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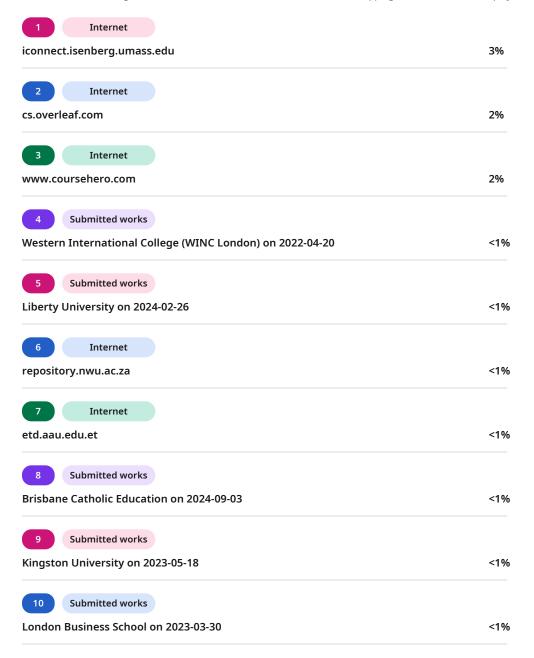
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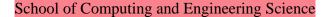
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Supervisor Name: James Gikera

An Informatics Project Proposal Submitted to the School of Computing and Engineering Sciences (SCES) in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a Degree in **Informatics and Computer Sciences**



Strathmore University

Nairobi, Kenya

10 May 2025





Declaration and Approval

We declare that this work has not been previously submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University. To the best of our knowledge and belief, the research proposal contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the research proposal itself.

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Abstract





















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List of Abbreviations







Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 (Panel, 2022) Background Information

For students, having a meaningful work experience is a vital component in ensuring adequate industrial exposure, financial support, skills and professional development. Internships are of the most common ways for students to attain work experience, as it provides an opportunity to network with great people and sharpen your skills before entering the workforce (Panel, 2022).

Stepping into the professional world enables students to have various opportunities to apply their academic knowledge, gain practical skills and explore potential career paths. As described by (Milam, 2024), finding on internship on a desired field is best way to gain experience while stepping into the professional world.

This need is not only exclusive to graduates but also for students seeking internships, industrial attachments and part-time work during their studies. However, the current methods of circulation of opportunities as these within university environments often fall short creating major challenges of access among students. Our project addresses the issue of inefficient circulation of a wide spectrum of work-related opportunities to university students making it difficult to identify and pursue relevant options at various stages in their academic journey. This lack of a centralized system hinders the student's ability to actively plan for their career development.

This issue of ineffective methods of dispersion of job and internship leads, creates a barrier to access for students seeking a work experience. This challenge manifests itself as students missing out on relevant opportunities buried within high volume of general emails and lack of a well centralised platform to find internships leading to decreased application rates accompanied with a sense of frustration and disengagement among students.

Historical data from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) states that at least 60% of students from the classes of 2013 to 2017 had an internship. (Kaplan, 2023)

However, new data from the National Survey of College Internships (NSCI) suggests that the number has dropped since the pandemic, reporting that just close to a fifth of students (21.5%) had internships in 2021. (Kaplan, 2023)





One of the major causes is the over-reliance on outdated mass communication methods which lack the necessary targeting and filtering capabilities to match with the student's specific needs and academic stages.



Studies also shows that more students want an internship than those who complete one.

According to the NSCI, nearly two-thirds of non-interns shared they wanted to take an

internship but couldn't for various reasons, including that they didn't know how to find

internships, they had too heavy of a courseload, or pay was insufficient. (Kaplan, 2023).

The career services department are also affected at large by the reduced effectiveness to connect students with employers. This can lead to the weakening of the university-industry relationships and a perception that the department is not adequately supporting the students in their career development.

Organizations and businesses seeking to recruit students for internships and entry level positions are also negatively impacted as they experience lower application numbers from qualified candidates due to poor visibility of their opportunities among the student population

1.2 Problem Statement

Finding internships is big challenge for university students. The way opportunities are currently shared, through scattered emails, outdated job boards, or hard to use career portals is deemed to be non-efficient. However, this problem is not only unique to students but to organizations at large. Companies looking to hire interns are also faced with this challenge as there lacks a proper centralized platform to advertise and inform students who are actively job seeking of available job listings. This disorganized system significantly drops internship participation as from a decade ago, the participation dropped to 21.5% in 2021 from 60% largely because students can't find relevant opportunities (Kaplan, 2023).

