsed the library’s website beforehand to be familiar with the library.

However, the interns admitted that they were not initially prepared for the internship. Only 34% of the interns had enough online and print resources that would help them study during the online practicum. The interns identified their Google accounts, Microsoft software, e-books, previous notes and handouts from other course

Table 2. Library interns' preparations (n=35)

RQ2: What were the preparations made by the interns for their virtual internship?	n (%)
I was properly oriented with the policies, procedures, rules, services, and staff of the library, and was given instructions and details about the expected outputs and tasks that we shall accomplish in our internship.	34 (97)
I have enough online and print resources that will help me study during the online practicum.	12 (34)
I have planned a strategy to handle the tasks and workload that would be assigned to us for the library.	11 (31)
I have a support system (family, friends, relatives, etc.) that will help me face the internship.	10 (29)
I am on the right emotional or mental capacity that will help me survive the challenges I will face during the internship.	9 (26)
I am physically prepared for the online internship, or even for a face-to-face internship.	9 (26)
I have the required electronic and digital devices for online internship.	7 (20)
I have the necessary knowledge skills regarding library services, information and communication technologies and others that will help me accomplish tasks.	6 (17)
I have a stable internet connection for my online internship.	4 (11)
I have a sufficient financial capacity that will support my internship.	2 (6)

work, as their supplementary learning resources to review basic librarianship concepts. Furthermore, only 31% of the interns said they have a planned strategy to employ to handle the tasks and workloads assigned to them. Some of them planned changes with their daily schedule and developed good study/work habits while some eyed multi-tasking and working with their classmates on the expected outputs.

In terms of their physical and emotional preparedness, only 26% of the interns expressed that they had the right physical and mental capacity to attend a virtual internship. Interns based their physical preparedness on their proximity to the library. Some interns rented boarding houses or stayed with relatives living near the school campus. Those who were staying in faraway residences had to find a place with a stable internet connection. Other interns were also anticipating restrictions to be lifted sooner so they would be ready to visit and do library work. Even if most interns knew it would not be possible for face-to-face internship, only a few interns claimed to be emotionally and mentally prepared for the online internship.

But despite online classes were being in place for a year already, interns were not yet prepared with a stable internet connection. Only a few interns were able to subscribe to internet plans to make sure they have a stable internet connection. The rest relied on mobile data and Wi-Fi hotspots to have access to the internet. Those with internet plans still need to secure extra budget to buy data in case their internet subscription fails. Additionally, only a few students had a prepared set of electronic devices to

attend virtual classes and their internship. Some of them had to buy their own or borrow from their siblings, who were also using those laptops for work or school. Not all interns could afford these because only 6% had sufficient financial capacity to support their internship.

The findings revealed that only a few interns were initially prepared and had the right physical and mental capacity to attend a virtual internship. Fortunately, the majority of the interns had a proper orientation which they considered as their foremost integration into the library workforce. These findings suggest the need for better preparation and support for students and interns in the virtual setting, including providing more resources and guidance for online learning and improving access to stable internet and electronic devices.

5.3. Challenges

Table 3 shows that 40% of the interns faced personal issues and matters regarding their study habits. There were numerous distractions that pulled their interest and attention once they log in online. That is why 31% of the interns also experienced issues with procrastination and time management. They admitted procrastinating on most of the tasks, causing their schedules to get filled up with other personal priorities. Managing their time is the real challenge for them in this internship because people at home assume that online learning is easy; they were always sent to do errands. They also struggled with managing their time in dealing with requirements for other subjects they are enrolled in. That is the reason why 40%

Table 3. Library interns’ challenges (n=35)

RQ3: What were the challenges faced by virtual interns?	n (%)
I faced personal issues and matters regarding my study habit.	14 (40)
I had experienced difficulty in balancing schoolworks and household responsibilities, making it difficult to concentrate with studying and doing the tasks assigned to me.	14 (40)
I had trouble accessing the online platforms and websites of the library due to my internet connection.	13 (37)
I had a hard time finishing the tasks due to system/server issues or power interruption which were out of my control.	13 (37)
I had encountered problems with time management and procrastination.	11 (31)
I have experienced stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout in managing the tasks and activities I have to accomplish.	10 (29)
I had troubles in accessing the online platforms and websites of the library due to incompatible and outdate electronic devices.	8 (23)
I had a hard time understanding and following the instructions, rules, policies, procedures, and guidelines of the library.	8 (23)
I have dealt some problems working with my co-interns in terms of responsiveness and cooperation.	5 (14)
I have experienced health and medical issues during the internship that got in the way of accomplishing the tasks.	3 (9)

of them expressed that they had trouble balancing school-work and household responsibilities, making it difficult to concentrate on studying and doing the tasks assigned to them. Some needed to tend to their younger siblings left with them at home, or take care of their grandparents that needed assistance from time to time. They also added that these were not issues during face-to-face learning where it was easier to focus.

Because all their tasks were done electronically online, they were affected by server shutdowns and other technical difficulties. Interns had trouble accessing the online platforms and websites of the library due to slow internet connections. The interns complained about connectivity issues affecting their participation in meetings and group discussions. Some would even struggle with following instructions during lectures that are being interrupted by fluctuating signals. Troubles accessing the online platforms and websites of the library were also due to incompatible and outdated electronic devices. There were also instances where students experienced power interruptions and system issues that impeded their accomplishment of their tasks. Interns experiencing this felt helpless because there was nothing they could do but to wait.

