

EXAMINING THE IMPLEMENTATION FIDELITY IN THE MALAWI GOVERNMENT'S GRADUATE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME

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Abstract

The study examines the programme implementation fidelity and the mutual benefits in the Malawi Government Graduate Internship Programme (GIP). It is premised on the basis that the Malawian Ministry of Labour has been implementing the programme since 2018, reaching out to 20232 young graduates aged 35 and below with the aim of enhancing youth employability. Using a mixed methods approach, the study sought to determine whether the programme is being implemented as per its design and to examine the value that it brings to both interns and the MDAs that host them. The study found that the programme is doing relatively well in terms of exposing interns to skills, knowledge, and expertise; however, most of the skills are administrative in nature. The recommendations from the study include enhancing monitoring and evaluation of the program, harmonization of orientation components for interns, revising the program length, and ensuring all key stakeholders are conversant with the guidelines. These recommendations are relevant not only to Malawi's public service programming with regard to youth employment but also to other African nations seeking to come up with strategies for the same.

Examining The Implementation Fidelity in The Malawi Government's Graduate Internship Programme

1.0. Introduction

Young people worldwide are capable of being productive members of society but often lack access to decent job opportunities (Vincent, Cyuzuzo, and Uwimana, 2023). According to Helyer and Lee (2014) fresh graduates are usually unable to transition smoothly into employment due to employers' high expectations for abilities such as communication, problem-solving, customer service, team-working, critical thinking, management, and leadership, as well as personal qualities such as punctuality, durability, and conduct in the workplace.

In Africa, research has shown that in 2019, the African population was estimated at 1.3 billion, with 35 per cent being young people aged 15 to 35 (UNDP 2019 as cited in Fokou, Kamga and Wouabe, 2025) and that “to ensure full employment, Africa needs to create an average of 12 million new jobs per year over the period from 2018 to 2030 (statistics show that there is a lag between job growth and population growth. Over the period from 2000 to 2014, average employment growth was 1.8 per cent, while that of population growth was 3 per cent” (Fokou, Kamga and Wouabe, 2025:1). The authors further point out that the unemployment levels are higher among young people in general and mainly among graduates of higher education.

Similarly, the unemployment rate in Malawi is high, and the levels are particularly high amongst the youth at 23% (Ministry of Labour, 2025). According to the Guidelines by the Ministry of Labour (2021), unemployment is of great concern for policymakers in government and other key

sectors and one of the contributing factors to this state of affairs is the lack of practical work-integrated experience among the graduates. Every year, thousands of young people graduate from post school institutions and universities with certificates, diplomas and degrees from a wide range of academic and technical disciplines and their preparation for afterschool employability and self-employment is generally low, (Malawi Ministry of Labour, 2021). It is against this backdrop that the Government of Malawi, as the largest employer, purports to address this gap through the GIP. The goal is to give young graduates a chance to gain valuable work-integrated experience, in order to explore and gain the relevant knowledge and skills required to enter the job market and to have a competitive edge in their job search.

Every year since 2018, the Government of Malawi recruit interns to various Ministries, Departments and Agencies for a year where they are expected to gain work experience and improve their employability. As of August 2025, the programme had run ten cohorts and the 11th cohort had just been recruited, totaling 20232 young graduates. This represents a significant government intervention to address youth unemployment. However, critical questions about implementation quality and participant experiences remain unexplored, creating an immediate opportunity for policy-relevant research.

Malawi's national Plan MW2063, aligned to Africa's AGENDA2036, identifies human capital development as essential for inclusive wealth creation and economic transformation. Similarly, the ten-year implementation plan, MIP-1, emphasizes strengthening education-industry linkages to enhance employability. The MW2063 acknowledges that the Malawi population is highly youthful

population but “the majority of the youth do not have the requisite skills or financial capabilities to support the development agenda of the country” (p.35). understanding whether initiatives designed to address this challenge such as the GIP is therefore of paramount importance, yet its implementation practices have not been systematically examined from both the perspectives of host organization and participants.

This study aimed to evaluate how effectively the Malawi Government Graduate Internship Programme is implemented and to determine the value that interns, and host organizations gain from participating. It compared the planned design of the Graduate Internship Programme with its actual execution across various host organizations. The research explored the benefits of the GIP for interns and host MDAs and identifies the key factors influencing its implementation. Using the Human Capital Theory, which states that investments in education, training, and skills development increase individual productivity and economic value (Kholifah et.al., 2025), the study fills a significant gap in understanding how government-led internship programs convert theoretical human capital initiatives into real employment outcomes in African contexts.