This causes a major problem as many a times we waste hours digging through social media pages, irrelevant listings on random websites with limited search filters and inherently rely on word of mouth. The lack of transparency in terms of tracking application progress often leads to a lot of frustration felt by the students. Consequently, this results to missed deadlines and



applying to unsuitable/ undesired job roles. On the employer's side, it is difficult to handle all the countless emails and makes it harder to choose the best candidate. This lack of centralization makes career services struggle to connect students with employers, and companies miss out on talented applicants. Milam (2024).

The current job search process is inefficient and overwhelming for students. When students leave university without meaningful exposure to real work environments, they end up stuck in a tough market with little experience. This weakens their confidence and limits their ability to get employed in a competitive job market. As a result, many graduates are left un-employed or under-employed. According to the African Development Bank (2022) reports that over 10 million youth enter the African labour force each year, but most are ill-prepared due to limited practical exposure during their studies, widening the gap between education and employment outcomes.

1.3 Aim/ Specific Objectives

To create a platform to ease accessibility to internship opportunities for students and employers

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To investigate the challenges and processes in how internship opportunities are shared with university students
- To analyze existing internship platforms to identify their strengths and gaps in meeting student needs
- iii. To design a user-friendly platform that allows students to create profiles, upload relevant documents, and apply for internships
- iv. To develop the designed platform using React, Node.js, and MongoDB with secure user authentication.
- v. To test the platform's functionality and usability to ensure it meets the needs of students and employers.

1.3.2 Research Questions

- i. How are internship opportunities currently shared with university students, and what are the challenges?
- ii. What features do existing internship platforms offer, and where do they fall short for students?





- iii. How can a centralized platform improve the efficiency of the internship application process for students?
- iv. What technologies are most effective for developing a secure and user-friendly internship platform?
- How effective is the platform in reducing application delays, and improving v. communication between students and organizations?

Justification 1.4

Literature strongly supports the need for improved university-industry linkages through studies that confirm that studies with previous industrial exposure have a higher employability rate compared to the students that do not have that experience (Panel, 2024)

The importance of work-related learning (Kaplan, 2023) and the challenges of information overload (Panel, 2024) all underscore the necessity of a more effective and targeted communication channels for career opportunities.

This engagement offers benefits to each of its stakeholders as described below:

Students – It provides a centralized, user-friendly platform where they can create professional profiles, actively search for relevant opportunities and efficiently manage their applications. The platform will also offer personal recommendations based on their profile and academic level to reduce information overload. This in turn empowers them to take control of their career exploration and increase their awareness of available opportunities.

To Universities and Career services – It offers a more effective channel to disseminate opportunities to the right student cohorts and build stronger relationships with partner businesses and organizations through a streamlined posting and application review process.

To Organizations and Businesses – It provides targeted access to a group of qualified students actively seeking relevant work experiences, streamlining their recruitment and application process, reducing advertising costs and potentially leading to higher quality hires. This inherently improves the efficiency of acquisition and manipulation of early talent allowing them to connect and recruit promising students more easily.

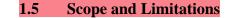
This research aims to create a significant difference by:





- i) Streamlining the application process for both students and organizations.
- ii) Reducing information overload for students by providing a curated and relevant selection of opportunities.
- iii) Improving visibility of diverse work opportunities, beyond just graduate roles and for students at all academic levels.
- iv) To shift from a passive broadcast model of opportunity dissemination to an active, personalized matching system
- v) Improving the visibility of diverse work opportunities for students at all academic levels.
- vi) Providing universities with a more effective tool to support student career development and engage with industry partners





1.5.1 Scope

1.5.2 The proposed system will focus on designing and developing a web-based platform to connect university students and graduates with internships by verified organisations. It includes requirements engineering through stakeholder interviews, system design, implementation using React, Node.js and MongoDB and evaluation through testing. The platform will support core features like user authentication, role-based access, internship listings and applications tracking. The study will engage students, university career offices and organizations offering opportunities. However, the project does not cover mobile application development and offline capability. Integrations with government systems will also not be pursued in this phase although the design will consider future extensions

1.5.3 Limitations

We anticipate the following challenges while engaging with the project:

- b) Data privacy and security Handling student and organizational data including personal and application information will necessitate a strong security measures. Ensuring data integrity and confidentiality and preventing breaches will be a critical challenge.
- c) User adoption Convincing both students and organizations to actively use a new platform when they might have been accustomed to existing system will pose a challenge as it will require intense demonstration of the clear benefits of the new system and potentially motivating initial adoption.





