EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: THE INTERNSHIP AND LIVE-CASE STUDY RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Educators are increasingly using experiential learning pedagogy to improve learning (knowledge and skills). Two highly effective experiential methods are live-case study projects and internships. This study examines the learning outcomes of courses with live-case study projects for students who have had a prior internship experience and those who have not as well as correlation analysis for each group. The results find that prior internship experience does improve applied project learning outcomes. Furthermore, the findings have implications of the importance for the integration of knowledge and skills development and the benefit of the live-case approach to particular student populations.

JEL: I21, A22, M31

KEYWORDS: Experiential learning, internships, business and marketing education

INTRODUCTION

Employers' expectations for the preparation of college students' employment are challenging to educators. In a recessionary, high unemployment economy and highly competitive markets, businesses are reducing costs and seeking better value (well-prepared students) for hiring entry-level positions. For example, companies are reducing skills training for newly hired college graduates (Georges, 1996; Kelley and Bridges, 2005). Therefore, the responsibilities for professional and career development skills continue to increase for educators. Furthermore, accreditation organizations have recognized the critical role business schools play in lifelong learning and skills development (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, 2010) and learning outcomes (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010; Duke, 2002) to prepare students for successful professional careers in which such standards require assurances of learning (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, 2007).

Major teaching-learning strategies are experiential learning activities to achieve assurances of learning standards (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business, 2010) and to meet expectations for employers (Lamb, Shipp, and Moncrief, 1995) and by students (Karns, 2005). Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) encourages active learning, e.g., Standard 13, in that "passive learning is ineffective and of short duration" (2010, p. 56). Lamb et al. conclude, "As skill acquisition and refinement becomes more important to students and employers, marketing departments will be called upon to engage in skill development in a systematic, demonstrable way" (1995, p. 18). Moreover, Karns found "undergraduate students' perceptions of learning activities are now structured by the degree to which the activities are enjoyable, challenging, and real world" (2005, p. 170).

Two prevalent, highly effective experiential learning pedagogies are internships and live-case projects (Farazmand, Green and Miller, 2010; Gupta, Burns, and Schiferl, 2010; Karns, 2005). Internships are perceived by students as being successful if they have positive experiences, gain personal benefits, and improve their employment prospects (Gupta et al., 2010). However, student internships are likely a one-semester experience and an optional (elective) course. On the other hand, live-case projects may be experienced in multiple courses and perceived as being successful by students and businesses (Elam and Spotts, 2004; Farazmand et al., 2010). Integrating skills and knowledge is an important focus of

experiential learning (Elam and Spotts, 2004; Lamb et al., 1995). With the same importance, skills development in different types of experiential courses should be integrated (Lamb et al., 1995). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of prior internship experience and live-case projects. Hence, does an internship experience improve live-case project learning outcomes? This study includes a review of the experiential learning literature, the methodology, data analysis findings, the discussion of the results, limitations of and future opportunities from this research, and the conclusion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, many higher education institutions have integrated learning by doing experiential methods of teaching-learning to their curricula to enhance learning outcomes of their programs (Aldas, Crispo, Johnson and Price, 2010). Accreditation organizations, educators and students have reported experiential learning activities effective in enhancing students' knowledge, skills and developments for future career success (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010a; Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010b).Business schools, particularly marketing discipline have implemented the experiential methods of teaching by incorporating hands on, real projects to different courses.

Titus and Petroshius (1993) assess the learning outcomes of an undergraduate consumer behavior course with an experiential project. The students' learning from the course and implication of the project include, hands-on experience, analytical skill in the market place, synthesizing theory and practice and relating marketing concepts to real world application, design and execution of a marketing project, and appreciation for marketing research. Geringer, Stratemeyer and Canton (2009) integrate a service project for a non-profit organization to thirty-eight sections of marketing concept course. Geringer et al. (2009) state that the service project learning outcomes showed enhancement and development in students' academics knowledge, skills, attitudes, career development and civic responsibilities.

