

Online Internships Survey Report

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SUMMARY

This study has been made with the view to analyse the perspective of students on online internships and their opinion on the same. The analysis of each question helps to give an overall conclusion of our research.

For this study, a survey was conducted in which a questionnaire was distributed and a total of 173 responses were collected. The project focuses on various elements of our research work beginning with a brief introduction about the topic, further structuring the data collected and analysing each question on various parameters. A sample questionnaire has also been attached.

1. INTRODUCTION

The pandemic has caused a massive disruption to human lives especially on the life of students. Since, the advent of Covid-19 in India, our education system had to undergo a lot of changes, majorly shifting from offline to online. So online education became the need of the hour. Earlier offline internships were in great demand but due to time constraints, had limited number of applicants but during the pandemic, the companies shifted to an alternative solution i.e. online internships, so that the students do not have to suffer and can utilize each and every second in gaining knowledge, experience and diverse skills taking them towards their career goals.

As the achievement of success in one's career is not limited to academic intelligence anymore, so online internships became the platform where the students can actually work on their soft skills, personality development, communication skills and prepare them better for the future endeavours. Virtual internships emerged long before the current pandemic, though the closing of physical worksites created virtual opportunities in organizations where they had never existed before. This is significant because virtual internships can help interns to obtain work experience with employers of their choice despite their location, potential disabilities that may place limits on their mobility and other (family or employment) obligations. This is in line with greater attention paid to non-traditional students returning to education and those individuals who have been disadvantaged in the past due to their individual mobility, financial or family responsibilities.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Internship

An internship is a professional learning experience that offers meaningful, and practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest. An internship gives a student the opportunity for career exploration, and development, and to learn new skills.

2.2. Virtual internship

A virtual internship is a work experience program where the participant (intern) gains experience while working in a remote professional setting and is not physically present at the job location.

Virtual interns communicate with their employer online through various means including email, Skype, Whatsapp, instant messaging, phone conversations, webinars, project management tools, SMS messaging, etc.

2.2.1. Benefits of virtual internship

Internships offer a wealth of opportunities and experiences early in your career. Being an intern provides you with a chance to practice what you've learned in a physical or virtual work environment.

Virtual internships are not a new concept. But technology accessibility, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, make them a suitable option nowadays. Effective programs combine learning, training, mentoring, and networking.

Here are a few benefits you'll likely encounter during your virtual internship experience.

1. Take Advantage of Flexibility

Virtual internships solve scheduling issues facing students. Calendars quickly fill up with classes, extra-curricular activities, family obligations, and jobs. Many college students juggle employment and studies at the same time.

The National Centre for Education Statistics notes that in 2018, 43 per cent of full-time undergraduate students worked while enrolled.

When you intern remotely, you can often work at your convenience. You just need to log the requisite number of hours per day or for the project.

Instead of a strict Monday-to-Friday schedule, you can choose to utilise your free time and weekends for the internship.

2. Practice Your Communication Skills

Scheduling conflicts and lack of in-person interaction emphasise the need for regular and effective communication.

The virtual environment is very different from the face-to-face environment. So, you will have to master the art of conversation and negotiation digitally.

Emails: How do you put your intentions into words? How do you follow up on requests firmly and politely? How do you write a professional response when you are angry?

Video conferencing: How do you remain focused while others are speaking? How do you voice out your concerns and suggestions? How do you appear professional on video?

3. Widen Your World and Connections

If you want to explore international companies or organisations, a virtual internship is a great option. It eliminates the usual concerns, such as commuting and limiting your choices because of location.

Aside from work itself, you can build relationships with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Establishing networks is not just for business-minded individuals but for anyone keen on building a successful career.

People you meet at work and school can help you out in the future, and vice versa.

4. Prepare for the Future of Work

It appears the option to work remotely is here to stay. Due to the necessity amid the pandemic, businesses have recognised that the arrangement can work.

Twitter, for one, has expressed openness to employees wanting to work from home permanently.

Your virtual internship prepares for telecommuting and other flexible working arrangements in the future. Being able to work with technology, as well as tools for project management and productivity, is a must these days. Plus, you'll already know what to do if technical issues threaten to disrupt your workflow.

5. Develop How You Work

The flexibility afforded by a virtual internship is not without responsibility. You still need to report to your supervisor, meet project deadlines, collaborate with others, and remain productive while working independently.

