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BENEFITS OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES OF SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated benefit of internship program in selected universities of South-western Nigeria. Specifically, personal characteristics of participants and expected benefits derivable from participating in internship training programmes in the selected institutions 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.

The findings revealed that 58.2 percent of the respondents from LAUTECH were male while 41.8 percent of them were female. About 64.7 percent of the respondents from OAU were male while 35.3 percent were female, 66.2 percent of the respondents from FUNAAB were male while 33.8 percent were female. Also, 34.6 percent of the respondents from EKSU were male while 65.4 percent were female. The major identified benefits derived from internship programme in LAUTECH (96.9%) and OAU (92.6%) while opportunities to learn new skills was the major benefit that most internees derived from internship training programme in the FUNAAB (90.9%) and EKSU (88.5%). It is concluded that, most of the internees utilized internship programme in practicing classroom learning to workplace.

KEYWORDS: *Benefit, character, internship, job and skills.*

INTRODUCTION

In terms of post effect, previous research has viewed internships as a positive development experience for the college students, having found linkages with a number of favourable outcomes (Callamon and Benzing, 2004), such as higher job satisfaction (Gault *et al.* 2000), greater degree of ambition (Pedro, 2006), improved perception of job fit and greater job stability (Rasheed, 2000) and reduced feelings of entry or reality shock on full time employment (Paulson and Baker, 1999). Also Coco (2000) pointed out that internship and other related programmes provide a risk-free method for companies to evaluate prospective lives and they provide a steady stream of motivated human resources who are comparatively less expensive than full time staff. Similarly, Piamko (1996) asserts that the internship can play a secondary recruiting role.

Agricultural transformation will not take place in developing countries such as Nigeria unless there is improved technical knowledge and willingness of youth to be employed in the sector. The 2020 Vision Initiative has vigorously pushed for sustainable food for all by the year 2020. Thus, if agricultural production is to be sustainable, youth should be empowered with appropriate skills, knowledge and change in attitude towards farming so that young graduates will replace the aged farmers in agriculture. This will enhance agricultural productivity and food security for all in the immediate, medium and long terms on a sustainable basis. This informed the National University Commission's (NUC) policy which makes FPT mandatory for agricultural undergraduates in the fourth year of the five-year degree programme. In the medium or longrun, this measure would enable it to create a propitious environment for producing adequate food in a sustainable manner.

Objectives of the study:

1. identify the personal characteristics of interneers;
2. identify expected benefits derivable from participating in internship training programmes in the selected institutions.

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° 10' North of the equator and 4° 10' 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° 8' North of the equator and 4° 5' 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 interneers (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 interneers 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 (Interneers) 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).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 indicated the distribution of respondents by sex. The findings revealed that 58.2 percent of the respondents from LAUTECH were male while 41.8 percent of them were female. About were 64.7 percent of the respondents from OAU were male while 35.3 percent were female, 66.2 percent of the respondents from FUNAAB were male while 33.8 percent were female. Also, 34.6 percent of the respondents from EKSU were male while 65.4 percent were female. On the overall, 60.0 percent were male while 40.0 percent were female from all the focal universities. The result of the finding therefore indicates that more of male than female respondents participated in internship programmes in the most of

the selected universities except in EKSU where more of female than male participated in the programmes. This is an indication that male are more involved in agricultural activities since it is tedious and laborious. Some internship training programmes are geared for boys and girls, yet female students are more likely to participate in work-based internships than male students. The finding is contrary to the report of Haimson and Bellotti (2001) which claimed that female students are more likely to participate in work-based internships than male students and as such additional work-based internships involving activities and settings that appeal to male students need to be developed. Also, additional work-based internships involving activities and settings that appeal to male students need to be developed (Haimson and Bellotti, 2001).

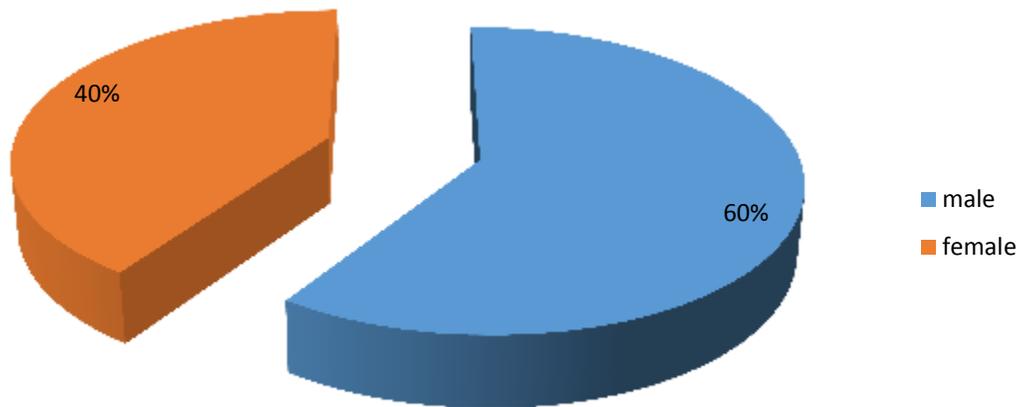


Figure 1: Gender of respondents

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.