Technical problems were not the only challenge faced by the interns because 29% of the interns experienced stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout in managing the tasks and activities. They attributed this stress to the delayed workload caused by procrastination as well as the server/system maintenance that halted their technical

and cataloging work. The health and medical issues faced by the interns were also notable. There were interns with households infected by the virus, which also affected their day-to-day activities, preventing them from going out and getting essentials.

These findings show that a significant percentage of interns faced personal issues and difficulties with managing their time and procrastination. The interns also had challenges with technical difficulties, slow internet connections, outdated electronic devices, and power interruptions. In addition, some interns experienced stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout while managing the tasks and activities. Communication and responsiveness among co-interns were also problematic due to poor internet connections, causing delayed receipt of messages and instructions. The health and medical issues faced by some interns due to the pandemic were also notable. In conclusion, the virtual setting of internships presents unique challenges that must be addressed to provide better learning experience for students and interns, including providing more resources needed to deal with the challenges and problems in a virtual internship.

5.4. Coping Strategies

Table 4 shows that 34% of the interns preferred taking a break from schoolwork and household chores. Some of them went home to their province to “enjoy natural life” and “have some fresh air.” Some played games to relieve stress. Some interns found relief from listening to music

Table 4. Library interns' coping strategies (n=35)

RQ4: What were the coping strategies employed by the interns?	n (%)
Taking a break to relax by going on a vacation, playing online games, listening to music, reading, gardening, forest bathing, or other activities outside school, work, and household chores.	12 (34)
Asking for assistance on difficult tasks helped me overcome the problems I have encountered.	10 (29)
Managing my time helped me balance my tasks and be able to accomplish them before the deadline.	10 (29)
Keeping myself busy and productive helped me focus on the positive side of things.	10 (29)
Setting up a plan and strategy in handling the activities helped me organize which should be prioritized.	8 (23)
Diverting my attention to other important things helped me cope with the problematic situations.	8 (23)
I was able to depend on my support system to relieve from the stress, anxiety, and depression I encountered during my internship.	8 (23)
Doing physical activities such as exercising, reorganizing my study area, eating, hiking, or going to part time jobs helped me relieve the responsibilities of school, and household chores.	7 (20)
Keeping myself motivated through reminding myself of my sacrifices and of people around me and the awaited culmination of my college journey.	3 (9)
Doing spiritual and religious activities helped me find comfort and relaxation during breakdowns or burnouts.	2 (6)

and reading fantasy or fiction books to escape their stressful reality. For some, they found gardening in particular as something therapeutic. Besides doing nothing or doing something aside from the required tasks, interns also diverted their attention to several physical activities such as exercising, reorganizing their study area, eating, hiking, or going to part time jobs to help them relieve from school and household responsibilities. Interns also claimed that eating helped them reduce stress. Some were also able to cope with the situation by keeping themselves active physically, such as bicycling, because it relieves stress.

There were also coping strategies where students faced challenges or problems head on. There were 29% of the interns who stated that they asked for assistance or help on difficult tasks to overcome or alleviate the problem they encountered. Some interns recalled how they were seeking help and guidance from co-interns, supervisors, librarians, and other teachers in handling problems with their internship. Some of them remembered how their co-interns were the ones providing updates on the activities they forgot to do or to finish. Similarly, 29% of interns worked on their individual problems by simply managing and reorganizing their schedule. They allotted a day or time per activity so they could eventually finish their tasks. They cleared out their schedule by accomplishing one task at a time, instead of trying to accomplish multiple things in one time. Another strategy was to identify first the importance or urgency of the task then identify among pending tasks which should be prioritized.

It was also found that very few students were able to maximize spiritual activities and self-motivation as a coping strategy. One of the interns said that "prayer helps in all kinds of situations." Some interns also found a way to motivate themselves and to wake their senses whenever they were feeling nervous or losing enthusiasm in starting tasks. Some relied on self-motivation to continue studying and eventually finish the degree.

The study found that interns have different coping strategies to deal with stress during their internship. Most of the interns preferred taking a break or diverting their attention, while some preferred seeking help, or doing spiritual and motivating activities. Overall, there were various coping strategies that interns used to manage stress during their internship. It is important for interns to identify which coping strategies work best for them and integrate these strategies into their daily routine to promote well-being and productivity. Employers and educational institutions can also provide support and resources to help interns cope with stress and promote a positive internship experience.

5.5. Opportunities

Table 5 shows that 63% of the students were able to have a chance to learn and experience actual digital library work despite their internship being online. This is because they were given access to the library management system. They were given access to the software used in cataloging and book listing, which allowed them to experience

Table 5. Library interns’ opportunities (n=35)

RQ5: What were the opportunities available for the interns during their virtual internship?	n (%)
It was a privilege to be able to learn and experience actual digital library works.	22 (63)
It was a learning opportunity to improve my time management, organization skills, and quality of my works and outputs.	20 (57)
It was a learning opportunity to increase my ICT skills especially using computers, software, websites, and databases.	18 (51)
I was able to explore and navigate the library portal remotely and learn how to work with Library Management Systems online.	18 (51)
I became a part of the library staff who provides library and information services to clients even though it was conducted online.	10 (29)
I had a chance to study at the comfort of our home with our family.	9 (26)
I was also able to help do chores at home or help in family business while finishing my studies.	7 (20)
I had an opportunity to gain extra income by applying for a part time job while studying.	6 (17)
I had an opportunity to start new hobby, passion, or leisure activity due to the flexibility of the learning set-up.	4 (11)
The remote learning set-up saved transport expenses, accommodation expenses like boarding house and dormitories, and other expenses usually needed during face-to-face classes.	3 (9)

technical tasks at their homes. Interns also considered it an opportunity to gain access to the library system to learn Machine Readable Cataloging tagging, which they were not able to learn because of the pandemic. That is why 51% of the interns considered it an opportunity to be able to explore and navigate the library portal remotely and learn how to work with library management software (LMS) online. It was also a chance to increase their ICT skills, especially using computers, software, websites, and databases. Because of the activities involving the system, their cataloging skills improved. Some of them attested that had it not been conducted online, they would not become experts in using computers at this time.