Accountability, self-discipline, time management, patience, resourcefulness, and proactiveness are among the values needed for this setup to work. These will also become the foundation of your work ethics moving forward.

2.2.2. Challenges of virtual internships

A remote internship is a special opportunity for students to gain work experience without a physical presence in the office. It primarily provides comfortable working space and schedule flexibility, however, it also poses similar challenges.

1. Misunderstanding between co- interns

International virtual internships connect students and employees from different parts of the globe. It is natural that in such diverse environments that is placed in a virtual world that sometimes you might not see each other and misunderstandings might happen.

2. Lack of motivation

Remote internships provide a great platform in times of pandemic to further develop professionally and to make connections. So how do we hold this motivation up and persevere in it? In case of weaker moments, try to remember why you have started the remote internship. You probably have engaged because you wanted to gain a job experience, learn digital or soft skills, practise languages, meet new people etc. Simply recall all those factors and remember that whatever you do during any internship is the investment into yourself and your education that will pay off in the future. Do not give up, keep up the momentum!

3. Disorganisation

It might become harder to organise your work when working from home and studying at the same time. Indeed, you do not have a strict work schedule nor a supervisor that is behind your back. Virtual internships are a great way to develop time management and work organisation skills to reconcile all duties. To make it easier for you, there are plenty of online or traditional tools that you can use for free to organize your schedule. In terms of online tools, you might use Google calendar, Microsoft Teams tasks, Doodle or Sticky Notes etc. Or you might use just a paper calendar with a weekly view to mark deadlines or mark meetings and classes.

3. METHODOLOGY

This part of the chapter involves the process followed in making of the project, the idea behind the design of questionnaire, the method used to collect data in various ways and analysing it to get a conclusion.

1). Idea Behind the Topic:

The Topic Online Internship is found to be quite relevant in today's scenario, since during and after the pandemic the no. of applicants for online internships have boomed up. Also this topic is very like-minded and easy to connect because almost every student had once thought about taking online internship to make up online internship to use their time in a knowledgeable way.

2). In making of project:

- Software Used

We have used various software like Microsoft Word, PDF, and Google Forms etc. to complete the project.

- Questionnaire Designing

While designing the questionnaire, a small section was devoted for personal information like name and e-mails etc. This section involved minimal information keeping in mind that people generally hesitate in giving much of their personal information.

The other section of Questionnaire dealt with the questions about our research. Most of the questions were kept objective or one word because we value the responses, time and efforts.

The questions were made easy to understand and quite easy to understand and relatable as per the convenience of people. A variety was kept like the scale questions, MCQ's and one word questions to keep the responses involved.

We also generated a QR code for the link of Questionnaire for the convenience of the responses to be collected.

3). Data Collection:

The data was collected randomly from the students of Mata Sundri's College for Women. Data from various departments, courses, years, has been collected to have diverse opinions about the topic .We collected about 180+ responses from Mata Sundri College for Women.

Firstly, a brief explanation was given to the person about the

topic and research project and then were requested to scan the code and fill the questionnaire. Also, any suggestions or recommendations given by the responses were noted.

Also, the questionnaire was circulated on WhatsApp platform i.e. On class groups of our college.

4).Data Analysis:

The data collected was then compiled in a single sheet and then analysis was done of each Question through pie charts and graphs. Also, in the end the conclusion was made after analysing each questions analytical response.

4. Data and Analysis

4.1 Have you done any online internship?

Interpretation- The data shows that majority of the MSCW students, have done online internships, while 48% represent those who have not done any online internship because of various reasons. Some of the possible reasons could be –

- a) lack of awareness
- b) lack of interest
- c) lack of technology
- d) lack of opportunity

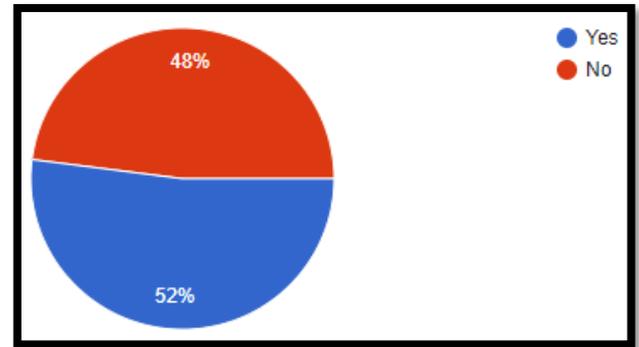


Fig-4.1: while 48% have not done 52% of the respondents, have done any online internship any online internship

4.2 If yes, then do you think it enhanced your practical knowledge?

Interpretation- Since the majority opted the option “Maybe”, it shows that either they are confused or the practical skills that they gained weren’t up to their expectation.

