

INTERNSHIP AS PERCEIVED BY LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) STUDENTS

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Abstract

The study aims to know the opinion of students regarding internship scheme using 400 level students for 2017/2018 session of the Department of LIS, Delta State University, Abraka and Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria. This research employed descriptive survey design. The sampling technique used for this study is the quota sampling technique. The data gathering instrument was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. Data analysis was done using Mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that respondents have positive perception of library internship in both universities and the relationship between LIS students and industry-based supervisors in both universities was cordial.

Keywords: University library, Internship programme, Library practicum, LIS Students, Industrial attachment, Nigeria

Introduction

On how library school graduates could be very useful upon graduation, Singleton (2003) and Kelsey and Ramaswamy (2004) suggested taking advantage of the opportunities made possible by internship programme. Internship is all about discovering knowledge, and mentoring so that the students can be made fit professionally for employment after completion of course of study. The field experiences give exceptional benefits to library school students to do their career development apprenticeship under the supervision of a professional librarian. Vocational skills ought to be inculcated in library students before they graduate into the world of work, and practicum is a unique strategy to realize this lofty aim.

This is due to the fact that fresh library graduates have slight experience and will find it difficult to be employed as academic librarians. In addition, certificates and skills are required than just a Master in Library and Information Science degree to get employed (Singleton, 2003). Despite the fact that some skills can be inculcated while employed, library graduates require a lot of rudimentary skills before starting their professional vocation.

A good number of employers of labour had claimed that universities and colleges of education have little or no practical work content to make their fresh graduates to be engaged gainfully. It is very obvious that the theoretical aspects of most programmes in our universities are emphasized more than the practical aspect. This is an unhappy situation that requires urgent consideration. A lot of universities lack current training equipment, experienced trainers and financial resource to enable them bring up to date and integrate most recent technologies into their programmes (Ukoha, 1994). Even when the training instruments are on hand, they cannot be used to train due to being out-of-date, arising from the ever changing nature of the technologies. This explains why most library and information science teachers are perfect in theory but extremely lacking in the practical aspect of the profession.

This paper, to the best of the author's knowledge provides the first effort to seek the opinion of interns (students) regarding their involvement in internship programmes in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

SIWES is a skill development programme that is intended to make students of Nigerian tertiary education institutions ready for transition from the college setting to the work world (Akerejola 2008). The emphasis on the theoretical components of library and information studies is quite obvious. Most institutions offering the course lack modern training gadgets, inadequate accommodation, competent training personnel and fund to update and incorporate latest technological advances into their programmes.

The above problems informed the idea of library internship by students of library and information science. Recognizing the importance of students' internship as an idea which will make our fresh graduate employable, the problem of this study stated in question form is: what is the opinion of library and information science students on library internship?

Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

1. What is internship as perceived by students of Library and Information Science in Delta State University and Ambrose Alli University?
2. What is the nature of the relationship between internship supervisors and the interns?
3. What leadership style did most interns' supervisors adopt in their supervision activities?

Literature Review

While looking for ways to get graduates ready for the profession and for their career aspiration in LIS, there should be a balance between their introduction to research strategies and academic simulations with applied research undertone in the discipline. Smith, Hallam and Ghosh (2012), noted that IFLA in her education guiding principle for Specialized Library/Information Educational Programmes explicitly underscore the gain of practicum or SIWES or internship through which would-be professionals are made ready for their vocation. With these guiding principles, LIS programmes are appropriately integrated to enable interns appreciate the relationship between theories in addition to their use in professional practice in the work world. In fact the significance of practical activities, embark on in an assignment location, cannot be exaggerated. Practicum as it is usually called assist in exploring vocational choices in addition to providing would-be employers a valuable perception on students' wellbeing and knowledge (Sinnasamy & Edzan, 2015; School of Informatics & Computing, 2018).

According to Wodi (2009) Industrial Training Fund introduced the scheme to bridge the gap between knowledge acquired by students in tertiary institutions on the one hand, and the practical world of work on the other.

In the course of its orientation, interns (students) are introduced to actual work methods in industries where they will acquire skill and familiarity in using tools and machineries that may not be available in school workshops and laboratories.

According to Nse(2012), the SIWES usually referred to as I.T (Industrial Attachment) is a programme of ITF that make available a part way for student in institutions of higher learning to obtain real world s skills and aptitudes that are to be expected when they graduate into the work world. The internship therefore is aimed at providing students the opportunity to transmit and transform their abstract knowledge to practical in the actual work environment. The putting into practice of SIWES/internship programme in Nigerian educational enterprise is targeted at investing on the students practical skills relative to their career aspirations (Ukwueze, 2011). Internship has to a great extent provided solution to the recurrent adequacy and relevancy challenges connected to personnel training, equipment and tools in higher educational institutions (Ojokuku, Emeahara, Aboyade & Chris-Isreal, 2015). Interns stand to gain a lot from the scheme.