Furthermore, Walsh (2002) explains how a SUNY College at Oneonta undergraduate student Marketing Club has successfully conducted a number of major marketing research projects and consulting services for the community private and public organizations. Walsh points out that most of their Marketing Club projects have been presented to the community organizations as written projects resulted in enhancing students' learning objectives. Students have acquired valuable skills such as collaborative and creative processes, consulting, teamwork and communication, in addition to personal growth and self-esteem and motivation development. Experiential learning can be incorporated into a college curricula in various forms, among them are live case projects and internship (Aldas et al., 2010; Farazmand et al., 2010; Gupta et al., 2010; Karns, 2005). Business schools have been using internship programs as a linkage between academic program and work to prepare students for transition from academia to the business world (Walker, Turner, Shoffner and Gibson, 2001). Though internship might not be considered of academic value by some faculty who consider internship as non-academic experience (*International Educator*, 2004), but internship experience has been reported as one of the effective components of academic preparations (McClam, 2000).The current study examines the relationship of prior internship and live-case projects. The positive impacts of internship experience on learning outcomes of an academic course could indicate the academic value of internship. Walker et al. (2001) suggest that integration of multiple experiential learning projects into different courses during the four-year college curricula enhances the impact of the internship in junior-senior year. This study examines the learning outcomes of courses with live-case study projects for students who have had a prior internship experience and those who have not.

The Experiential Learning Study

The experiential projects were conducted at Lynn University (LU), Boca Raton, Florida. LU is an independent, coeducational, residential institution with 2,224 students (1,786 undergraduate and 438

graduate) from 46 states and 81 nations. LU has a 17:1 student-to-faculty ratio and offers baccalaureate, master and doctoral degrees. The University has six colleges of which the College of Business and Management is the largest (Lynn University, 2010).

The projects for this study were for five upper level marketing courses (Consumer Behavior, Marketing Communications, Global Marketing, Marketing Research, Business Marketing Management) in the College of Business and Management during three consecutive semesters (Fall 2009, Spring and Fall 2010). Each course was structured exactly the same with the exception of the type of marketing project. Generally, class sessions met on Tuesdays and Thursdays for 75 minutes. Depending on the semester, examinations were 30% of the course grade, course project ranged from 30% to 50%, and other assignments 20% to 40%. The courses allocated time of approximately 60% classroom meetings and 40% field research and project development. Since 2000, the College of Business and Management (CBM) has had a relationship with SCORE, a partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration, to provide "real world" learning opportunities for CBM students. Prior to each semester, the course instructor worked with a SCORE Counselor to develop a course project.During the semester, the same Counselor would be a co-instructor for the courses and in the classroom approximately 50% of the class sessions, primarily during the student teams' project development period. However, the businessperson also would be in class the first week of the semester and a few sessions during the textbook learning period to discuss pre-project topics and answer any questions about the project. During this three-semester period, the same Score Counselor, a highly successful businessperson in manufacturing, provided the business project for and worked with 132 traditional undergraduate students.

METHODOLOGY

Although the semester was in two parts – textbook (assignments and examinations) and project (field research and presentations), the two were integrated with knowledge content and skills development by specific requirements (Lamb, et al, 1995). The first part of the semester was focused on textbook assignments and the last part was only for developing the course-learning project. As an example, for the textbook chapter assignments, instructor-developed discussion questions were required that linked the text to the project. Moreover, each course had instructor-developed project guidelines in which textbook concepts were to be applied in the live-case project. These were detailed but were flexible enough for student teams to be adaptive and innovative to complete their experiential learning project.

During the field research and project development period, there were no class sessions for one day of the week. The teams used the classroom for meetings and the instructor was available for assistance. In addition, required business/project meetings were held with the businessperson and the instructor during the second scheduled class day each week. These meetings were to report (project status) and for informational (ask questions) purposes. For the last week of the semester, each team made an oral presentation using PowerPoints and submitted a written plan to the instructor and businessperson. At the time of the written submission, each team individually rated or evaluated (based on a total of 100%) all team members as to their contribution to the project with no two members having the same rating (percentage). The projects were evaluated (graded) and returned to students during the scheduled Final Week class session. This provided an opportunity for students to ask questions/make comments for timely feedback. The three semester courses had a different applied project.

While the same semester courses had the common project concept, they had very different project assignments. For the consumer behavior course, teams selected a target market, used the Engel, Kollat, Blackwell (EKB) model (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2006), and developed a marketing strategy based on their consumer market behavioral findings. For the marketing communications course, teams selected different target audiences, and completed an integrated marketing communications plan. Global marketing teams identified different countries, and developed an international marketing plan. For the

marketing research course, teams chose different target markets, and developed a research proposal and did a market research study. Finally, business marketing teams selected different target markets, and developed a business marketing plan.

