

Perception of the Internees towards the Relevance of Internship Program in Selected Universities of South Western Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated perception of the internees towards the relevance of internship program in selected universities of South-western Nigeria. Specifically, personal characteristics of participants and perceptions of the internees towards the relevance of internship training programmes to future job attainment of the internees were investigated. Multistage sampling technique was employed to select two hundred and sixty seven internees from the selected universities. namely Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta (FUNAB) and Ekiti State University (EKSU). Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Chi – square (X^2) test.

The result showed that 70.8 percent of the respondents in all the focal universities were Christians, 28.5 percent were Muslims while 0.7 percent were traditional worshippers. It was revealed that most of respondents in LAUTECH (89.8%), OAU (98.5%), FUNAAB (80.5%), and EKSU (100.0%) were single. However, more of internees in FUNAAB (19.5%) and LAUTECH (10.2%) were married. It was revealed that close to half (44.6%) of the respondents perceived the relevance of internship to their future job relevance favourably while 40.2% had neutral disposition to internship in relation to their future job prospect. However, 15.2% of respondents perceived the relevance of internship to their future job relevance unfavourably. Age ($x^2 = 483.988$), marital status ($x^2 = 51.881$) and the Department of the internees ($x^2 = 764.638$) were significantly related to their perception of the future job relevance of the internship training programme.

It is concluded that, most of the internees are youths. Some of the respondents perceived the relevance of internship to their future job relevance favourably. The internees' department was a very important factors that determine internees' perception of the future job relevance of the training programme.

Keywords: Internees, internship, perception and job attainment.

INTRODUCTION

Training forms the core of apprenticeships and provides the backbone of content at technical colleges, polytechnics and other institutions of higher learning. In addition to the basic training required for a trade, occupation or profession, observers of the labour-market recognize the need to continue training beyond initial qualifications in order to maintain, upgrade and update skills throughout working life (Helsy, 2000).

Studies have indicated and concluded that a gap really exists between the quality of graduates produced and what the market demands (Mpairwe, 2010), For this and other reasons, training institutions and employers have accepted the need to seek mitigatory steps to bridge the gap. Employers have not been left out of the benefits as internships can provide them with inexpensive help, new ideas and potential future employees (Rothman, 2007; Cannon and Arnold, 1998) though at times complaints have been raised against employers for treating the interns as cheap labour. The benefits have, therefore, accrued to the tripartite stakeholders: the students, parent institutions and employers (Cook et al., 2004; Lam and Ching, 2007).

Objectives of the study:

1. identify the personal characteristics of internees;
2. determine perceptions of the internees towards the relevance of internship training programmes to future job attainment of the internees.

Hypothesis of the study

Ho₁. There is no significant relationship between the internees' selected personal characteristics and their perception of the future job relevance of the training programme.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Ladoke Akintola University of Technology (LAUTECH) in Ogbomoso North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) in Ife Central Local Government Area of Osun State, University of Ado Ekiti (EKSU) situated in Ado Ekiti, Ekiti State as well as federal University of Agriculture in Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Ogun State. Ogbomoso in Oyo State lies on $5^{\circ} 10^{\prime}$ North of the equator and $4^{\circ} 10^{\prime}$ East of the Greenwich Meridian and it is gateway to the Northern part of Nigeria from the South; it is located between Ilorin and Oyo. The climatic condition is influenced by two major winds which are hot and dry wind. The type of crops grown well in the area (Ogbomoso) include Yam, Cassava, Potatoes and grain crops like millet, maize, guinea corn.

Ile – Ife in Osun State lies on $7^{\circ} 8^{\prime}$ North of the equator and $4^{\circ} 5^{\prime}$ East of the Greenwich meridian. Ile-Ife is an ancient Yoruba city in South-western Nigeria and it is located in present day Osun State. Ile-Ife has a moderate rainfall of 2000 - 3000mm per year. It has high temperature of about 27°C and high relative humidity of over 90% and it has a long period of raining season between 6-8 months and 3-4 month of dry seasons. Heavy rainfall in Ile-Ife makes it conducive in the cultivation of tree crops like cocoa, oil palm, kolanut and food crops like yam, cassava and maize.

Ado Ekiti is the capital of Ekiti State in south-west Nigeria. Ado Ekiti is inhabited by Yoruba- speaking people and is blessed with many institutions including University of Ado Ekiti and a Federal Polytechnic. It has a moderate rainfall of 2600 - 3500mm per year. It has high temperature of about 26°C and high relative humidity of over 72% and it has a long period of raining season between 6-8 months and 3-4 month of dry seasons. Heavy rainfall in the area gives rise to the growth of tree crops like cocoa, oil palm, kolanut and food crops like yam, cassava and maize.