In both the theoretical and practical skills acquired by the students there are loop holes in spite of the high level qualified Library Science educators in Nigeria library schools. Ugwu (2010) noted that there is a very urgent need to give adequate attention to the education and training of would-be Library and Information experts in order to enable them enhance library service activities. As a result, Juznic and Pymm (2016) asserted that a good number of programmes, such as, fieldworks or practicum function as a link between theory and practical work and the vocation. Juznic and Pymm further noted that practicum is used as a model with a view to improving the library school program of study, divert a little away from too much emphasis on old academic learning procedures such as readings and homework. In addition, the idea of

practicum is to inspire educators to understand their library school involvement from a completely different standpoint, which will yield positive results (Bilodeau & Carson, 2015).

Internship Challenges

It is indisputable that today's library science students are the librarians of tomorrow. It is therefore very necessary that our future librarians are given suitable prospects to enable them acquire multifaceted expertise. This is because the effective service rendered in the library is relative to the extent of training and skills obtained by the staff of the library.

However, due to the resultant interplay of multitude of factors which Okafor (1993) and Udo (1988) that includes delay in payment of allowances to the interns and negative attitude of supervising ministries to the scheme. Others are rejection of interns by institutions, weak co-ordination, low incentives and inadequate supervision. These factors have not allowed the scheme to achieve hundred percent successes. The success or otherwise of the scheme to a large extent depends on the efficiency of employers of labour, the Ministries, ITF, institutions, and the general public involved in the management of the programme (Wodi & Dokubo, 2009). Olugbenga (2009) studied students' in three Departments, School of Applied Science, Nuhu Bamalli Polytechnic, Zaria. The study was on the relevance of the skills learned throughout the duration of the students' involvement in internship programme. Arising from the data collected and analyzed, the study concluded that a lot of the students indicated that the practical skills learnt are not adequate. This according to the researcher was because the students complained about the short duration and inadequate up-to-date facilities in their place of industrial training assignment. There is the need for examination of the internship programme by students from the angle of the induction process, and adequate communication between students and their industry-based supervisors. Communication has been categorically stressed to make certain that the latter are mindful of the wellbeing and concerns of the former and that the practicum becomes effective (Pacios, 2013; Hu & Patrick, 2006).

Methodology

The research employed descriptive survey design. The population for this study consists of one hundred and fifty (150), 400 level students of the Department of Library and Information Science, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State and Delta State University Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.

The sampling technique used for this study is the quota sampling technique. Consequently, fifty (50) respondents each were allocated to the two universities. Therefore, a sample size of 100 was drawn. Data retrieved from respondents were analyzed using frequency count, percentages and chi-square techniques.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What is internship as perceived by students of Library and Information Science in Delta State University and Ambrose Alli University?

Data in Table 1 were used to answer research question 1.

Table 1: Students' Internship as Perceived by LIS Students

S/N	Items	Institutions	Mean	SD	Overall Mean score
1.	I learnt about the latest development in my course through internship.	Delsu AAU	2.6 2.8	10.0 12.7	2.7
2.	Internship added a good deal to my scientific knowledge.	Delsu AAU	2.7 2.8	11.6 12.7	2.8
3.	Much of what I learnt in theory became real through internship.	Delsu AAU	3.0 3.0	15.7 15.7	3.0
4.	The time I spent in my place of industrial training was an unwelcome distraction from my studies.	Delsu AAU	2.0 2.0	16.0 16.0	2.0

5.	Internship provide opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in real work situation thereby bridging gap between theory and practice.	Delsu AAU	2.9 2.7	14.4 13.2	2.8
6.	Transition from school to the world of work is enhanced through contacts for later job placements.	Delsu AAU	3.0 3.0	15.7 15.7	3.0
	Grand Mean				2.7

Table 1 revealed that 'much of what I learnt in theory became real through internship programme' and 'my transition from school to the world of work is enhanced through internship job placements' had 3.0 as mean scores. This was closely followed by 'Internship provided opportunity for students to apply their knowledge in real work situation thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice and 'Internship added a good deal to my scientific knowledge, 2.8 respectively'.

Generally, the mean cutoff point and grand mean was 2.0 and 2.7 respectively. Therefore, the research concluded that the respondents had positive perception of internship programme.

Research Question 2

What is the nature of the relationship between internship supervisors and the interns?

Data in Table 2 were used to analyze research question 2.

Table 2: The nature of relationship between the industry-based supervisor and students while on internship

S/N	Items	Institutions	Mean	SD	Overall Mean Score
1.	My relationship with industry-based supervisor was cordial	Delsu AAU	2.4 2.9	9.7 14.1	2.7
2.	The relationship enable me to have positive work attitude and self-confidence as a student	Delsu AAU	2.9 3.0	15.1 15.7	3.0
3.	Interpersonal relations skill was impacted on me	Delsu AAU	2.8 2.5	12.4 10.6	2.7
4.	I learnt good citizenship and problem solving skill through my industry-based supervisor	Delsu AAU	2.8 3.0	14.1 15.7	2.9
Grand Mean					2.8

Table 2 shows the nature of relationship between industry-based supervisors and students on internship training. In the table 'The relationship enabled me to have positive work attitude and self-confidence as a student' recorded 3.0 as mean score. This was followed by 'I learnt good citizenship and problem solving skill through my industry-based supervisor, 2.9'. Furthermore, 'My relationship with industry-based supervisor was cordial' and 'Interpersonal relations skill was impacted on me' recorded 2.7 each as mean score.