The students who opted NO represent those who either have not done any online internship or they felt that they did not gain any practical knowledge.

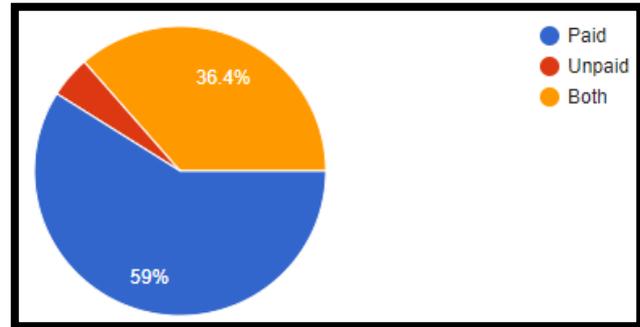


Fig-4.2: Out of 173; 38.7% (67) students chose the option “Maybe”, 37.6% (65) chose “YES” as the option, and 23.7% (41) chose “NO”.

4.3 What do you usually prefer, Online or Offline internships?

Interpretation- The data shows that despite of the growing trend of online internships, still there are many students who believe that offline internships are better than online.

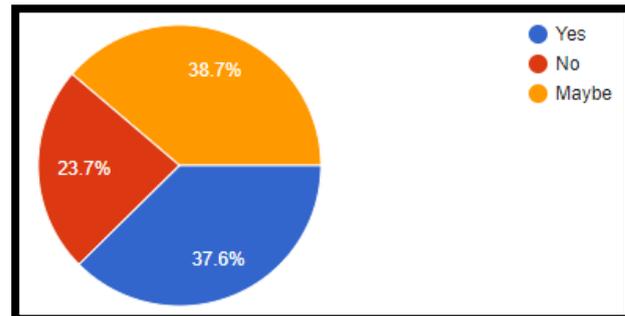


Fig-4.3: 57.2% students prefer offline internships, whereas 42.8% prefer online internships.

4.4 Which type of internship do you prefer?

Interpretation-Majority of respondents prefer paid internships over unpaid ones.

Possible reason could be:

They might have feeling that unpaid ones exploit them over paid ones

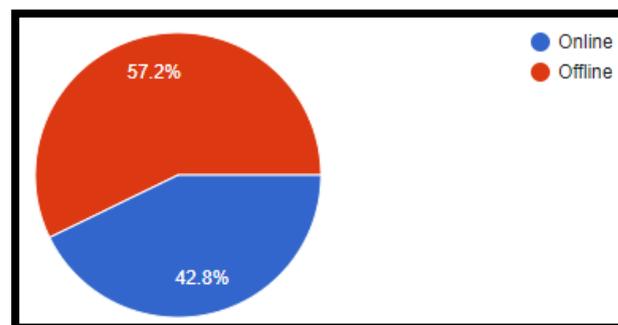


Fig-4.4: 59% students are interested in Paid internships, 4.6% in Unpaid, while 36.4% in both.

4.5 How many months do you usually devote for an internship?

Interpretation- This shows that for majority of students, 3 months is an ideal time for an internship and near about 30% students believes that 1 month is more than enough to devote for an internship.