More than half of the interns stated that their internship was a learning opportunity for them to improve various skills and competencies, such as time management, and organization skills which resulted in improving the quality of their work. Besides the opportunity to experience remote working tools and technologies, they were also able to enhance their time management and communication skills during the internship. Some of the interns stated that time management skills were tested and refined due to the challenges in keeping their schedule balanced. They also said that the activities were able to enhance their technical skills a little bit better.

It is also notable that interns were able to help in household chores, do part-time jobs, start new hobbies, and save expenses despite a small percentage of interns acknowledged these opportunities. Some of them were

very positive that they were able to help with household chores or their family business while attending online classes. Some interns were thankful that they were able to apply for a part time job and help with their expenses and school requirements. Aside from earning opportunities, online internships saved money and time, unlike traditional internships where students had to commute to physically report. It also lessened their usual expenses because instead of renting boarding houses, they could stay at home and do their schooling. Some of them also found time to indulge in new hobbies because of the online set-up.

The study found that despite the internship being conducted online, most of the interns were still able to learn and experience actual digital library work through their access to the library management system and software used in cataloging and book listing. The online format also provided an opportunity for interns to increase their ICT skills and learn how to work with the LMS remotely. Additionally, the internship was found to be a valuable learning experience for the students to improve their time management and organization skills, as well as their technical and communication skills.

The online format of the internship provided some unexpected benefits, such as the ability to help with household chores or family businesses, apply for part-time jobs, and explore new hobbies. Furthermore, it saved resources for the interns by eliminating the need for commuting and accommodation expenses. Overall, the study found

that online internships could provide valuable learning opportunities and benefits for students, even during the pandemic.

5.6. Realizations

Table 6 shows that a majority of the students became more self-aware when it comes to their capabilities and limitations. There were 74% of the interns who realized what they can and cannot do. The students realized which aspect of their skills and knowledge needs enhancement and improvement. They admitted they needed to improve their time management and to lessen their time spent on unimportant things, such as social media. They realized that they also needed to become more confident with their skills. Some interns also admitted that they needed to work on their communication skills and cooperation with other interns. Some of them also recognized their lack of knowledge on the theories they did not encounter and skills they were not able to practice in their online classes.

Nearly half of the interns have also realized how hard and important a librarian's job is. They were able to witness librarians' actual challenges and at the same time the significant contribution of librarians to the community they serve. The interns' exposure to actual library work led interns to realize how difficult it is to work as a librarian, especially on an online set-up. Some realized that they needed to multitask and be patient in performing their tasks and functions as librarians in the future. At the same time, they were able to realize that there is a large quantity

of knowledge and skills that a librarian must have. They have learned that a librarian must possess knowledge and skills in different fields on information resources and technologies, to efficiently provide the information services needed by clients. Some of them realized that there are many things they have not learned or known yet, and that they must exert effort to learn about those things.

Another reason why interns realized how hard library work is, is because they witnessed the difference of theories and principles as compared with actual and practical applications. Among the interns, 43% realized the difference between theories and principles compared to the actual and practical application of library and information concepts. They were able to compare and see what is ideal and what is being done in reality; and that it is more complicated. They came to understand that the real duties of librarians vastly differed from the way they were being taught in the classroom.

Many of the students realized their capabilities and limitations, including the need to improve their time management, communication skills, and technical knowledge. Additionally, nearly half of the interns acknowledged the challenging nature of a librarian's job and the importance of possessing a diverse set of skills in different fields of information resources and technologies. Furthermore, the interns' exposure to actual work challenges and the difference between theories and practical applications in the library setting contributed to their realization of the complexity and difficulty of library work. These show that online internships can help students gain a better under-

Table 6. Library interns' realizations (n=35)

Q6: What were the realizations of the interns after their internship?	n (%)
I learned to become more self-aware when it comes to my capabilities and limitations.	26 (74)
I realized how hard and important a librarian's job really is.	17 (49)
I have realized the difference with the theories and principles compared to the actual and practical application of library and information concepts.	15 (43)
I have realized that there are a lot of knowledge and skills that a librarian has to have to be able to function efficiently in the library.	14 (40)
I have realized the importance of working with others in the attainment of one goal.	12 (34)
I have learned the importance of paying attention to every detail during instructions to be able to work efficiently.	12 (34)
I have realized the importance of doing hands-on activities in our learning and educational development.	11 (31)
I learned the importance of seeking help, guidance or assistance from supervisors and co-interns.	10 (29)
I learned how to organize and plan my work and managing my time in handling multiple tasks.	7 (20)
I have learned how to work effectively under pressure despite dealing with personal, financial, emotional, mental, family, school, or work problems.	2 (6)

standing of the profession and the skills required for practice.

6. DISCUSSIONS

6.1. Expectations

Most of the students expected to gain knowledge and skills on the operation, services, organization, roles, and responsibilities of librarians, and new ICTs. They also had high expectations on the cooperation and support that their fellow interns would give them during their internship. It is important for interns to express their expectations for them to have a basis for determining their success after the internship. The more accurate their perception or expectation towards the organization, the more successful they may become in their internship (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008). According to Basow and Byrne (1992), supervisors may help interns learn what to expect from their internship through sharing reports from previous interns. The orientations can also provide details for students to formulate their expectations towards their internship. Knouse and Fontenot (2008) also added that internships help interns create a set of realistic expectations for work. On the other hand, Ruhanen et al. (2013) also emphasized that clear articulation of expectations to students mitigates the negative consequences of less structured programs. This means that both expectations of students and supervisors should be discussed to help define the internship.