Even though there is substantial literature on youth unemployment in Africa (Africa Capacity Building Foundation, 2017; World Bank, 2022; AUC/OECD, 2024), systematic evaluation of the implementation effectiveness of government interventions through internships is limited (Fokou, Kamga and Wouabe, 2025). Thus, Malawi's GIP, with over 20,000 participants across eleven cohorts, represents one of the continent's extensive graduate internship programs requiring an examination of its implementation fidelity and stakeholder value creation.

Additionally, most applications of human capital theory often focus on formal education outcomes rather than work-integrated learning experiences. This necessitates the need to extend the theoretical understanding by examining how government-facilitated workplace learning contributes to human capital development, particularly in resource-constrained public sector environments typical of developing African economies. As African governments increasingly invest in youth employment initiatives to address demographic challenges and support economic transformation agendas, understanding what works in program implementation becomes critical for optimizing public resource allocation and maximizing development impact (Fedorowicz and Aron, 2021). The timing is particularly relevant as Malawi prepares to launch its twelfth cohort, creating immediate opportunities for policy-informed program enhancement.

1.1. The Malawi Government Graduate Internship Program

Launched in 2018, the Malawi Graduate Internship Program has the overall objective of overall objective of the internship programme is to provide graduates with opportunity to gain experience in the world of work. and the following specific objectives:

- i. Facilitate skills transfer to graduates.
- ii. Provide hands-on experience to build upon skills learned in the classroom.
- iii. Mentor and mould graduates into a productive and disciplined workforce.
- iv. Inculcate discipline, commitment and good work ethics to the interns; and
- v. Enhance youth employability by creating clear linkages between training and work.

Unemployed young graduates under 35 years of age with at least a first degree from accredited institutions are eligible for the program and once selected, they are expected to enter into a contract

with the Government of Malawi. Graduates can only enroll into the programme upon showing an original degree certificate and a National ID, as proof of being a citizen of Malawi. They are expected to be placed to an organization taking into consideration their qualification and his/her area of specialization, the need for interns in host organization, and the proximity to work from intern's place of residence. They are paid a stipend of 150,000 Malawi Kwacha, which is around 70 USD a month, and appropriate subsistence allowances shall apply according to his/her grade when they work outside their duty stations. They are also covered under the Workers' Compensation Act for injury or death caused by an accident in the course of duty.

2.0 Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods approach to examine how the design of the program and its intended outcomes align with the reality on the ground

2.1. Data Collection Methods and Analysis

Data was collected using Semi-Structured interviews with direct supervisors of interns and other key officials in MDAs, including the Ministry of Labour were conducted. Secondly, data was collected through two Focus Groups, each with 8-10 participants that were held with interns. The goal was to generate insights through participant interaction, comparing experiences across placements. Thirdly, Document Analysis of Program documents, such as contracts and guidelines, was done to establish formal expectations to compare with actual implementation. Lastly, the study used open-ended questionnaires, which were distributed using Kobo-toolbox. This targeted a larger sample of interns from various cohorts. It encompassed structured questions regarding implementation experiences and perceived value as well as some of the challenges experienced

within the internship program. Thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data through coding, categorization, and theme development using ATLAS.ti and Julius AI. Whilst quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

2.2. Sampling Techniques

As of September 2025, the GIP had reached out to 20232 graduates across 11 cohorts. This meant that the population of the study included 20232 graduands across the 11 cohorts in 205 workplaces where interns are allocated across various sectors, including government ministries, hospitals, district councils, and statutory bodies, and Key Informants whose number is unknown. Out of these, 3 cohorts were selected for the open-ended questionnaires. However a sample of interns was drawn from selected cohorts of the Malawi Government Graduate Internship Programme, representing a combined population of 8,485 interns. A total of 87 interns participated in the survey, yielding a response rate of about 1%. Although this provides useful insights, the small proportion of respondents limited the representativeness and generalisability of the quantitative findings. To strengthen the analysis, survey data was triangulated with qualitative evidence through two focus group discussions with interns and key informant interviews with host organization.

3.0. Findings and Analysis

3.1. Implementation Fidelity of the GIP

Implementation fidelity is the degree of compliance with which the core elements of program or intervention practices are used as intended (Lemire, Rousseau, and Dionne, 2022). It acts as a

potential moderator of the relationship between interventions and their intended outcomes and may have an impact on the relationship between these two variables. Thus the study used the objectives of the GIP, “Facilitate skills transfer to graduates; provide hands-on experience to build upon skills learned in the classroom; mentor and mould graduates into a productive and disciplined workforce; inculcate discipline, commitment and good work ethics to the interns; and enhance youth employability by creating clear linkages between training and work,” and the program’s intended delivery design, placing to an organization having taken into consideration their qualification and their area of specialization, the need for interns in host organization, and the proximity to work from intern’s place of residence, to determine the whether it was being implemented as intended.