Lynn University requires all undergraduate students to complete a 3 credit hour (150 hours of work) internship at a student-selected organization. Generally, the internship course is completed during the junior year or the first semester senior year. Therefore, students in the upper level marketing course might have completed an internship. In this study, 132 students participated in the live-case projects during the three semesters of which 55 had completed an internship and 77 had not. There were 73 males and 59 females. The vast majority was College of Business and Management students (94.7%), and only six students were from the College of International Communications (4.5%) and one for the College of Liberal Studies (0.8%). The students tended to be juniors in academic level (56.8%).

While there was a large representation of international students (37.1%), U.S. students were the majority (62.9%). More than two-thirds of the students lived off-campus (68.9%) and the remaining students lived on-campus (31.1%). About one-half of the students (53.8%) did not belong or were associated with a University organization, e.g., student government, fraternity or sorority, athletic team. About four out of ten students did not have a paying Summer job (42.4%) but most of those who did worked 30 or more hours (28.8%). During the semester of the course, most students did not work (73.4%) but most of those who did worked less than 20 hours (19.0%). See Table 1 for specific student characteristic details.

Students were given three surveys during each semester. First, at the beginning of the semester (pre-test) they provided demographic information (e.g., gender, citizenship), campus experiences (e.g., student activities), educational experiences (e.g., credits earned, internship completion), and their perception of examinations and applied projects with six 5-point Likert-type scale items. Second, another survey was completed before beginning the project (mid-term test) in which the six items (5-point Likert scale) were asked gain. Third, at the end of the semester (post-test) the six items were asked but the verb tense was changed from future tense to past tense. See Table 2, Panel A for the post-test items.

As shown in the table, these items were developed measuring students' applied project perceptions and experiences as (1) knowledge, (2) skills, (3) personal development, or (4) both knowledge and skills. Additional data were included as to the teams' ranking of each member with no two students in the team having the same ranking and was used to compute individual student's applied project score. Furthermore, other data provided for the study were from the instructor or the University, e.g., examination and applied project scores, cumulative grade point average.

Findings

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship of a prior internship experience and live-case projects. The data were analyzed and the findings are reported by two methods. First is a comparison between students who had completed an internship (n=55) and those who had not (n=77) using t-Tests. Second determines what factors (variables) influence learning outcomes using multiple regression. Learning outcomes (dependent variable) are determined by two measures – the students and the instructor.

Table 1: Students' Characteristics with and without Internships

Student Characteristics	Students with Internship		Students without Internship		Total Students	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	55	41.7	77	58.3	132	100.0
Gender						
Male	36	65.5	37	48.1	73	55.3
Female	19	34.5	40	51.9	59	44.7
Academic Major						
College of Business & Mgt.	54	98.2	71	92.2	125	94.7
College of Int'l. Comm.	1	1.8	5	6.5	6	4.5
College of Liberal Studies			1	1.3	1	0.8
Academic Year						
Freshman (29 or less credits)						
Sophomore (30 to 59 crs.)	1	1.8	11	14.3	12	9.1
Junior (60 to 89 credits)	26	47.3	49	63.6	75	56.8
Senior (90 or more credits)	28	50.9	17	22.1	45	34.1
Citizenship						
U.S.	33	60.0	50	64.9	83	62.9
Not U.S.	22	40.0	27	35.1	49	37.1
Residence						
On-Campus	17	30.9	24	31.2	41	31.1
Off-Campus	38	69.1	53	68.8	91	68.9
University Organizations						
None	37	67.3	34	44.1	71	53.8
One	9	16.4	24	31.2	33	25.0
Two	8	14.5	11	14.3	19	14.4
Three	1	1.8	1	1.3	2	1.5
Four of More			7	9.1	7	5.3
Summer Employment (weekly)						
No Paying Job	23	41.8	33	42.8	56	42.4
Job Less than 10 Hours	2	3.6	6	7.8	8	6.1
Job 10 to 19 Hours	3	5.5	9	11.7	12	9.1
Job 20 to 29 Hours	6	10.9	12	15.6	18	13.6
Job 30 or More Hours	21	38.2	17	22.1	38	28.8
Semester Employment (weekly)						
No Paying Job	41	74.5	56	72.7	97	73.4
Job Less than 10 Hours	5	9.1	5	6.5	10	7.6
Job 10 to 19 Hours	4	7.3	11	14.3	15	11.4
Job 20 to 29 Hours	3	5.5	4	5.2	7	5.3
Job 30 or More Hours	2	3.6	1	1.3	3	2.3

This table shows student sample demographic, educational and work experience information. This information is presented in detail (number and percentage) by students with internship experience, students with no internship experience and all students in the sample.