Interns, when faced with uncertainties and profound expectations confronting the expected internship, do have varied assumptions on how it will proceed, especially when restrictions are still part of the equation. The high expectation goes well with what they have seen, heard, or even experienced from previous small exposures aligned to their academic courses. It can also be due to the rigid orientation as to what is expected of them as interns; also, to a certain level, because BSU Library and Information Services is one of the more excellent research and academic libraries. Its awards were also cited by the interns as one of the reasons why they were delighted to be deployed at the library. Similarly, Yoo and Pang (2007) found among culinary arts interns' expectations that the social image of the hotels provided a major contribution to the internship expectation.

6.2. Preparations

A majority of the students were not prepared mentally and physically. They admitted they were still hoping for a face-to-face internship since not all of them have

the capacity for an online internship such as an internet connection, computers, and devices. They also admitted to having a lack of online and print resources as well as the necessary knowledge and skills regarding library internship. They also lack emotional stability, support, and financial capacity that would help them survive their virtual internship. A study revealed that, especially during the pandemic, many students suffered from high levels of anxiety, depression, and distress (Essadek & Rabeyron, 2020). University students, which includes interns on their final course requirement, are vulnerable to various mental health concerns (Kaparounaki et al., 2020). Thakur (2020) stated that the quarantines, trauma, grief during COVID-19, and the lack of adequate support systems further increased the risk of mental health problems among adolescents.

However, the unpreparedness among interns was compensated for by the preparations they made because of the orientation. The interns regarded the internship orientation as a way for them to be prepared for the whole internship. As recommended by Park and Jones (2021), there should be orientations for internship that include working conditions and expectations for virtual internships. This goes back to the goal of internship orientations in preparing students for what to expect and not to expect. Supervisors must help their interns state their learning goals for them to realize what they must contribute and what they would like to learn in return (Basow & Byrne, 1992). Interns' uncertainty regarding virtual internship should be clarified during internship orientation. This allows interns to have a clear picture of the organization they shall be working with, which is a predictor of their success for the internship (Knouse & Fontenot, 2008).

Virtual internship as part of a career program requires increased planning and consideration by both interns and supervisors, but they can still be a great way to gain skills and make connections. Being unprepared is a struggle, especially for unexpected virtual internship programs. This might be coupled with the feeling of incompetence and the false hope of having hands-on internships.

6.3. Challenges

The interns dealt with personal issues, especially regarding their study habits. Some experience being easily distracted and eventually procrastinating and struggling to manage their time. Interns also have trouble in balancing schools work and household responsibilities. Although these individual and personal issues would still be present in traditional internships (Ruggiero & Boehm, 2016), the

interns attributed these personal issues to the distractions they encounter online. Kostaki and Karayianni (2022) also discovered that during online and distance learning, students generally find it difficult to concentrate due to cellphones, social media, and all-day screen time. Hollis and Was (2016) also discovered that mind wandering, and social media distractions affect students' performance in online learning.

Other problems faced by interns were due to technical and technological issues, such as poor internet connections, server shutdowns, incompatible electronic devices, and power interruptions. The interns claim that these technical and technological issues impeded them from finishing their outputs properly and affected the quality of their work. These were also the same issues revealed by Kostaki and Karayianni (2022), that students dealing with a slow internet connection and disruptions on the communication platform causes them trouble in hearing their teacher. The same applied for the interns, where technical issues caused communication failure, especially in meetings where task instructions were given by their supervisors. Besides their instructors and supervisors, interns also experienced difficulty in working with others due to poor internet connections. Chen et al. (2020) confirms that technological difficulties impede development of group relationships and interaction with each other. In other words, technical difficulties hindered students' learning and participation in the tasks and activities (Kostaki & Karayianni, 2022). The internship needs to emphasize collaboration and cooperation among students, not competition, focusing on what can be achieved through collaborative learning and achievement. Maintaining smooth communication supports collaborative learning and achievement, especially in virtual internships.

Consequently, these technical problems are also causing stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout in managing the tasks and activities. Although students admitted procrastinating and delaying their work, their stress is aggravated by the slow signal whenever instructions and demonstrations were given during virtual meetings. This affects their reception of instructions, rules, policies, procedures, and guidelines of the library. The continuous logging on and off due to internet connection issues can pose serious issues that make interns unable to understand and communicate well (Chen et al., 2020). But on the brighter side, very few students dealt with medical problems related to COVID-19 because of the strict implementation of lockdowns. Because of the virtual internship, the interns did not need to go out, which might possibly result in get-

ting infected. However, Kostaki and Karayianni (2022) reported that students' eye health was affected because of staring at their screens for too many hours. Fortunately, no students reported such challenges and other ergonomic issues.

6.4. Coping Strategies

The interns employed numerous strategies to cope with challenges during the internship. Most of the interns preferred taking a break by doing activities outside school, work, and household chores. These strategies were categorized by Ismail et al. (2020) as avoidance strategies to cope with challenges encountered. These were found to be moderately correlated with stress, anxiety, and depression. These active self-distractions or diversion of tasks were also categorized as avoidance coping strategies. The results show that most of the students' strategies fall under avoidance, which is completely opposite with the result of Ismail et al. (2020) that avoidance is the least employed strategy by interns.