Placement based on Interns’ Qualification and Area of Specialization

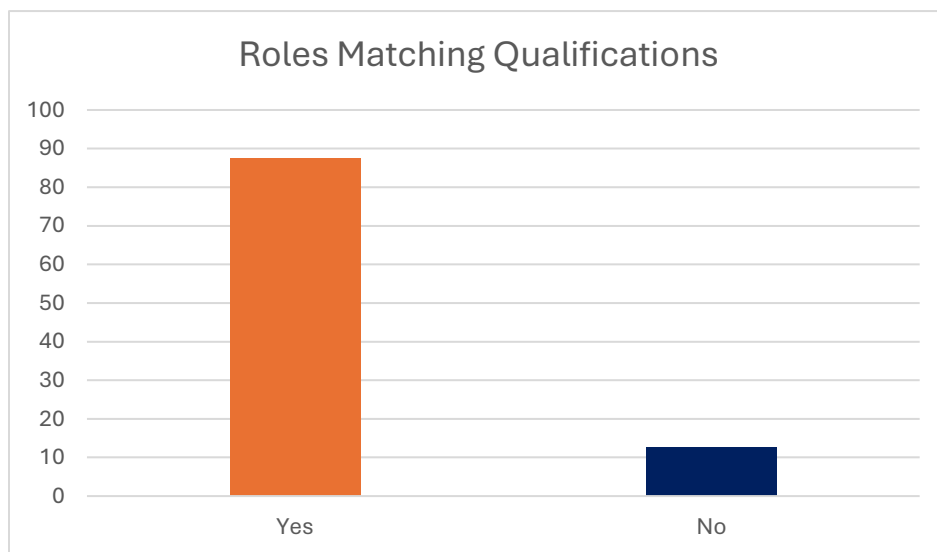


Figure 1: Intern Perceptions on Role Qualification Match

Figure 1 above presents data on the interns' perceptions as to whether they were assigned roles that match their qualifications and skills. 87% of the interns believe that they have been or were allocated roles that match their qualifications; however, about 13% of the respondents do not believe so. This shows that with regard to matching interns' qualifications with the assigned roles, the program is being implemented as per design. It is important to note, however, that even though

the majority have been allocated the relevant roles, the 13% should not be ignored. This is because, for the program to be fully impactful, all interns need to be assigned the relevant roles. This can be achieved by constant monitoring.

3.2. Need for Interns in Host Organization

For the need for interns in host organizations, data collected showed that even though the program was designed to respond to needs, organizations are just allocated interns. Only in one institution, from those visited, that indicated they were consulted on their needs before the eleventh cohort was sent to them. It is important to note, however, that this was after they sent back some interns in the previous cohort because they were not matching the organization's needs. This shows that with regard to needs assessment, the GIP is not being implemented as per its design. This becomes a problem as, at the end of the day, the objective of transferring skills to interns is not achieved. As shown in figure 2 below, the frequency of the challenges as mentioned by respondents. From the figure one will note that being given little work was pointed out very often at 37% followed by not being assigned work at 28% and being assigned irrelevant work at around 26%.