Based on the result in table 2, opportunity to apply classroom learning to the workplace has been the major identified benefits derived from internship programme in LAUTECH (96.9%) and OAU (92.6%) while opportunities to learn new skills was the major benefit that most internees derived from internship training programme in the FUNAAB (90.9%) and EKSU (88.5%). The variation in the benefits derived from internship training programme in the focal universities is likely to be associated with the organization and coordination of programme. This result therefore revealed that most of the internees utilized internship programme in practicalizing classroom learning to workplace.

It was perceived that internees that pay more attention are more likely to benefit more from the programme as they will be more motivated to exploit what they learn into real life situations. This result is in

line with the reports of some researchers who viewed internships as a positive development experience for the college students, having found linkages with a number of favourable outcomes (Callamon and Benzing, 2004), such as higher job satisfaction (Gault *et al.* 2000), greater degree of ambition (Pedro, 1984), improved perception of job fit and greater job stability (Richards, 1984) and reduced feelings of entry or reality shock on full time employment (Paulson and Baker, 1999). Similarly, Piamko (1996) asserts that the internship can play a secondary recruiting role. This assists students in planning for their futures and helps in transitioning them to post high-school life at college and the future workforce (D’Andrea, 2005; Greifner, 2007; Littke, 2004). Internships play a positive role in keeping students in school, preventing them from dropping out (Cavanaugh, 2004; Littke, 2004; Toch, 2003).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by benefits of internship programme

| S/N | Benefits derived from internship programme | LAUTECH (%) | OAU (%) | FUNAAB (%) | EKSU (%) | POOLED (%) |
|-----|--|-------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|
| 1. | Application of classroom learning to the workplace | 95(96.9) | 63(92.6) | 68(88.3) | 22(84.6) | 247(92.5) |
| 2. | Exploration of career options | 91(92.9) | 55(80.9) | 46(59.7) | 19(73.1) | 210(78.7) |
| 3. | A change to reality test, try out one’s interest, values, and abilities in a work setting | 91(92.9) | 54(79.4) | 62(80.5) | 19(73.1) | 224(83.9) |
| 4. | Development and enhancement of professional skills | 91(92.9) | 52(76.5) | 63(81.8) | 23(88.5) | 228(85.4) |
| 5. | It provides an opportunities for increasing one’s self confidence as students and worker | 88(89.8) | 57(83.8) | 63(81.8) | 19(73.1) | 226(84.6) |
| 6. | An opportunity to practice job search skills and expand one’s network of professional contacts | 91(92.9) | 50(73.5) | 60(77.9) | 20(76.9) | 219(82.0) |

| | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| 7. | It provides avenue for relevant work experience to add to one's resume to demonstrate interest and commitment to a field | 91(92.9) | 56(82.4) | 47(61.0) | 20(76.9) | 213(79.8) |
| 8. | An opportunity for leadership and/or character development | 88(89.8) | 51(75.0) | 70(90.9) | 18(69.2) | 226(84.6) |
| 9. | Internship provide an opportunity to learn new skills | 91(92.8) | 60(88.2) | 70(90.9) | 23(76.9) | 243(91.0) |
| 10. | Academic credit to boost one's graduating grade | 86(87.8) | 44(64.7) | 64(83.1) | 20(76.9) | 212(79.4) |
| 11. | Internship provide an opportunity to pursue future dreams | 90(91.8) | 59(86(.8) | 47(61.0) | 20(76.9) | 214(80.1) |
| 12. | A chance to earn money to help pay for educational expanses | 69(70.4) | 25(36.8) | 32(41.6) | 8(20.8) | 134(50.2) |
| 13. | Internships provide an opportunity to explore career opportunities with potential "full - time" | 79(80.6) | 51(75.0) | 63(81.8) | 19(73.1) | 210(78.7) |
| 14. | Internships provide an opportunity to gain needed word experience for professional certifications and to enhanced their professional resume | 83(84.7) | 48(70.6) | 54(70.1) | 21(80.8) | 205(76.8) |
| 15. | Internships provide an opportunity to develop a network of professional colleagues | 88(89.8) | 44(64.7) | 48(62.3) | 18(69.2) | 197(73.8) |

*** Multiple responses**

Source: Data analysis, 2013

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

More of male than female respondents participated in internship programmes in most of the selected Universities. Therefore, free education should be made for deprived females in other to promote girl-child education. Most of the internees prefer practical method internship programme than the classroom learning method. Thus, internship programme should

be made practically-oriented in other to make the participants more productive.

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