There were also interns who preferred dealing with the problems head on by asking for help or managing and reorganizing their schedule. This implies that there were interns who tried to personally adjust and find flexibility in the different activities related to their internship. For interns in the medical field, these problem-focused strategies were the most used and resulted in interns performing better (Ismail et al., 2020). For the case of library interns, problem-focus strategies were second to avoidance strategies.

The least employed strategies were emotion-focused strategies. Some relied on strengthening faith through spiritual activities while some relied on self-motivation through pushing or reminding themselves of what is at stake if they failed to come to their senses. This implies that only a few interns dealt with their problems through working out spiritual or motivational issues.

6.5. Opportunities

The chance to experience digital library work, and navigate library databases and systems despite the pandemic, were considered by the interns as an opportunity. They were privileged to learn and perform the tasks of librarians when services go online. This also provided an opportunity to learn, enhance, and improve their skills in ICT and other library technologies. Similar to the opportunities in virtual teaching internships, interns were also able to explore various technological resources and tools during their internship (Iradel et al., 2021). The interns

were also able to maximize their access to the library system because they were also properly guided on how to use and navigate the database. According to Park and Jones (2021), the proficiency of the supervisors was deemed by interns as an important competency to supervise virtual internships. This means that supervisors must be technology savvy to better guide interns in using the system that the library uses. That is also why many of the interns in this study attested that they were guided and assisted in the totality of library operations. The provided access to the actual database used by the library was highly appreciated by the interns because it was an opportunity for developing cataloging skills and learning new technological skills. Iradel et al. (2021) also discovered that interns were grateful because virtual internship experiences provided opportunities for skill development and acquisition. The interns also viewed their internship as an opportunity to improve soft skills such as time management, and organization skills that help them in producing better outputs. Gill (2020) also highlighted that one of the key learnings in online internships is time management. These soft skills are also as important as the technical skills for the interns to develop. This can only mean that the virtual internship was still able to provide the necessary learning that traditional internships offer. As explained by Ruggiero and Boehm (2016), virtual internships offer the same benefits as traditional internships such as giving an opportunity to gain experience working in a virtual environment.

The interns were also able to maximize various opportunities during their internship such as helping with household chores, earning extra income from part-time jobs, starting new hobbies, and even lessening their expenses for travel and accommodation. Iradel et al. (2021) confirm these opportunities, stating that online teaching internships provide cost advantages enabling interns to save transportation expenses. Being able to work part-time and earn a salary while studying is also a plus factor for why the interns appreciated virtual internship. These are some of the issues in traditional internship that virtual internship addresses; the need to temporarily relocate to nearer residences, to travel long distances, or to take time off from the current jobs of the interns (Ruggiero & Boehm, 2016). These factors were also revealed by Kostaki and Karayianni (2022), that students have more time to rest and study with the time in commuting lessened in online learning.

6.6. Realizations

The virtual internship allowed students to reflect on

themselves and discover their capabilities and limitations. Most specifically, the interns were able to realize their weak competencies needing improvement, such as time management, confidence, communication skills, and their ability to manage their tasks. Similarly, Iradel et al. (2021) also found that teaching interns have the same realization that there should be skills they have to improve, specifically behavioral and emotional self-regulation. Gill (2020) also found that one of the key learnings in students' self-management of their workload is to have self-discipline. This really shows that online internships effectively allow students to reflect on their work and themselves. This is supported by work by Sweitzer and King (2019), which discussed that reflection is a key component of experiential education because it connects the field work to the learning. In fact, the National Society for Experiential Education (2022) identified reflection as an element that transforms simple experience to a learning experience. Sweitzer and King (2019) added that internships and other kinds of field instruction are a form of experiential learning where students can translate their classroom lectures into real workplace scenarios. Interns also realized their lack of technical knowledge and skills in librarianship which they were not able to learn in the classroom. This means that while the interns were lectured with theories and principles in the classroom, there should still be other trainings and orientations to prepare them for the challenges to be dealt with in real workplace scenarios. These were also the same realizations of teaching interns in the study of Iradel et al. (2021), that they think their three-year preparation for the teaching internship was insufficient and must be improved. This realization might also be attributed to the various challenges faced by student interns in their work, outputs, co-interns, and selves, which can only be discussed but not actually experienced inside the classroom.

That is also the reason why interns have learned the difference between theory and practical applications of librarianship. This coincides with the findings of Iradel et al. (2021), that internships provide students with several opportunities to apply what they have learned in class. Internships, indeed, bridge the theories they learn in their classroom into practice. Although a larger percentage of students stated that they were able to experience actual digital library work, not all interns were able to fully connect theory into practice due to the lack of hands-on activities which they will be physically experiencing when accomplishing their tasks in the library. As an effect, only a few students realized the importance of doing hands-on

activities in their learning and development. This might also be the reason why only a few of the interns were able to learn how to work under pressure and deal with the challenges experienced in the workplace. The lack of hands-on activities made the internship less challenging. Plus, interns were working virtually in the comfort of their homes. Gill (2020) also found similar realizations from their respondents, that interns had a relaxed working environment. Adding to the fact that all work activities were digital or done online, students were not able to have physical interaction with the books and the library. Although they were able to experience challenges in the virtual internship, they might still be longing for the different challenges encountered in a face-to-face internship. It cannot be denied that there are interns that mentioned they learned how to handle the pressure and challenge faced in a virtual workplace and were positive that they could do it also in the future.

6.7. Internship Framework

This proposed model consists of three stages, namely: pre-internship preparation, internship process, and post-internship, which may find similarity with Sweitzer and King (2019)'s Developmental Stage Model of Internship and other internship models (Kiser, 2015; Woodside, 2017) (Fig. 1).