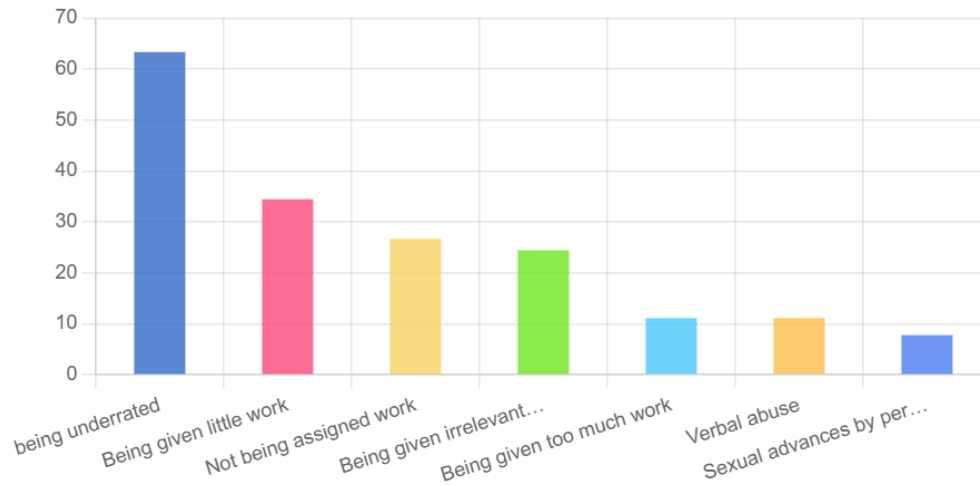


Figure 2: Challenges with the GIP

Table 1: Frequency of Common Challenges

Challenges	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percentage (%)
Not being assigned work	84	0.29	0.454	28.57
Sexual advances by permanent officers	84	0.08	0.278	8.33
Verbal abuse	84	0.12	0.326	11.90
Being given too much work	84	0.12	0.326	11.90
Being given little work	84	0.37	0.485	36.90
Being given irrelevant work	84	0.26	0.442	26.1s9
Being underrated	84	0.68	0.470	67.86
Valid N (listwise)	84			0.00

The most commonly reported challenges based on descriptive statistics also show that being underrated (68% - highest mean of .68) was the most commonly reported challenge, followed by

being given little work (37%), not being assigned work (29%), and being given irrelevant work (26%). Most interns felt undervalued or underutilized rather than facing harassment or overwork. The relatively low standard deviations indicate that most respondents agreed on this challenge, which can be attributed to the lack of a needs assessment.

3.3. Proximity to Work from Interns' Place of Residence

The guidelines for the GIP require that the proximity to work from the interns' place of residence should be taken into consideration. This is because the interns are not salaried, and there are no relocation arrangements. However, the issue of transport was one of the issues that kept being mentioned by the interns that should be considered when allocating interns. For example "If not already provisioned, consider travel stipends indexed to distance or location-based hardship top-ups;" "Prioritize matching interns to hosts closer to their residence or enable hybrid/remote days where feasible;" and "Include a pre-placement preference form capturing residence, commuting options, and constraints to improve matching" were some of the comments mentioned in the survey questionnaire as areas to be considered. Additionally, from the key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews, similar sentiments were expressed.

3.4. Monitoring and Evaluation of the GIP

The GIP guidelines also put in place monitoring and mechanisms including monitoring of internship uptake trends and patterns for forecasting and planning purposes; determining the total number of interns who successfully complete the programme, obtain a letter of completion of internship and secure employment after the completion of the programme; ascertaining the degree

to which management of MDAs are satisfied with the value of and contribution made by the interns; preparing monthly, quarterly and annual reports on the internship programmes; and Reviewing the overall programme for purposes of improvements and alignment with MDAs' strategic goals. However, both the Ministry of labour and the host organizations acknowledged that this has not been implemented. The host MDAs pointed out that interaction with the Ministry of Labour rarely goes beyond the letter with a list of interns allocated to the host MDAs that the Ministry of Labour shares with them. The host MDAs pointed out that the only other times they interact with the Ministry of Labour are when there are delayed stipends or when there is a need for interns to transfer. They pointed out that there are no reports that are sent to the Ministry of Labour after interns complete their internship. This also shows that when it comes to monitoring and evaluation, the program is not being implemented as designed. This becomes a challenge because this is one of the most important aspects for any project. Without proper monitoring, it is not possible to determine whether a program is achieving its intended outcomes or not. More so for a program that has been implemented for over seven years across eleven cohorts.