In Table 2, Panel A, the internship and non-internship experienced students' post-test results are compared using the t-Test method in which the items were measured by a 5-point Likert type scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). Four of the six items and the total mean score (unweighted for the six items) show significant differences. Students who had an internship course had a better learning experience, e.g., knowledge, skills, and knowledge and skills, than those who did not have an internship experience. The positive impact of an internship by enhancing students' knowledge and skills shows (1) the academic value of an internship and (2) that the integration of an internship and courses with live-case project enhances the impact of experiential teaching pedagogy. The two items in which there were no significant differences, e.g., personal development and skills (team experience), were consistent with the significant items in that the internship experienced students had a more positive experience (lower mean scores). In Table 2, Panel B the project grades (1 = A to 5 = F) were not significantly different between the two groups. However, students without internship experience did better (lower mean scores).

Table 2: Project Score Related Results Comparison between Internship and Non-Internship Experienced Students

Panel A: Student-Reported (Post-test)				
Item	Students With Internship Mean	Students Without Internship Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference
Learned more about Marketing in this course than a Marketing course without a service (applied) learning project. (*Knowledge*)	1.56	1.87	0.601	-0.31**
Developed better or new skills in this course than a Marketing course without a service (applied) learning project. (*Skills*)	1.55	1.92	0.757	-0.37*
Look forward to doing another service (applied) learning course project in the future. (*Personal Development*)	2.00	2.26	1.122	-0.26
Look forward to working in a team in the future. (*Skills*)	2.24	2.43	1.208	-0.19
Did better in this course that had both examinations and a service (applied) learning course project than without such as project. (*Knowledge and Skills*)	1.87	2.26	0.944	-0.39**
A service (applied) learning project has benefited me more in meeting my career goals than a course without such a project. (*Knowledge and Skills*)	1.74	2.07	0.5339	-0.33**
Mean Score for the 6 student-reported items	1.83	2.14	0.6526	-0.31**

Panel B: Instructor-Reported				
Item	Students With Internship Mean	Students Without Internship Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference
Project grade	2.15	1.88	1.214	0.27

*This table presents t-Test results by comparing students with and students without an internship experience. The significance levels are shown as * $p < 0.01$ and ** $p < 0.05$. In Panel A, the self-reported results are from the post-test with six 5-point Likert-type scale items (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree). This panel also shows the mean score for the six items. In Panel B, the instructor's project score results (1 = A to 5 = F) are reposted.*

For multiple regression analysis, learning outcomes as the dependent variable includes the students' post-test results (self-report) and their applied project grades (instructor-report) with equal weight for each. Pearson correlation coefficient analysis examined the bivariate relationships between specific independent variables (gender, U.S. citizen, rank in team, mid-term response) and the dependent variable (total project score). The results are shown in Table 3. No findings exceed .400, indicating acceptable levels of correlation. Of particular interest, the total project score (dependent variable) is significant ($p < 0.01$) with the four independent variables, and has a negative correlation with gender and U.S. citizen. As well, these two variables have an inverse relationship with all of the other variables. There is a negative, significant correlation ($p < 0.05$) gender and rank in team.