6.7.1. Pre-internship Preparation

Pre-internship preparation is an essential step for LIS students who are about to embark on an internship experience. This stage involves preparing for the internship before it begins. Activities in this stage include researching

the company or organization, reviewing internship requirements, identifying learning goals, preparing a resume and cover letter, practicing interviewing, connecting with mentors or advisors, and preparing for the first day of the internship.

In a virtual internship, pre-internship preparation may involve additional steps such as ensuring that the intern has access to the necessary technology and software, setting up virtual communication tools, and clarifying expectations for remote work. The intern may also need to prepare a dedicated workspace and ensure they have a reliable internet connection.

In the model of Sweitzer and King (2019), students have things they look forward to, as well as things they are anxious about. That is why internship orientations are important onboarding activities for interns. This stage covers the first two stages of Kiser (2015)'s model, the pre-placement and initiation stage. This model recognizes the behind-the-scenes preparations including making all parties involved aware of the program objectives. Besides preparing students with technical and technological concerns focused on the achievement of program objectives, as the study also revealed challenges experienced by virtual interns, this stage must also include mental state, time management, confidence, communication skills, and their ability to manage their tasks and so on. Diambra et al. (2004) recommended making a list of anticipated signs of stress and coping strategies.

6.7.2. Internship Process

The internship process typically involves several key steps that help ensure a successful and productive experi-

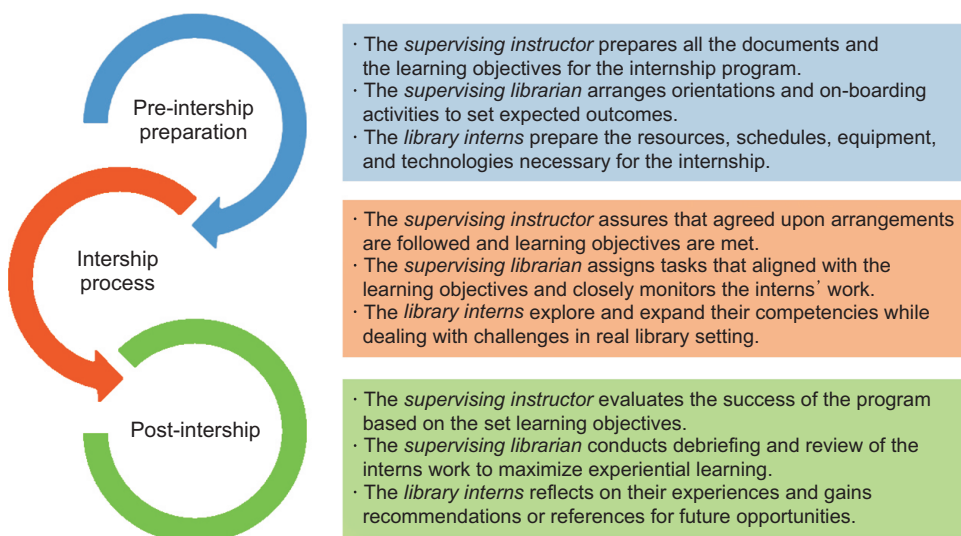


Fig. 1. Internship model.

ence for both the intern and employer. This stage involves the actual internship experience. Activities in this stage include receiving regular feedback, developing new skills and knowledge, and behaving professionally while dealing with real workplace challenges in the library. Interns employ various coping strategies in this stage to overcome those challenges.

In a virtual internship, the intern may work remotely, which requires additional communication and collaboration skills to stay engaged and connected with the supervisor and colleagues. The intern may participate in virtual meetings, collaborate on shared documents and files, and communicate through email, instant messaging, or video conferencing.

Sweitzer and King (2019) identified the in-between stages exploration and competence in the developmental stage model. Woodside (2017) identified two stages as well, which are increasing participation and expanding skills. Kiser (2015) termed this as the working stage. All of these identified that this is where the bulk of internship activities are done. It is where interns engage in working, explore the workplace, and increase their participation with workmates or co-interns. This is also where they develop competencies and expand their skills. This calls for the need to develop training guides for librarians as well as learning resources that would benefit the supervising librarians and interns. As the study discovered the usefulness of scanned notes and information resources among interns, such references should be packaged with the interns as they are deployed to various libraries.

6.7.3. *Post-internship*

A post-internship activity is an important step for interns to reflect on their experience and to transition into their next phase of professional development. This stage occurs after the internship has ended and involves reflecting on the experience and transitioning to the next phase of professional development. Activities in this stage include debriefing with the supervisor, updating resumes and portfolios, reflecting on the experience, networking, and staying in touch, evaluating career goals, providing feedback, and expressing gratitude.

In a virtual internship, the post-internship stage may involve additional challenges such as ensuring that the intern has access to references and recommendations from the supervisor and colleagues, as well as finding ways to maintain connections with the company or organization after the internship has ended.