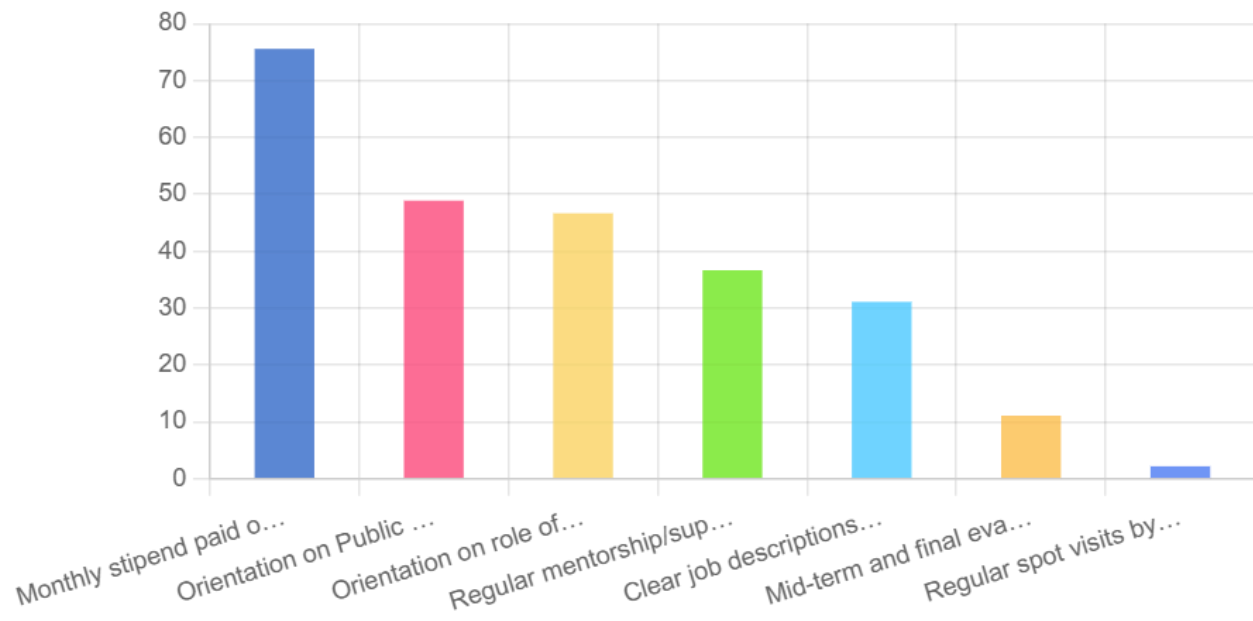


Figure 3: Implemented Components of GIP

Figure 3 above presents a summary of the elements of the GIP that have been implemented according to the respondents. Timely payment of stipends appears to be the main component that most of the respondents stated was fully implemented (75%). Orientation on the public service was the second one at 49% and orientation on their role as interns is at 48%. Regular spot visits only scored 2% with monitoring and evaluation getting 10% mentions. This shows that the most important aspects that would promote the fidelity of the program have not been fully implemented including providing interns with clear job descriptions, fully orienting them on the public service, mentorship and supervision as well as monitoring and evaluation.

3.5. Benefits of GIP to interns and Host Organization

The GIP aims to promote skills transfer to graduates, provide hands-on experience to build on classroom learning, mentor and shape graduates into a productive and disciplined workforce, instill discipline, commitment, and good work ethics in interns, and improve youth employability by establishing clear links between training and employment. The study found that both interns and host organizations agree that the graduate internship program is important and relevant, as it addresses unemployment among recent graduates and helps alleviate manpower shortages. This resonates with the argument by the human capital theory that when an “individual acquires knowledge and skills through education and training, that is, human capital. This knowledge and skills will increase his or her productivity in the workplace” (Tan, 2014:413).

3.5.1. Benefits to Interns

Asked on the types of skills that the interns have gained, the majority mentioned data analysis, minute taking or documentation, report writing as the technical skills that they have gained. Additionally, communication and teamwork were some of the soft skills frequently mentioned. The interns as well as host organization also pointed out that they had gained leadership skills from the GIP. For example, it was pointed out by one respondent that sometimes interns are brought into departments that do not have permanent staff and they have to take on leadership roles. Table one below provides a summary of the skills that were frequently mentioned. Out of the 79 respondents, 65 pointed out data analysis, minute taking, and report writing as the skills that the interns gain from the program.

Table 2: Summary of Skills Gained by Interns from GIP

Skills	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Technical skills (e.g., data analysis, report writing, minutes taking)	66	83.54
Soft skills (e.g., communication, teamwork)	61	77.22
Leadership/management skills	52	65.82
Sector Specific skills	30	37.97
Other	15	18.99

Further analysis of frequencies show that these skills are in line with the type of work that they are assigned during the internship which is mostly administrative and coordination-heavy tasks as well as planning/meeting-related roles such as representing organization at various meetings.

Table 3: Tasks Assigned to Interns

Tasks	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Taking Minutes in Meetings	53	58.89
Support Administrative activities e.g printing, records keeping etc	44	48.89
Representing organization in meetings	41	45.56
Support planning and implementation of new initiatives	33	36.67
Other	25	27.78
Drafting memos	19	21.11

The other benefit pointed out was experience of workplace culture and requirements. Most interns pointed out that before starting the internship program, they had limited knowledge of what is required of an employee, more so a public employee. They lamented the presence of office politics but pointed out that the program gave them an opportunity to grow. Additionally, interns pointed out that they gained leadership skills as they were able to represent the organization in some meetings, depending on the organisation. These benefits were also highlighted by all host organization interviewed who pointed out that they had observed growth among the interns “from university students to employees.” This shows that the program is indeed beneficial to interns. There were few interns that pointed out that they were employed after the internship