- d) Matching accuracy developing an effective recommendation system that accurately matches students with their relevant opportunities will be technically complex. Balancing various factors like skills, academic levels, interests and opportunity requirements will require detailed and careful algorithm design and potentially some machine learning techniques.
- e) Resource constraints Working within a low budget environment might limit access to certain tools and, technologies like APIs or expertise requiring creative problem-solving skills.
- f) Maintaining Engagement Keeping students and organizations actively engaged with the platform over time will require ongoing maintenance, updates and potentially the introduction of new features. '

1.5.4 Delimitations

The delimitations of this project define its scope and boundaries, clarifying what will need to be intentionally included and excluded. The project is delimited as described below:

- a) Target users the primary focus is undergraduate and postgraduate students actively enrolled at a specific university or organization seeking to offer the students employment, internship and attachment opportunities.
- b) Opportunity types The platform will primarily cater to opportunities typically sought by university students which include full-time entry level positions, paid and unpaid industrial attachments and internships. It is important to note that the platform will not focus on scholarships, positions unrelated to career development or opportunities requiring advanced professional certifications.
- c) Geographical scope The initial deployment will be limited to opportunities and students within a specific university and its immediate geographic vicinity.
- d) Platform features the core functionalities will include student profile creation, Opportunity posting and browsing, an application submission system and a recommendation feature based on profile matching.
- e) Technology stack The project will utilize a standard web development structure by using common programming language, frameworks and database systems.



Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to establish the critical need for a student and organization centred platform to connect university students with diverse work opportunities, ranging from internships and attachments to entry-level positions highlighting the inefficiencies of current information dissemination methods within universities. By analysing existing online job platforms like Brighter Monday, Internships Co.ke, and myJobs Kenya, this chapter aims to identify the key limitations such as a lack of opportunities tailored for students with limited experience, non-student-friendly user interfaces, fragmented application processes, outdated information, and the absence of crucial details like application deadlines and work period durations. These shortcomings fuel the significant gap in the current landscape and provide a strong need for the development of a dedicated platform designed to address the specific needs and challenges faced by university students in their pursuit of valuable work experience.

2.2 Current Processes / Pipelines / Existing Technologies

Internship opportunities play a major role in bridging the gap between theory and practice. The current way internship opportunities reach students is a mix of old-school and digital methods, but this is often a mess. Platforms like career fairs, emails, social media, word of mouth, and online job boards. However, these processes are scattered and hard to navigate, leading to many missed opportunities. According to Munene and Iravo (2021), many Kenyan university students lack structured access to internship information and often depend on WhatsApp groups, posters, and referrals, resulting in unequal opportunities and inefficiencies in application processes.

The focus is on how students access and apply for internships. The process begins when the opportunities are sourced from employers, who may or may not share the opportunities with universities. In the event they do, the staff manually post notices on noticeboards, forward emails, and mention them in classes or during career talks. Students are then expected to independently draft application letters, acquire recommendation letters, and follow up with the organisations. Some institutions have career offices to help students, but the information provided by these offices is mostly outdated or inaccessible to most students. As reported by Otieno and Nyambegera (2019), less than 30% of students in public universities reported



receiving internship announcements through formal university channels, highlighting a serious disconnect between institutional intent and student experience.

The process of securing internships should align with both university policies and regulatory standards. universities are expected to support students in finding industrial attachments, following guidelines set by their internal rules as well as the Commission for University Education (CUE). These guidelines emphasize the need for structured placements, effective supervision, and timely evaluations (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). However, many of these ideals fall short in practice. Students often submit incomplete or late reports, and supervisors sometimes neglect to fail to fill out forms. This shows a clear gap between expectation and reality. As noted by Waweru and Njenga (2020), the absence of a centralized digital system undermines fairness, reliability, and real-time tracking—elements that are essential for achieving both student and institutional objectives.