To determine the relationships of the independent variables and the dependent variable multiple regression models (forward stepwise) were tested for all students, students with internship experience, and students without an internship course. The independent variable is included in the model only if it is significant at or less than 0.05. For all students, the explained variance (adjusted R^2) was 37.5%. Four independent variables were included in the equation. Mid-term response and rank in team have positive relationships to total project score. However, gender (coded as 1 = male, 2 = female) and U.S. citizen (coded as 1 = yes, 2 = no) have negative relationships. Therefore, the regression model (Table 4, Panel A) is:

> All Students = 1.246 + 0.430 (mid-term response) + 0.293 (rank in team) – 0.233 (gender) – 0.199 (U.S. citizen)

Table 3: Internship and Non-Internship Experienced Students Correlations for Applied Projects

Variables	Gender	U.S. Citizen	Rank in Team	Mid-Term Response	Total Score	Project
Gender	1.000					
U.S. Citizen	-.123	1.000				
Rank in Team	-.202**	-.078	1.000			
Mid-Term Response	-.013	-.050	-.075	1.000		
Total Project Score	-.256*	-.225*	.348*	.376*	1.000	

*This table presents the inter-correlations between the study variables relative degree of association (positive and negative). The significance levels are indicated as * $p < 0.01$ and ** $p < 0.05$.*

For students with an internship experience, the explained variance (adjusted R^2) was 26.3%. Two independent variables were included in the equation. Gender had an inverse relationship for total project score. However, mid-term response had direct relationships to total project score. Hence, the regression model (Table 4, Panel B) is:

Students with Internship Experience = 2.288 – 0.494 (gender) + 0.293 (mid-term response)

For students with no prior internship course, the explained variance (adjusted R^2) was 40.5%. Two independent variables were included in the equation. Mid-term response and rank in team have positive relationships to total project score. Therefore, the regression model (Table 4, Panel C) is:

Students without Internship Experience = 0.132 + 0.570 (mid-term response) + 0.308 (rank in team)

Therefore, mid-term response is a major variable factor (variable) in predicting live-case projects success in that it was included in all three equations.

DISCUSSION

Employers are expecting better-prepared college graduates with having greater, more advanced skills (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010b; Lamb et al., 1995). This appears to be a result of businesses reducing skills development budgets for recent college graduates training (Kelley and Bridges, 2005). An important pedagogical strategy to address and develop better student skills is experiential learning, e.g., internship experiences, live-case study projects (Karns, 2005). As with content knowledge, skills development experiences should be integrated (Lamb et al., 1995). Internships usually occur with only one experience (course), while live-case studies may be integrated into multiple courses.

Therefore, this study examines, does an internship experience improve live-case project learning outcomes? The findings are that an internship does improve live-case project learning outcomes. The results from this study are supported by seven specific findings.

First, in the comparison of the two groups students with prior internship experience reported lower mean scores (strongly/somewhat support) for all six items for their live-case project learning experience than those without an internship. See Table 2. Second, of the six items four were significantly different between the two groups. Students with a prior internship "developed better or more skills" with the project ($p < 0.01$). They also "learned more" in a course with a project ($p < 0.05$). Interesting in that these students recognized the importance of knowledge and skills in which they "did better in this course that had both examinations and a service (applied) learning project" ($p < 0.05$). Students with an internship course also realized that the live-case project "benefited (them) more in meeting (their) career goals than a course without such a project" ($p < 0.05$) than students without an internship experience.

Third, the highest mean score (somewhat agree) related to working in teams. While not significant, students with an internship had a lower mean score (looked more favorable to another team project) than

the other students. This may have been a result of the internship experience with an organization that involved them in team situations, a "real world," out-of-classroom/off-campus experience.

Table 4: Course Project Regression Models for Internship and Non-Internship Experienced Students

Panel A: All Students					
$R^2 = 0.395$	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.375$	Std. Error = 0.56012	F = 19.447	Significant F = 0.000	
Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T-Value	Significance
(Constant)	1.246	0.365			
Mid-Term Response	0.512	0.085	0.430	6.008	0.000***
Rank in Team	0.343	0.087	0.293	3.938	0.000***
Gender	-0.332	0.106	-0.233	-3.127	0.002**
U.S. Citizen	-0.289	0.105	-0.199	-2.746	0.007**

Panel B: Students with Internship Experience					
$R^2 = 0.290$	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.263$	Std. Error = 0.62125	F = 10.639	Significant F = 0.000	
Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T-Value	Significance
(Constant)	2.288	0.354			
Gender	-0.744	0.178	-0.494	-4.186	0.000***
Mid-Term Response	0.382	0.154	0.293	2.489	0.016*