The population of this study comprised 2012/2013 internees (2,564) that participated in the internship training programme in the selected South-west Universities namely (LAUTECH, OAU, FUNAAB and EKSU).

Multistage sampling procedure was employed for this study. The first stage involved random selection of two federal and two state universities in south-west of Nigeria. The next stage involved purposive selection of the Faculty of Agriculture from each of the selected institutions. All the Departments that are participating in the internship training programme in each of the Faculties of Agriculture from the selected institutions were considered. Then, fifteen percent of all the students in each of the departments from LAUTECH, OAU, EKSU and FUNAAB were chosen. Proportional sampling procedure was adopted to randomly select 15% of the internees from the selected Universities. List of the students were collected from the SIWES coordinator on departmental basis and 15% were sampled per department to ensure wide coverage of 269 respondents (Internees) for this study.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, means, percentages, charts were employed in the presentation of some data values. The mean and standard deviation was obtained by summing up all the data values or scores and dividing by the total number of data value or scores (N).

Chi – square (X^2) test of independent samples:

It is used to test hypothesis when data are at nominal counts rather than scaled values.

The test of independent using X^2 deals with the same sample that are independent of one another.

The two variables are said to be independent when the probability of one variable occurring is not affected by the probability of other variable.

The data of two variables for the sample are normally arranged in the form of contingency table.

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e} \text{ Where } F_o \text{ and } F_e \text{ are observed and expected frequencies.}$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presented internees' religious affiliations. The result showed that 70.8 percent of the respondents in all the focal universities were Christians, 28.5 percent were Muslims while 0.7 percent were traditional worshippers. This result therefore indicates that internees either engaged in one of the three major religions which therefore imply that these major religions coexist together or pave way for unity and progress in all the focal universities. These religious units is organizations with grassroots' support which have different origins. He further offered that these organizations feel obliged to give not only spiritual but also material help for supporting human resource development. The result showed that each of the respondents belonged to these established organizations along- side the pursuit of their economic activities. Religion representation is also an indication that none is preventing their faithful from studying agriculture or choosing the vocation.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by religious affiliation

Religious affiliation	LAUTECH (Frequency, %)	OAU (Frequency, %)	FUNAAB (Frequency, %)	EKSU (Frequency, %)	POOLED (Frequency,%)
Christianity	70(71.4)	55(80.9)	46(69.7)	20(76.9)	189(70.8)
Islam	27(27.6)	13(19.1)	31(40.3)	5(19.2)	76(28.5)
Traditional	1(1.0)	-	-	1(3.8)	2(0.7)
Total	98(100.0)	68(100.0)	77(100.0)	26(100.0)	269(100.0)

Source: Data analysis, 2013

Table 2 showed the distribution of respondents by marital status. It was revealed that most of respondents in LAUTECH (89.8%), OAU (98.5%), FUNAAB (80.5%), and EKSU (100.0%) were single. However, more of internees in FUNAAB (19.5%) and LAUTECH (10.2%) were married. Evidently, most students remained single probably in order to be focused on the training and avoid the tendency of marriage pressure diverting their attention. The finding still tends to favour singles category which indicates vividly that most of the internees are youths. Majority of the internees participated in internship programme and these youths are known to contribute significantly to agricultural and forestry activities such as land clearing, cultivation, marketing, distribution, and exploration (Farinde *et al.*, 1997). The result is in line with that of Ovwigho and Ifie (2004) which stated that youths were considered as people who were not yet married and depended on their parents for social and economic survival.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by marital status

Marital status	LAUTECH (Frequency, %)	OAU (Frequency, %)	FUNAAB (Frequency, %)	EKSU (Frequency, %)	POOLED (Frequency, %)
Single	88(89.8)	67(98.5)	62(80.5)	26(100.0)	241(90.3)
Married	10(10.2)	1(1.5)	15(19.5)	-	26(9.7)
Total	98(100.0)	68(100.0)	77(100.0)	26(100.0)	269(100.0)