3.5.2. Benefits to Host Organisation

The main benefit pointed out by host organization was filling the labour gap. One of the main challenges in the public service is unfilled positions (Manda and Kayuni, 2021), and the GIP acts as a temporary solution to this challenge. Some respondents pointed out that sometimes they are able to entrust interns with work in departments, units or sections that do not have permanent staff. This is in line with the findings by (Maertz, Stoeberl and Marks, 2014) who also noted that interns are widely regarded as a source of low-cost, flexible labour that allows organisations to absorb work that would otherwise not get done, while freeing full-time staff to focus on more critical tasks. Beyond addressing immediate staffing shortfalls, host organisations benefit from reduced recruitment and training costs, since the internship period effectively functions as an extended, low-risk trial through which supervisors can assess an intern's competence, work ethic, and organisational fit before any decision on permanent absorption is made (Ismail, 2018; Maertz, Stoeberl and Marks, 2014). Recruitment and selection savings are amplified when

interns already possess institutional knowledge and require less socialization and adjustment time than an external hire would (Maertz, Stoeberl and Marks, 2014). This was, however, not pointed out by respondents, a point that can be linked to the design of the public service where “Entry into and advancement within the public service shall be determined solely on the basis of merit, namely, relative ability, knowledge, skill and aptitude after fair and open competition which assures that all citizens receive equal opportunity” (Government of Malawi, 1994)

The literature also identifies talent screening as one of the most frequently cited benefits for host organisations, since internships allow companies to evaluate prospective employees over an extended period while simultaneously gaining productive work from them (Gerken et al., 2012). In addition, host organisations benefit from the fresh ideas, energy, and knowledge exchange that interns bring from their academic training, even as this must be balanced against the supervision and training costs that come with managing early-career, less experienced staff (Gerken et al., 2012; Maertz, Stoeberl and Marks, 2014).

3.6. Challenges within the GIP

The study noted a number of challenges that influencing how the program is implemented including resource constraints, limited orientation of interns, monitoring and evaluation and other challenges pointed out earlier in the paper. This section looks at some of these challenges and how they are influencing the implementation of the program

3.6.1. Resources

One of the key factors influencing the implementation of the program is financial resources. All respondents (interns, former interns, supervisors, heads of organizations, and other key informants) pointed out that the stipend that the interns get is not sufficient. Asked how much would be sufficient, respondents varied between MK300,000 to MK500,000 (150-250USD). The respondents acknowledged the financial burden that government already has but pointed out that due to the cost of living in the country, MK150,000 is still not sufficient. The study also noted that participating in activities outside the duty station was dependent on the host organization. This means that some interns can sustain themselves with allowances from field visits, whilst other interns have to depend solely on the stipend. The issue of stipend was frequently mentioned, so much so that it was raised in challenges, as well as when respondents were asked how they would redesign the program. One of the respondents pointed out that they would redesign the program by “ [increasing] the stipend to fit with the current financial living.”

3.6.2. Work Allocation

The study also noted that allocation of work is dependent on the organization, department and sometimes supervisor. When asked what type of work interns are assigned, some responded that they were assigned little to no work whilst others were assigned a lot of work and others were assigned just sufficient amount, and, as noted earlier, some were allocated work that was not relevant. For example, one respondent pointed out that they had to change organization because they were not being given work in one organization. Another pointed out that they had to find work on their own as their supervisor did not give them any work. This was also observed from the challenges as summarized in Figure 2, where 30% of the respondents pointed out that they had not

been given any work. These discrepancies mean that whilst some interns may gain the necessary benefits that the program intends to produce, others may not.

3.6.2. Orientation

During the study, it was noted that when interns have been selected, the Ministry of labour meets them to orient them on what is expected of them. In this session, they are familiarized with the internship contract, they are informed about the dress code in the public service and the length of the internship. Once interns sign the contracts, they are given an introductory letter that they present to the host organization. For host organization, a letter with a list of interns that have been placed in their organization is sent to them by the Ministry of Labour. Once interns arrive, they are welcomed by the Human Resources department and they are oriented on the expected behaviour from public officers, they are given a brief about the organization and some of the relevant documents including the code of conduct and conditions of service which they are expected to go through and return to the HR department. From there, they are introduced to the head of their allocated department where they should be briefed on their role. Figure 4 below shows the fact that there are no specific guidelines on the roles of interns which is represented by an equal distribution (46.59%) of interns that received job description versus those that did not receive one.