Woodside (2017) referred to the internship conclusion

as the leave-taking of interns, which required an orderly transition of the roles and responsibilities that an intern assumed. Apart from assuring a smooth transition, Kiser (2015) emphasized that this final stage (termination stage) is a time for reflection that provides students with an ideal opportunity to examine and work on these patterns and skills. Quijano (2015) highlighted that reflection enables students to describe an ideal librarian and plan their career in LIS based on the LIS-related tasks they carried out and competencies they have acquired during the practicum. Sweitzer and King (2019) stated that the culmination stage required settlement of concerns to avoid a sabotaged perception towards their experience. In this study, the reflections helped students conduct self-assessment and an evaluation of the internship site and supervisors. In fact, there should also be assessment mechanisms for supervising librarians for them to reflect whether they have also contributed to the development of the professional and personal skills of the interns.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Interns expected to gain knowledge and skills on the operation, services, organization, roles and responsibilities of librarians, and new ICTs from the library and from librarians, regardless of the mode of their internship. Although they were not initially prepared, the orientation helped them identify what they should prepare, such as computers and a stable internet connection, as well as the necessary knowledge and skills for them to accomplish the tasks assigned to them. Challenges brought by procrastination were further aggravated by technical difficulties such as server shutdowns, slow internet connections, power interruptions, and incompatible devices. The interns employed avoidance strategies as coping mechanism or taking a break from school, work, and household responsibilities. The interns had an opportunity to learn and navigate the online digital system of the library despite the pandemic. They were given a chance to experience digital library work and develop the technical and soft skills needed for their future employment. Most importantly, the interns realized their capacity and reflected on which competencies need improvement. They were also able to realize the importance of the librarians' job at the same time as the needed knowledge and skills to function as one. In conclusion, virtual internship can still offer the benefits of a traditional internship. Although virtual internships are no substitute for face-to-face internship, students still learned the necessary knowledge and skills of

a librarian; experienced the challenges faced in an actual library and were provided with various opportunities and realizations.

The proposed framework outlined various stages in an internship. Initially, the pre-internship stage is focused on establishing expectations and preparations for all parties involved. This stage involves setting objectives and conducting orientations. Next, the internship process involves interns expanding their skills and dealing with challenges encountered in a library workplace. Finally, the post-internship stage involves the translation of the entire experience into meaningful takeaways such as career opportunities and realizations. This stage includes assessments and feedback as closure for the program. While the model has not yet been tested and validated, this study aims to offer a comprehensive guide for the supervising instructor, supervising librarian, and library intern through these stages.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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APPENDIX. Sample journal entries

“Oh no ... how can I handle everything?” This was my first reaction to the internship as I found out that it would be conducted online. Due to the outbreak, most of my daily activities were affected. I have to establish a new schedule for me to follow and learn to organize it as well. In the very beginning, I felt that I would really have a hard time undergoing an internship program, but I realized that I shouldn't overthink for possible things to happen because I didn't even know what was going to happen. Sometimes, this was challenging, but I also tried to look at it as an opportunity. I know that an online internship can be just as helpful as an onsite experience if I focus on the tasks assigned to me. I felt excitement when I found out that I would be assigned to the Benguet State University (BSU) Library. Just because I really wanted an internship that would prepare me for my chosen career path. I think that my internship at the BSU library would be good, and this internship will teach me exactly all of the essential skills and tasks needed to have a career in my field. My expectations for this online library internship program are to learn as much as possible about the daily functions of the library. I'm expecting to learn about the library management and have an actual work experience about cataloguing of books and to learn about other library tasks. I also expect that this internship would be a good way of broadening my knowledge of a career in the field of library science. When it comes to the cooperating library and librarians, I expect them to provide me with the opportunity to learn and grasp the possible activities in this internship in a way that I can understand. Upon accomplishing this internship program, I expect that this internship will give me that hands-on experience I need. I expect that this internship will help me build up my knowledge of responsibility, positivity, and focus. I had to be responsible for my activities. I have to accomplish it, not just by compliance. It's a responsibility that needs to be achieved. I had to be positive and stay focused on the things I do. As an intern, I expect my co-interns to be a contributing member of the team. In this matter, I remember something remarkable about the cone experience topic we have tackled with Ma'am Lascano that “the best way to learn is by doing.” Yes, interns like me must interact with the environment in order to adapt and learn. In the field of library science, the best way to learn how to do a specific job is to simply try doing the job and at the same time understanding what you're doing.

If I were to ask if I am prepared for an online internship, I would say that I'm not actually prepared. How can I be motivated? What are the possible changes and adjustments I could do? These were the questions running through my mind. But I know that this internship was very important, and it's a great opportunity for a college student like me. When it comes to the preparation for the internship, I did some changes with my daily schedule. The significance of that is for me to stay committed to my new schedule in order to develop good study habits. Planning and setting goals is important. Without a specific plan and defined strategy, it would be hard to propose a new initiative through completion. Thus, setting and reaching goals makes me feel a sense of accomplishment.

Just as I said, everything is changed tremendously due to the pandemic. We are now living differently in the way we lived before. We are now having the world of the virtual era. I am taking my degree virtually since the last semester so, I am sort of used to this online setup. I am truly grateful that I was assigned to BSU where I am studying the degree I am taking, which is Bachelor of Library and Information Science, so there are not many adjustments at all instead, preparing myself to be more attentive and efficient even if it is virtual. I have to be more organized especially the files on my laptop so, I will be managing my future tasks in the library efficiently and effectively. We are seven in our group for this internship. Only three of us in our group can visit the library whenever it needed. When the three of us visit the library as an intern, (disclaimer: we followed the Inter-Agency Task Force protocols which are wearing our facemasks and face shields properly) we received a warm welcomed in each library staff inside the BSU library. Our instructor made a good job on introducing us the things we have to do, things we need to prioritize in the library tasks, things we should not do and things we should know about being a library staff. Communication skills are a must in a job qualification. Our instructor gave us an open communication. At the back of our minds, we did feel intimidated and nervous to ask too many questions because we did not want to admit or ashamed that we don't understand some library tasks and that we needed extra help with something. Blessed because our instructor let us get over that hesitations and fears because he made us realized that asking questions are the only way to learn what we are really supposed to be learning and doing. He also mentioned that he actually appreciated it more if we asked questions to make sure we really understood what it was doing and that we did it correctly. If we had not worked with such cooperative and helpful instructor, we probably would have been too

uncomfortable to ask questions in our future company or organization we will work on. Now, that we know it is not bad to ask, we won't have to struggle with it in our future job.