Source:Data analysis, 2013

Table 3 further shows the categorization of the respondents according to the perception of the relevance of internship to their future job prospect. It was revealed that close to half (44.6%) of the respondents perceived the relevance of internship to their future job relevance favourably while 40.2% had neutral disposition to internship in relation to their future job prospect. However, 15.2% of respondents perceived the relevance of internship to their future job relevance unfavourably. This trend may be due to individual dispositions to the programme in selected universities. From this finding, it could be deduced that the different disposition of the respondents to the internship programme may probably be attributed to improper targeting of information needs of the internees, timing of activities carried out during internship, quality of technologies involved in carrying out necessary internship works as well as coordination of programmes by supervisors while on the field. The result of the finding therefore revealed that internship training programme was perceived to be more relevance to future job since it provides an avenue for acquiring new, practical and usable skills of the work place. This implies that internship usually provides a platform for preparing internees for future job project. This finding

supports previous reports that identified that internship play a positive role in keeping students in school, preventing them from dropping out (Cavanaugh, 2004; Littke, 2004; Toch, 2003). Thus, an internship is an element of some degree or certificate programmes. If students are taking the internship for credit, and after they complete assigned course projects and requirements and fulfill the internship, they receive a grade and a certain number of academic credits are granted or awarded (Marczely, 1982).

Table 3: Disposition category of perception of interneers to frequency relevance of internship towards future job relevance

Disposition category of perception of interneers to frequency relevance of internship towards future job relevance	Frequency	Percentage
Favourable (> 47.9)	119	44.6
Neutral (40.1- 47.9)	107	40.2
Unfavourable (< 40.1)	41	15.2
Total	267	100.0

Source: Field analyses (2013) \bar{X} = 40.1 S.D 7.8

Hypothesis Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the interneers' selected personal characteristics and their perception of the future job relevance of the training programme.

The result of chi-square analysis in table 4 showed the relationship between interneers' selected personal characteristics and their perception of the future job relevance of the training programme. It was revealed that age ($x^2 = 483.988$), marital status ($x^2 = 51.881$) and the Department of the interneers ($x^2 = 764.638$) were significantly related to their perception of the future job relevance of the internship training programme. This relationship indicated that the

internees' age, marital status as well as the department they belong to are very important factors that determine internees' perception of the future job relevance of the training programme. For instance, more matured internees especially in age and marital status are more likely to perceive internship training programme as a relevant tool for securing job out of school. The department that the internees belong to could also influence their perception of future job relevance of internship programme because the department could be a source of motivation for the internees.

Age defines a period of time marked by a distinctive characteristic, achievement or figure or a state of being old. Studies have shown that academic preparedness and a general understanding of the professional field and key concepts (Department) determine effectiveness of internship (Beard and Morton, 2009). This study agrees with the findings of Bacow and Byrne (2013) which indicated that students should not attempt internships prematurely (age) and that mature students reason for making the transition from education to further education possible. They intimated that matured students seem to have a particularly rich understanding of the meaning and relevance of their studies than the younger students to approach their learning in ways that emphasize a search for understanding (Richardson, 2005).

The findings of this study also concurs with that of Sagen (2000) who found out that males benefitted from relevant internship work experiences than their female counterpart. The explanation for male success is somehow linked to their physiological traits and abilities. He widely held the belief that by the end of students' undergraduate research experience, male internees rated themselves significantly higher than did female internees with respect to their ability to understand contemporary concepts in their field..

Hence, the hypothesis that no significant relationship exist between the internees' personal characteristics and their perception of the future job relevance of the training programme is hereby rejected for all the significant selected variables except for religion.

Table 4: Summary of Chi-square analysis showing the relationship between internees' selected personal characteristics and their perception of the future job relevance of the training programme

Personal Characteristics	Chi-square value	Difference	p-value	Remarks
Sex	36.637	29	0.156	NS
Age	483.988*	377	0.000	S
Religion	51.752	87	0.999	NS
Marital status	51.881*	29	0.006	S
Department	764.638*	667	0.005	S

S = Significant, NS = Not significant

*** = Significant at 1% level**

Source: Data analysis, 2013

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the internees are youths. Therefore, Montessori education should be fortified with the employment of Teachers that are well trained in early childhood education in other to promote youths enrolment in the internship programme.

Some of the respondents perceived the relevance of internship to their future job relevance favourably. Thus, internship programme should be well financed and managed. Also, internees should be well trained in practical agriculture in other for them to secure self reliance-job in the future.

The internees' department was a very important factors that determine internees' perception of the future job relevance of the training programme. Therefore, students should be guided adequately by counselors and lecturers on their choice of carrier in agriculture.

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