2.3 Challenges Facing Processes / Pipelines / Existing Technologies

2.3.1 Inaccessible or outdated information

The Inaccessibility of internship opportunities is a major problem. Subsequently, it also leads to outdated information. Universities stick notices on physical boards or send emails that get lost in inboxes, or are opened past the due dates, and online platforms sometimes list internship opportunities past their deadlines. This happens because career offices don't have digital tools to update listings in real time, and online platforms skip regular checks. Students waste time chasing expired opportunities and employers get flooded with irrelevant applications. If this is not fixed, students end up graduating without hands-on experience. Otieno and Nyambegera (2019) found that only about 30% of Kenyan students get internship info through formal university channels. Some schools have tried online portals, but they are barely updated, leaving a gap our platform intends to fill.

2.3.2 Fragmented Information Channels

Internship listing information is scattered across too many channels, like noticeboards, email, WhatsApp groups, and online job boards. This leads to confusion and missed opportunities, especially for students with limited access to some of these platforms. This lack of a central platform limits the ability to find and apply for internships. A study by Mwangi and Karanja



(2015) highlights that the absence of integrated digital platforms in Kenyan universities significantly limits students' access to internship opportunities. Relying on scattered communication methods is inefficient and a major challenge for students with limited connectivity and rural students without institutional networks

2.3.3 Lack of Real-Time Application Tracking

Once students apply for internship s, there is no easy way to track their application status or get updates. This leaves them stressed and in the dark. This stems from manual processes and platforms lacking tracking systems. Without a structured system, feedback is slow. Mwangi & Karanja (2015) argue that the absence of real-time tracking capabilities significantly lowers the quality of student engagement with industry opportunities and makes follow-up difficult for both parties.

2.3.4 No Centralized System for Matching Students and Opportunities

The lack of smart digital systems at both the national and institutional levels to match students with internships, based on their academic backgrounds, skills, and interests, results in students wasting time going through irrelevant listings. This also drowns the employers with irrelevant applications, disrupting the hiring process. It also leads to a mismatch of skills with the needs of the industry. It may also result in the absorption of sub-standard interns into the workforce. Karimi and Mutua (2022) highlights that without intelligent matching systems, students must sift through hundreds of irrelevant listings, and employers are overwhelmed with non-targeted applications.

2.3.5 Poor Communication and Feedback Between Stakeholders

Communication between students, universities, and employers is a major concern. Current systems lack dedicated communication channels. This causes missed deadlines, updates, and unclear expectations. The old-school manual process is not optimal for collaboration between the stakeholders of the system. Kiptoo and Chumba (2020) found that poor communication between university internship coordinators and host organizations frequently results in unclear learning outcomes and dissatisfaction among students. This shows the need for real-time





systems that will address these issues to ensure there is smooth collaboration during the whole process.

2.4 Related works

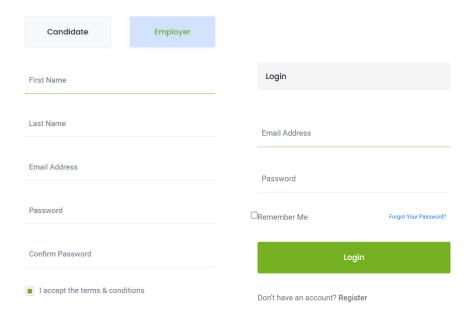
2.4.1 MyJobsinKenya

myJobsinKenya operates as a two-sided platform catering to both individuals seeking employment and organizations looking to hire. For job seekers, the platform offers a straightforward process to discover available opportunities. It features a prominent search section where users can input keywords related to the type of job they are interested in. When the user initiates a search, the platform displays a list of job listings that match the search criteria. This allows users to quickly scan through relevant openings based on their desired roles.

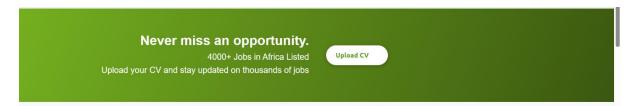


To engage more deeply with the platform, specifically to apply for listed jobs or for organizations to post new vacancies, user registration is a prerequisite. This registration process involves providing personal or organizational details to create an account on myJobsinKenya. Once registered and logged in, job seekers gain the ability to initiate the application process for jobs they find suitable. Similarly, registered organizations can access features to create and manage their job postings, outlining the necessary details and requirements for potential candidates.