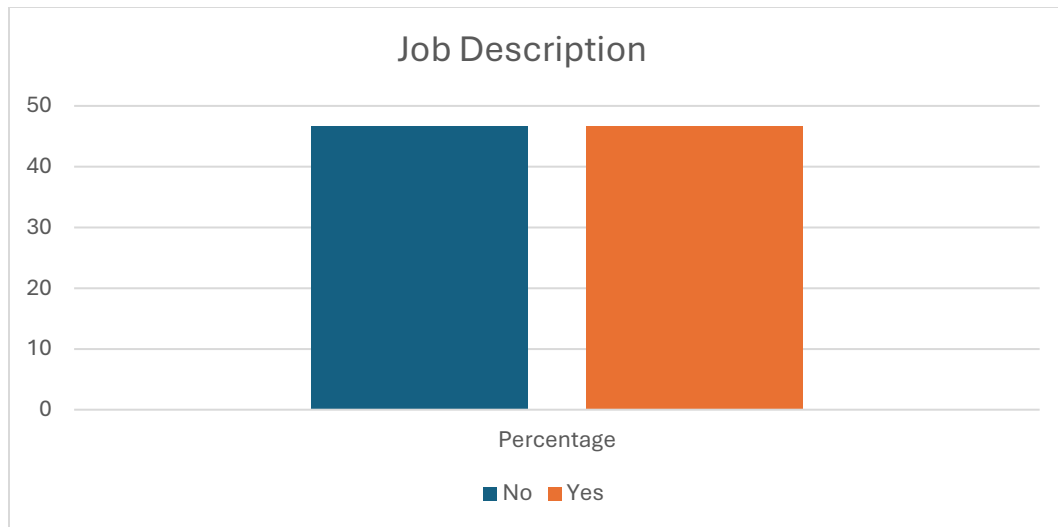


Figure 4: Job Descriptions for Interns

3.6.3. Monitoring and Supervision

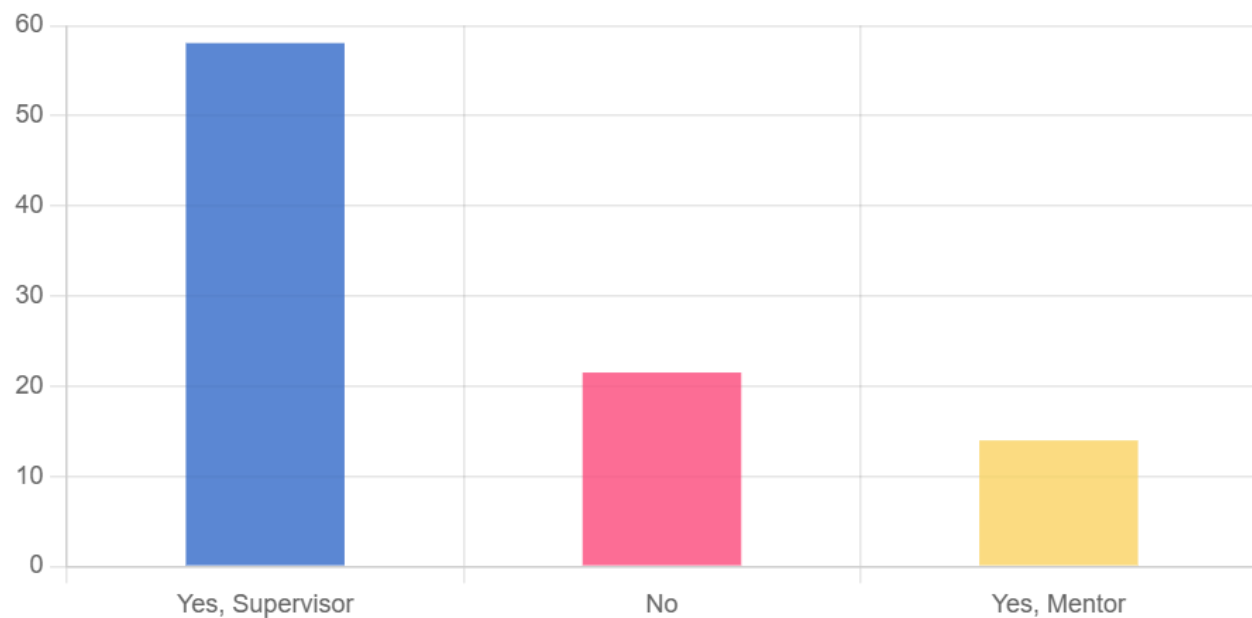


Figure 5: Supervision of Interns

Asked if they were allocated a supervisor, most of the respondents stated that they were given a supervisor. It was, however, noted during the focus group discussions that the supervisor was the

head of the department and not specifically allocated to the intern. This becomes a challenge as the programs objectives including transference of skills, and mentoring and and moulding graduates into a productive and disciplined workforce. Authours contend that mentorship is an important aspect of any internship program as it enhances psycho-social and career development (McDonald & Wilson-Mah, 2022; Liu *et. Al.*, 2024).