The study concluded that with 2.0 as cutoff point and 2.8 as grand mean, the relationship between the industry-based supervisor and students while on internship

Research Question 3

What leadership style did most interns' supervisors adopt in their supervision activities?

Table 3 below answers the above hypothesis.

Table 3: Mean distribution of students on the leadership style commonly used by industry based-supervisors while on internship

S/N	Leadership styles	Institutions	Mean	SD	Overall Mean Score
1.	Autocratic	Delsu AAU	2.2 2.2	11.7 9.8	2.2
2.	Democratic	Delsu AAU	2.7 2.7	11.6 12.5	2.7
3.	Laissez-fair	Delsu AAU	2.2 2.2	9.2 10.2	2.2
4.	Combination – the three	Delsu AAU	2.2 1.7	10.1 12.2	2.0
	Grand Mean				2.2

Table 3 shows the leadership style commonly used by industry based-supervisors. The table revealed that the most commonly used leadership style by industry-based supervisors was democratic leadership style, with 2.7 mean score. Next in the line of scores is autocratic leadership style, 2.7. Furthermore, both laissez-faire and combination (the three) of the three leadership styles had 2.0 each.

The research also concluded that with 2.0 as cutoff point and grand mean, 2.2, that the commonly used leadership style was democratic leadership.

Discussion of Findings

The research concluded that the LIS students had positive perception of internship. All the item statements in Table 1 have high scores showing that their perception of the objectives of the programme was positive in both universities. In Nse' (2012) research, all the respondents agreed that they had 100% participation and are excited with the internship programme organized between October 2010 and January, 2011. This shows that the interns are conscious of the importance of internship programme relative to their educational endeavor. Also, the result of the study by Ukwueze (2011) also revealed that to a high extent, employability skills of interns are possible through adequate involvement in the programme. This research corroborated Dayom and Banwat (2016) who revealed in their study that interns generally ranked the field experience as having impacted positively on their future career performance. However, they lamented that they are not contented with the six-month attachment while school is in session but prefer it done during holidays.

Also, the study concluded that with 2.0 as cutoff point and 2.8 as grand mean, the relationship between the industry-based supervisor and students while on internship was cordial. This finding agrees with Wodi and Dokubo (2009).

They found out in their study that management of the firms studied was receptive even when initially they were reluctant to accept students on placement. Of importance is their affirmation in Table 2 that their relationship with industry-based supervisors was cordial and this made them to have positive work attitude and self-confidence. Ukwueze (2011) in his study show that greater level of employability skills is attainable through successful participation in internship programmes by students.

The present study disagrees with those of Ugwuanyi (2010), who revealed that there is inadequate supervision of students by both teachers and industry-based supervisors during internship work exposure.

Furthermore, the research also concluded that with 2.0 as cutoff point and grand mean, 2.2, that the commonly used leadership style was democratic leadership. Table 6 revealed that most supervisors adopted democratic leadership style. The finding is expected as students rated their relationship with supervisors as cordial. Where leadership style is geared towards the wellbeing of interns, the possibility of getting full cooperation from them is very high. Industry-based supervisors who want to succeed must create an atmosphere of mutual understanding between themselves and the interns. Likert (1969) agreed with this view when he opined that no matter how highly motivated the members are or how good the procedures in an organization are, it will not be effective unless the efforts of its members are coordinated and focused. There is the need for efficient interaction or mutual influence system which provides the mechanism through which the goals and activities of the institution are integrated and coordinated.

Policy Implications

Resolving the problem of skill acquisition by graduates of Nigerian Technical/Vocational Education is the reason for the establishment of internship programme. In order not to endanger the essence of the programme, ITF should ensure regular visitation of its officers to supervising agencies, institutions, employers and students on attachment. This is because the effectiveness of programme lies on proper supervision.

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Conclusion

Students' of the Department of Library and Information Science perception of internship programme was positive in both universities. The interns observed that their involvement in the programme is advantageous as well as important but recommended modifying how it is conducted. This to a large extent will reduce work load pressure in the first semesters of their third and fourth year's school calendar.

The students maintained cordial relationship with their industry-based supervisors while on training. Most of the industry-based supervisors adopted democratic leadership style in their supervisory activities. The supervisors' use of democratic leadership style is a healthy development that needs to be encouraged. Under such a trusting environment supervisors and students will work amicably and direct their efforts towards realizing the objectives of the programme.

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