Furthermore, myJobsinKenya provides a functionality for job seekers to upload their Curriculum Vitae (CV) or resume. This feature allows users to store their professional profile directly on the platform, to centralize the application process for various job listings. However, similar to the application and job posting functionalities, the ability to upload a CV is also dependent on the user registration process.



2.4.2 Brighter Monday'

Brighter Monday functions as a comprehensive online recruitment platform designed to connect job seekers with employers. The platform offers distinct pathways for both parties: those looking for employment and those seeking to hire. A major distinct feature is its search

functionality, allowing users to input job titles, keywords, or locations to discover relevant job

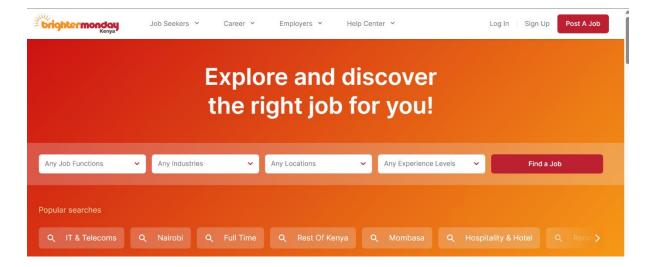
listings. To further refine search results, Brighter Monday equips users with active filters.

These filters enable job seekers to narrow down opportunities based on specific criteria such as industry, job type, salary range, experience level, and location, facilitating a more targeted

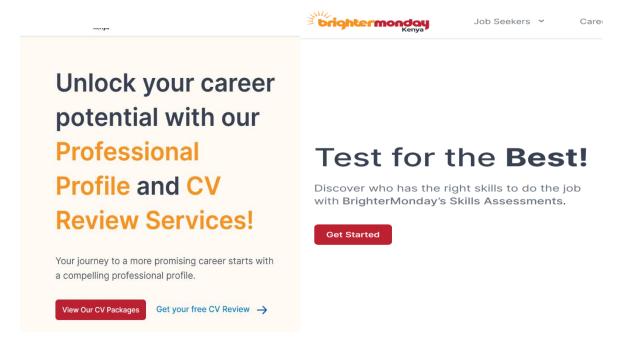
search process.







Additionally, the platform offers a skills assessment tool, which users can utilize to evaluate their proficiencies in different areas, potentially aiding them in identifying suitable career paths and highlighting their strengths to potential employers. For user support, Brighter Monday includes a comprehensive help center section that contains frequently asked questions (FAQs) to address common queries and provides clarity on platform functionalities. Additionally, they also offer CV review services, where users can receive feedback on their resumes to enhance their quality and impact.



Brighter Monday also aims to support career development through supplementary resources. It features a section dedicated to articles providing insights and advice on various aspects of career progression, covering topics like resume writing, interview skills, and industry trends.





Tips on evaluating your skills, assessing your career needs, and becoming a competitive candidate in the Kenyan job market.



Every Youth Deserves a Chance to Learn and Prosper



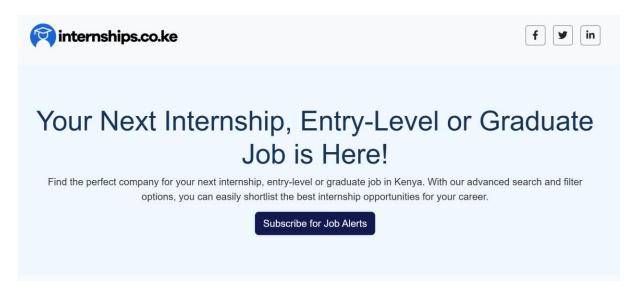
Is Getting a Master's or PhD Really That Deep?