As indicated earlier, there is little to no monitoring from the Ministry of Labour once the interns have been placed in MDAs. Monitoring of intern progress within host organization is dependent on the organisation. Some organization mentioned that interns' performance is evaluated in tandem with permanent staff, other organization mentioned that the interns write a report at the end of their internship, whilst in other organization interns come and go with no evaluation. This can also be attributed to the passive role that the Minstry of Labour has taken in implementing the program. The need for monitoring by Ministry of Labour was actually mentioned 17% of the time by as an area respondents would redesign in the program as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 4: Areas of Improvement

Theme	Frequency
Employment pathway after internship	20.50%
Increase stipend	19.30%
Monitoring & supervision	17%
Extend duration	12.50%
Mentorship & training	12.50%

4.0. Recommendations

The Graduate Internship Programme, being implemented by the government of Malawi, is a relevant programme addressing unemployment among the youth. Based on its target to provide young people with a feel of the workplace to prepare them for employment, one would conclude that the programme is achieving its intended purpose. However, once one digs deeper by looking regarding the type of work that interns are usually assigned and the number of interns, pointing out that they are given little, irrelevant, or no work, they will note that the program is not being implemented as intended. This was also observed from the benefits and challenges that the program is facing.

The study recommends the following for improved efficiency and effective delivery of the program.

4.1. Active Participation of The Ministry of Labour in the GIP

The Ministry of Labour should take an active role in how the interns are utilized in the MDAs. The absence of monitoring and evaluation activities by the Ministry of Labour has made it possible for host organization to implement the program as they see fit. To ably monitor, the Ministry should consider developing an implementation fidelity checklist that will help them keep track of the objectives of the program.

4.2. Alumni Network

One of the challenges that was experienced during the study was identifying past interns and dependence on reported feedback from interns to determine the benefits of the program. This can be attributed to the absence of a network of former interns. As this is a program that aims to, at the

end of the day, address youth unemployment, the study recommends that the Ministry should develop an alumni network, which can be used to further develop the capacity of the interns through mentorship and support.

4.3. Revision of Internship Conditions

From the findings, almost all interns expressed concern about the duration of the internship, which is one year. They explained that most of the vacancies in newspapers require at least two years of experience, this means that even after completing the one-year contract, they are usually unable to secure employment. Additionally, there were concerns with the employment pathway post-internship. An argument raised by the civil service on the issue of absorbing the interns into the public service is that as a merit employer, the civil service cannot employ anyone without advertising. Additionally, the fact that the program is an annual program means that the public service would eventually be bloated were it to absorb the interns. It is on this basis that the study recommends a review of the contract period so as to provide interns with the relevant experience in years to give them a competitive advantage on the job market. This, coupled with the proper guidelines developed for the type of work interns should do, will address the concerns raised by respondents.

4.4. Lessons for other Countries

For other countries that would want to introduce the graduate internship program to address unemployment among the youth, Malawi is a learning ground. As noted, this is indeed a good program, as it addresses the issues of unfilled positions within the public service and youth

unemployment (though temporarily). What needs to be worked on, however, is to ensure that the program design addresses some of the shortfalls that the program is facing in Malawi, such as monitoring and evaluation, orientation, and the issue of job descriptions and expectations.

5.0. Conclusion

The study aimed at examining the Implementation Fidelity in the Malawi Government's Graduate Internship Programme. Findings from the study show that the implementation of the programme is on track but is faced with a number of hiccups. It has been established that beneficiaries of the programme are given supervisors who are not mentors, monthly stipend that is paid on time and sometimes allowances when they attend meeting and go to field (at the discretion of the host organisation). In addition to this the graduates gain various skills, knowledge and expertise from the program, even though most of the skills are administrative in nature. Host institutions also benefit from the programme as the human resource gap is filled and beefed up by these interns, and as interns bring in innovative ways of managing programs in the organisations. Some of the hiccups associated with this programme include lack of monitoring and evaluating the program to determine the progress, an inadequacy of the time for the interns to fully acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, and expertise in their relevant skills. Enhancing the monitoring role of the Ministry of Labour and reviewing the conditions of the internship would ensure that the program is implemented with fidelity. Future research should track the long-term employment outcomes of GIP alumni, in order to determine whether the programme meaningfully translates into sustained employment beyond its one-year duration.

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