Panel C: Students without Internship Experience					
$R^2 = 0.423$	Adjusted $R^2 = 0.405$	Std. Error = 0.54037	F = 24.161	Significant F = 0.000	
Variable	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient	T-Value	Significance
(Constant)	0.132	0.296			
Mid-Term Response	0.636	0.104	0.570	6.096	0.000***
Rank in Team	0.338	0.103	0.308	3.298	0.002**

*This table shows the regression estimates for all students, students with an internship experience and students without an internship. The significance levels for each independent variable are indicated as * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$ and *** $p < 0.001$. Panel A shows All Students = 1.246 + 0.430 (mid-term response) + 0.293 (rank in team) – 0.233 (gender) – 0.199 (U.S. citizen). Panel B presents Students with Internship Experience = 2.288 – 0.494 (gender) + 0.293 (mid-term response). Panel C shows Students without Internship Experience = 0.132 + 0.570 (mid-term response) + 0.308 (rank in team).*

Fourth, in determining predictors (multiple regression equations) for project success mid-term response was significant ($p < 0.05$) in the three equations (all students, students with internship experience, students without internship experience). See Table 4. This may be explained by "educators should be intentional about carefully explaining (even selling) the merits of their pedagogical choices as helping prepare students for their future. …. In sum, marketing educators should help students see the alignment between the course design (learning goals and learning activities) and the students' own goals for their future" (Karns, 2005, p. 170). While the students in this study were given the same six items at the beginning of the semester (pre-test response), it was not significant (as a predictor) to the project success. Therefore, in experiential learning, the pedagogy "selling" should continue throughout the semester for student "buy-in" to this teaching and learning method. Furthermore, to contribute to this effort, there should be continual integration of knowledge and skills (Lamb et al., 1995) to foster successful leaning outcomes. Fifth, internship experience was a significant factor for female students' project success.

As well, and sixth, being an international student was a factor for all students. Both groups, being minorities (females in business school and international students at a U.S. university), might have been more motivated to learn and achieve project success. Seventh, as expected rank in team was a significant

predictor for all students. Students provided a peer-evaluation at the end of the course and project grades were computed accordingly. Not only have professional accrediting organizations, e.g., AACSB, recognized the need for experiential learning but other higher education organizations have too, including those that have liberal education focuses, e.g., Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). In a recent survey of employers, AACU found revealing results – 79% of the employers wanted more college emphasis on integrative and applied learning (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2010b). Furthermore, they also found employers wanted more intellectual and practical skills, e.g., written and oral communication (89%), critical thinking and analytic reasoning (81%), complex problem solving (75%), teamwork in diverse groups (71%), creativity and innovation (70%), information literacy (68%), quantitative reasoning (63%). This study has specific limitations. It is at one university, in one academic area, one instructor and only undergraduate students.

These are factors that this study's results cannot be generalizable. However, this does provide future research opportunities and basis for other universities, academic areas and graduate students. Based on the findings from this study, student internship experience positively influences live-case projects' learning outcomes. However, it remains unknown the relationship between students who have had a prior live-case project experience and a successful internship. Universities, particularly business schools have difficulties in getting students to take an elective internship course (Gupta et al., 2010), and the live-case experience would introduce the student to experiential learning which could lead to more internship interest. Furthermore, universities have student retention as a high priority, particularly in their first year. A study of interest and benefit would be including in an introduction, freshman level, business course with a live-case project as part of the "freshman experience" to determine if student retention increases.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship of prior internship experience and live-case projects; does an internship experience improve live-case project learning outcomes? The results were that prior internships do improve live-case course projects learning outcomes, indicating the academic value of an internship. The results also complements Walker et al. (2001) in that integration of an internship and multiple experiential learning projects into different courses during the four year business school curricula has a stronger effect on student learning. Specific findings were students with prior internships had better learning outcomes in comparison to those who did not and the student "buy-in" to the projects were significant regardless of a prior internship. Minorities, e.g., females and international students, benefitted more than other students did. Prior internship experience for females was a significant factor for their project success.

Employers are reducing budgets for new college graduate skills training but have higher expectations for better and more skills from them. As a result, educational organizations are encouraging, expecting better and more skills development during the students' college experience. This must be achieved through learning, the integration of knowledge and skills within courses and across the curriculum. Experiential learning is a pedagogy that enables such successful learning outcomes. The two most effective experiential learning experiences are live-case projects and internships, and this study has provided a better understanding of each and their inter-relationship.

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