How to Find a Mentor for Career Growth

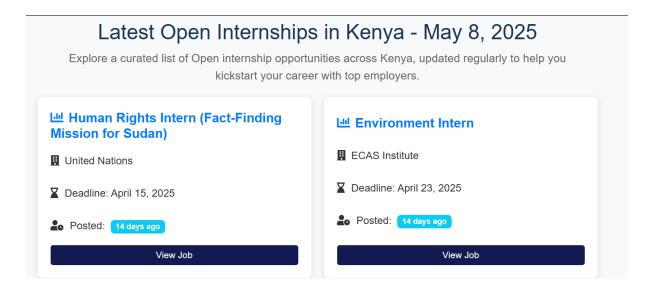
2.4.3 Internships co.ke

Internships Co.ke is another platform that has its focus primarily on students seeking internships. It operates with a key feature centred around keeping its users informed of new opportunities through a subscription-based notification system. Individuals interested in receiving regular updates on the latest internship and job alerts can sign up for this subscription service. By providing their contact information and specifying their areas of interest, subscribers can receive timely notifications via email whenever new opportunities matching their preferences are posted on the platform.



Internships Co.ke also provides users with a set of filters to refine their search for relevant opportunities. These filters typically include criteria such as the work region or geographical area of the internship, and the specific job title or role being offered. By utilizing these filters, users can narrow down the displayed job listings to those that align with their preferences and requirements in terms of location and the type of internship they are seeking.





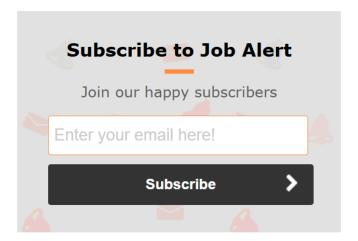
However, a significant aspect of the application process on Internships Co.ke is the redirection to external links. When a user selects a job listing that interests them and clicks the "apply" button, instead of initiating an application process directly on the Internships Co.ke website, they are taken to a new, external web address. This external link likely belongs to the organization offering the internship and hosts their specific application form or process.



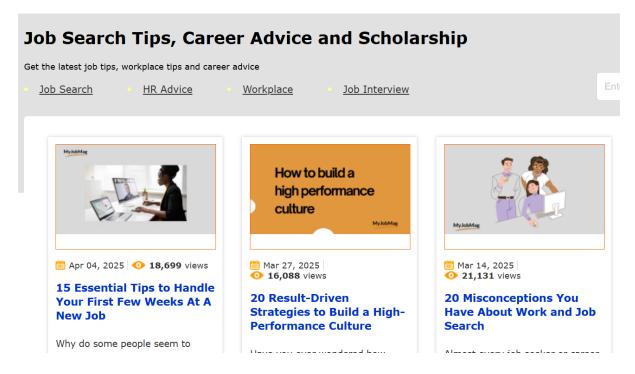
2.4.4 MyJobMag

MyJobMag functions as an online platform facilitating connections between job seekers and employers. Individuals looking for employment can utilize the platform's search functionality to find relevant job postings based on keywords, job titles, or locations. To stay informed about new opportunities, users have the option to subscribe to receive notifications, ensuring they are alerted when jobs matching their criteria are listed on the site.





The platform also provides a range of tools and resources aimed at supporting job seekers in their career development. It features a CV builder, allowing users to create and format their resumes directly on the platform. Additionally, MyJobMag offers a section dedicated to career advice, including articles, tips, and guidance on various aspects of the job search process, such as interview techniques and career planning.



To access the full suite of features, including the ability to apply for jobs and for employers to post vacancies, users are required to log in after completing the registration process. This controlled access ensures that interactions on the platform are tied to user accounts, likely for managing applications, job postings, and personalized notifications.

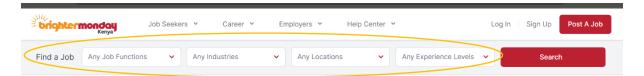


2.5 Gaps in related works.

2.5.1 Brighter Monday

Brighter Monday is a general job and career platform that serves a broad spectrum of job seekers and employers. While it is a popular platform in the region, its limitations become apparent when considering the specific needs of university students seeking internships, attachments, and entry-level positions:

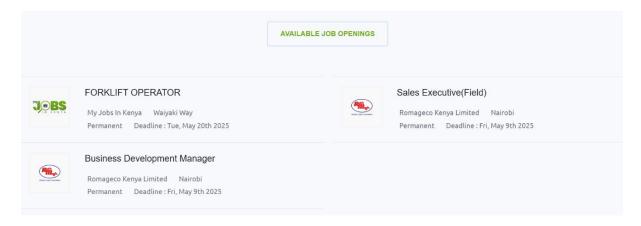
Non-Student-Friendly User Experience: The user interface and overall experience of Brighter Monday are designed for a general job-seeking audience, which may not align with the specific needs and expectations of university students. Students often require features that cater to their academic timelines (e.g., filtering by internship duration, academic major relevance), a more visually intuitive interface familiar to their online experiences, and guidance on creating student-specific application materials.