We were assigned a number of activities, namely: making our work plans (individually and by group), assisting in the creation and completion of a series of videos on information literacy, writing a book review, cataloguing activities with e-books and the university's cataloguing system, and currently—assisting in library activities either as a facilitator, or a participant, or both.

Thinking about them all as tasks on a to do list has been both helpful and daunting. It's a little frustrating when you have so much to do that you don't know exactly where or how to start, then again, starting is usually that hardest part for me. But as soon as I find a flow or get in the zone, I get things done. I've started writing physical to do lists and taping them up where I can see them and that usually helps keep me from getting distracted. Music or any sort of background noise I find I can work over helps me concentrate. Baking shows, or any shows where people make things serve that purpose well, Music has been constantly teetering between heavy metal, instrumentals, and indie/folk (probably to the annoyance of anybody who can hear it).

Coordination, collaboration, and synergy has been moderate. It's easy to leave a message for classmates to read, But the time it takes for them to reply (if at all) varies. My groupmates however, have been fairly proactive, and my instructor makes asking questions a lot less frightening.

The task I probably had the most fun with might be the voice recording for the infographics. I wish I could have been able to produce something with a better quality, but I've been limited by the things I have to record with. Still, it was something I could do and do well. The task I enjoyed least has to be the cataloguing activity. I recognize its significance and the difficulty itself was part of a healthy challenge, my frustration lies with the errors in the system and how many careless mistakes I've made (mostly because of my clumsiness and inexperience). I've finished cataloguing the books I've been assigned, and yet I can't have them checked because the system is out of order again. I might be getting a bit too riled up about this though. I've never been the most patient person. I worked with my co interns well, especially with my groupmates, who were understanding and easy to talk to.

There have been quite a lot of difficult things going on outside of school that have made concentration hard and any effort feel like something that isn't worth doing. I'm sure plenty of others are going through the same thing. I've had to deal with the loss of a family member with whom I have had a complicated and mostly negative relationship with, and that turmoil is felt even now. During that period, my co interns have been patient with me, even when I spoke little of my situation. They didn't rush me to finish output, or hassle me into doing something. They thanked me for my contributions, and that made me feel like I've been helpful, and that what I had done for the group has been enough.

I've mentioned this before and I probably risk sounding like a broken record but he has been very kind and approachable and easy to talk to, even about mistakes, which can be daunting for most students to come forward with. There was a moment during the cataloguing activity where I had made a few careless mistakes, the library catalog suffered unnecessary changes because of that, if I hadn't brought this to the attention of our course facilitator as soon as I did, I probably would have done more damage. He was quick to clarify and correct without humiliating me or making me feel like a dunce.

This month might have been the most stressful out of all of them. Aside from the library system going down for the longest time, I've just found out that most of the work I've done is gone without much hope for recovery. Pretty bleak, considering how hard that was for me to get done. Making lists, which has helped in past in keeping my mind organized, has turned into something that gives me more stress.

It was, and still is very hard for me to concentrate. I have no idea if it's the persistent issues I have with my brain or the environment I have to work in or both, but it's been pretty detrimental to work and progress. I know what I have to get done, but actually getting them done feels absolutely monumental. It's gotten worse throughout the month and I've had more breakdowns and burnouts than I care to count.

Finding some time to indulge in new hobbies has somehow supplied me with a few moments of peace. To deliberately step away from schoolwork and my computer for a while to do some exercise, or to plant something. Gardening, in particular is something I've found to be incredibly therapeutic (something about getting your hands into good soil and

seeing something grow, but I won't go too into that). I haven't had much time to do much of it at all these past few weeks however.

One of my realizations during the internship program is that staying connected with my co-interns and teacher is important. No man is indeed an island because, at the end of the day, I still need to cooperate and ask for help from my co-interns and teacher to get the tasks done successfully. In addition, I need always to stay active on my accounts (messenger and google classroom) to be updated with the activities and announcements of my teacher since the mode of the internship program is online. Even though I am at home, I should be aware of my class schedules and manage my time properly. Lastly, as an intern, I should always put effort and be responsible enough to do the task assigned. The online internship is difficult but the experience is enjoyable and worth it.

The aspect that I wanted to improve on myself is on time management because I admit I have a procrastination habit. Because of this negative habit, the quality of my works is being affected. On the other hand, I also wanted to improve more my cataloging skills. I still commit errors more specifically on using punctuations and sometimes I am not confident on the information of the book that I input in the system. On the internship program, it would be nice if it will be a blended internship (online and onsite) if the protocols are not already that strict for us to gain more experience. I don't see any aspect that still needs improvement to our course facilitator because he guided us well throughout the online internship and he is also approachable in times we encounter difficulties with the task given to us.

"Quality over quantity" - these are the words that our teacher always reminds us of when doing our activities. It encapsulates my whole experience as a student library intern because in all of the tasks that we have done one common thing that I learned is to always assure quality. For example, finishing cataloging all the titles of the book assigned to me will not mean that I finish the task successfully if there are too many errors that I commit. Carefully and properly cataloging the book in the system with the correct tags and punctuation will more matter even if a lot of records still await to be finished. Throughout my internship experience, I learned that the amount or number of what we have accomplished is not what really matters rather it is the standard and value of what we have accomplished.