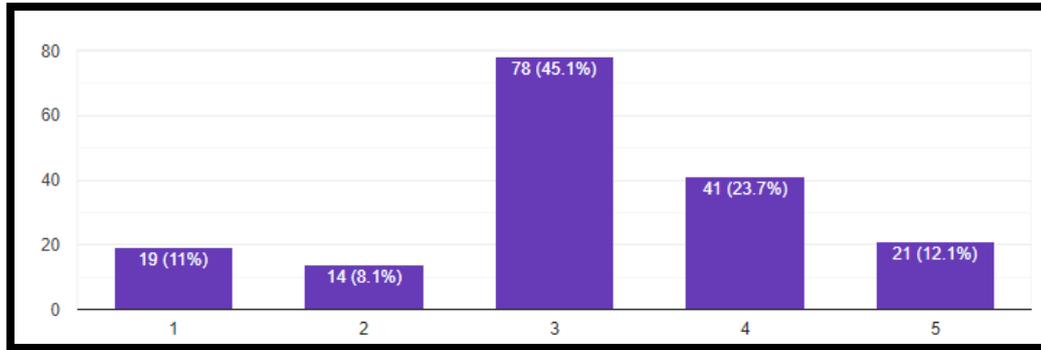


Fig-4.5: The data shows 30.1% of students are interested for 1 month, 55.5% for 3 months, 11% for 6 months, and 3.5% for more than 6 months.

4.6 What is your main motive of taking up any internship?

The results can be compiled as:

To gain practical knowledge	16.2% (28)
To gain more experience	12.1% (21)
To earn	1.2% (2)
All of the above	70.5% (122)

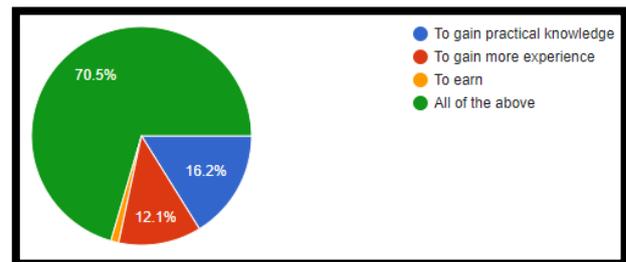
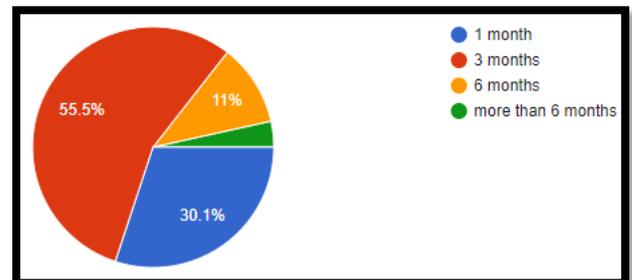


Fig-4.6: Figure showing main motive of students to take up the internships

Interpretation- From the results, it is evident that most of the students expect a holistic development from an online internship which gives them an opportunity to gain practical knowledge, experience and earn as well. It can also be inferred that most of the MSC students prefer knowledge over money.

4.7 To what extent was your motive fulfilled?

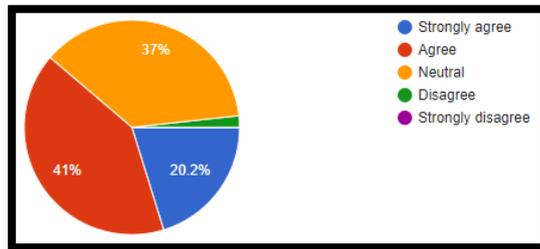


Fig-4.7: Graph showing fulfilment of student's motive on a scale of 1-5

Interpretation- the graph depicts that out of 173 respondents 78 believe that their motive was fulfilled only to a certain extent while 21 were fully satisfied.

4.8 Do you think doing any course before taking up an internship makes it more impactful?

SCALE	RANK	NO. OF STUDENTS
1	Strongly agree	20.2%(35)
2	Agree	41%(71)
3	Neutral	37%(64)
4	Disagree	1.7%(3)
5	Strongly disagree	0

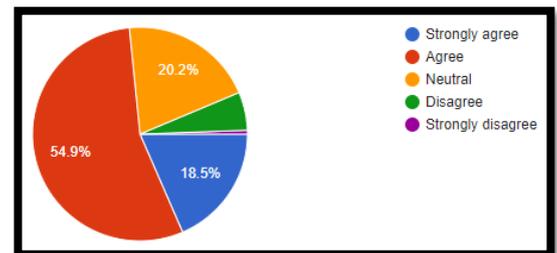


Fig-4.8: Data showing students thoughts on taking up any course before doing an internship

Interpretation- Approximately 60% of the respondents agree that doing any course before taking up any internship makes it more impactful. Further it is interesting to note that barely a few respondents disagree with the given statements.