2.5.2 MyJobsinKenya

MyJobsinKenya presents significant shortcomings, particularly when considered as a resource for university students seeking internships, attachments, and entry-level employment:

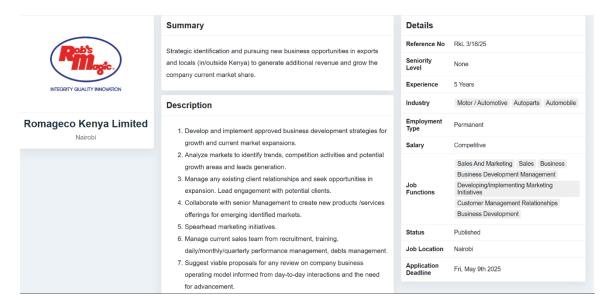
 Limited Number of Job Postings: The extremely low volume of job postings on myobsinKenya renders it practically unusable for students actively seeking opportunities. With such a small number of listings, students lack the solid chance of finding a relevant role.







User Experience Not Relevant to Students: The user experience of myJobsinKenya is not tailored to the needs and expectations of university students. The platform might be designed for experienced professionals or lack features crucial for students, such as filtering by academic discipline, internship duration, or entry-level focus. Students accustomed to user-friendly and intuitive online interfaces will likely find a non-relevant UI (User Interface) frustrating and inefficient.



2.5.3 Internships Co.ke

Internships Co.ke, while focusing specifically on internships in Kenya, it suffers from several limitations that our project aims to overcome:

• Plain and Boring UI: An unengaging user interface can significantly hinder user adoption, especially amongst our target audience which include university students who are accustomed to visually appealing and intuitive online experiences. A dull and difficult-to-navigate interface can lead to frustration and students being less likely to spend time exploring opportunities on the platform.



Filter Jobs by: Job Type ▶ Graduate Trainee Internship Minimum Qualification ► <u>Any</u> ▶ Bachelor's Degree Certificate Diploma Region **Eldoret** Kisumu Nairobi Remote Job Function

On-Site Application Not Available: The inability to complete applications directly on Internships Co.ke adds a significant barrier for students and organizations as well. Having to navigate external sites, create new accounts, and learn different application procedures for each opportunity increases the effort required and can lead to students abandoning applications due to frustrations and organizations losing track of the applications received.

How to Apply

Ready to take the next step? <u>Click here to apply</u> before April 4, 2025. Don't miss out on this opportunity with Rift Valley Institute (RVI)!







Outdated job listing information: another limitation of Internships Co.ke is the prevalence of outdated information/ static data, particularly job listings where the application deadlines have already passed. This severely diminishes the platform's utility for university students actively seeking timely internship opportunities. The business organizations are also severely impacted by this as they fall victim to receiving tons of outdated and irrelevant applications from students.



2.5.4 MyJobMag

While MyJobMag aims to adequately serve its purpose as a bridge between job seekers and employers due to its centralized platform, it falls short in a few aspects that centres around the overall student experience while interacting with the platform. Some of its drawbacks are described as follows:

Nonstudent friendly user Interface

This lack of an appealing user experience could discourage students from actively exploring the available opportunities, leading to lower engagement with the platform compared to a more modern and student-friendly interfaces.

Lack of essential information within the job listings. Specifically, the absence of clearly stated application deadlines and the duration of the work period creates considerable uncertainty for students. Without knowing when an application period closes, students risk missing out on timely submissions. Similarly, the absence of work period duration makes it difficult for students to determine if an internship or entry-level role aligns with their academic schedules and availability for different types of work engagements.



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Posted: Apr 28, 2025 Deadline: Not specified	Save Email			
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Conceptual Framework Must have a DB 2.6





Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction This chapter..... Applied Development Approach 3.3 System Analysis **3.4 System Design**



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Appendix

Appendix 1: Gantt Chart