4.9 Are you more likely to choose online internship because of pandemic?

Strongly agree- 18.5%

Agree-54.9%

Neutral- 20.2%

Disagree- 5.8%

Strongly Disagree- 0.6%

Interpretation- approximately 75% students agree that they are more likely to do an online internship which shows that the global pandemic has not only affected the physical and financial aspect of their lives but has also affected their career choices.

4.10 Which platform do you use to get internship?

Interpretation- Since majority of the respondents use Internshala or LinkedIn to get online internships, this shows that these apps have good quality internships which enhances their practical knowledge.

Fig-4.9: Thoughts of students to choose online internships

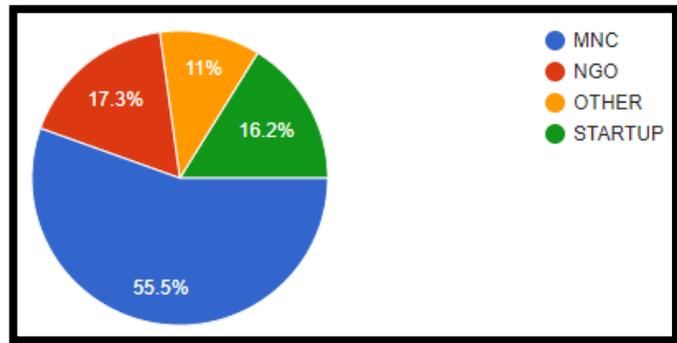
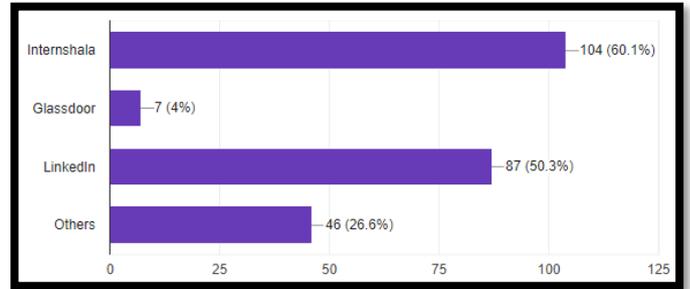


Fig-4.11: As per the data: MNC-55.5%, NGO-17.3%, STARTUP-16.2%, OTHER-11%

4.11 In what kind of organizations do you prefer to do internship?

Interpretation- Out of 173 respondents,

96 prefer doing an internship in an MNC because of various factors. Some of them are:

- They get to work with highly experienced professionals
- They are more likely to end up with a job opportunity
- The incentives are usually higher in case of MNCs

4.12 How was your overall experience in online internships? Rate on a scale of 1-5

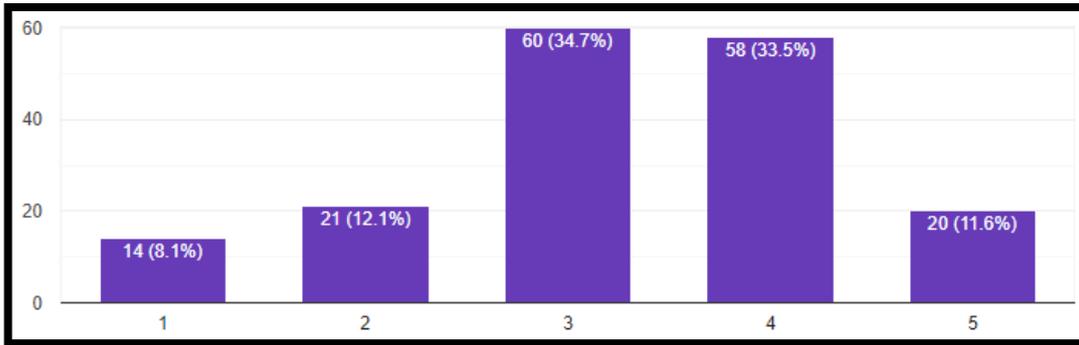


Fig-4.12: Overall experience of students in online internships

Interpretation- The above data shows that the majority of the respondents had a neutral experience in online internships. Out of all the respondents, 78 of them had a satisfactory experience while 35 of them had an unsatisfactory experience in their respective online internships.

4.13 Which practical skill do you think you acquired from online internships?

Interpretation- The respondents chose various practical skills that they think one can acquire through an online internship. Some of the most common skills were

1. Communication
2. Leadership
3. Experience
4. Networking
5. Time management
6. Problem solving skills
7. Online public dealing

This shows that these are the most common skills that students can develop from online internships which gives them a boost in their respective careers and further help them in long run.

5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In a nutshell, internships have been an excellent and rewarding experience for students. We can conclude that there have been a lot of students who have learnt, gained experience and knowledge. Two main things that students might have learned are- importance of time-management, and self-motivation. Virtual internship programs have proven to provide students with everything they need- from web literacy to flexible working hours to the proper online support. Taking a virtual internship can help students boost their global employability while gaining academic credit.

In Virtual Internships, students can attend business webinars and group discussions alongside building global connections.

Overall, the results indicate that students were largely satisfied with their virtual internship experiences. Keeping in mind that the students surveyed were part of an unprecedented and unplanned experiment, and that their employers and program coordinators had little time to prepare, the experiences recounted suggest that the virtual internships completed amidst the pandemic were still able to provide many of the core components of a successful internship.

Most importantly, virtual internships allowed students to develop and apply skills and forge connections with their employers.

However, despite these positive responses, most respondents were likely to see virtual internships as a temporary solution to a pressing problem. As a result, analysis of their satisfaction should be tempered by an acknowledgement of this reality. Moreover, the results indicate that if remote internships will be offered in the future, additional attention will be devoted to working with students to connect their employment to their academic coursework, and to connecting students to peers and colleagues beyond their direct supervisor. Focusing on these aspects of the virtual experience could help assuage some anxieties about the relevance of the internship for student's future employment amidst a changing professional landscape.

With this in mind, we recommend that additional attention be directed towards the efficacy of virtual internships as they relate to students' ability to-

- (1) Forge connections with peers and mentors, and
- (2) Develop confidence and skills relevant to their career path.

Currently, our analysis of virtual internships is framed by the context of the pandemic if and when companies return to in-person work internship coordinators will need to exercise caution in employing virtual interns

while virtual internships may make experiential learning available to more students, whether or not these opportunities measure up to their in-person counterparts remains to be seen. For this reason, we recommend caution when scaling up existing programs. Should virtual internships continue, we recommend that researchers and program coordinators pay special attention to how interns are integrated into the life of the company, in order to ensure that they are not left behind while working at a distance.

6. Limitations

This research focuses on whether online Internships enhance practical skills of students and has analysed the perspective of the students of Mata Sundri College. No project can be proved proficiency unless there are some limitations which are set aside and this research is no exception. Hence, the following are some of the limitations of the research:

- There is no formal & detailed research study done on whether online internships help in enhancing practical skills of students. Moreover the researches done in other parts are also rare, hence making it difficult to find references.
- There is also a risk of respondents being a little biased or dishonest with their answers.
- To portray a true picture of online internships, it would have been more appropriate to engineer this study project in way that it covers more responses but because of time constrain, this research is carried out for a small group of people.
- Data was collected from the people who were conveniently available and able to participate in the study. Hence, the 173 respondents do not represent the point of view of the entire student body of Mata Sundri College.
- The survey was conducted using an online platform, which has limited reach, making it difficult to get more responses.
- Further, there are many students who have not done any online internship, which means that these students don't necessarily have any opinion on whether online internships improve one's practical knowledge.
- Lastly, this study considered a relatively small sample size and future research should consider a large sample size and see whether it provides different results.

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APPENDICES

1. Have you done any online internship?

- Yes
- No

2. If yes, then do you think it enhanced your practical knowledge?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

3. What do you usually prefer, online or offline internships?

- Online
- Offline

4. Which type of internship do you prefer?

- Paid
- Unpaid
- Both

5. How many months do you usually devote for an internship?

- 1 month
- 3 months
- 6 months
- More than 6 months

6. What is your main motive of taking up an internship?

- To gain practical knowledge
- To gain more experience
- To earn
- All of the above

7. To what extent was your motive fulfilled?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

8. Do you think doing any course before taking up an internship makes it more impactful?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. Are you more likely to choose online internship because of pandemic?

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. Which platform do you use to get internship?

- Internshala
- Glassdoor
- LinkedIn
- Others

11. In what kind of organizations do you prefer to do internships?

- MNC
- NGO
- OTHER
- STARTUP

12. How was your overall experience in online internships? Rate on a scale of

1-5

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

13. Which practical skill do you think you acquired from online internships?
