CHALLENGES FACED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS DURING THEIR STUDENTS INDUSTRIAL WORK EXPERIENCE SCHEME: SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTITUTION-PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

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Abstract

The study was aimed towards assessing the challenges and difficulties faced by Business Education Students during their Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) and make suggestions for institution-industry partnership. Three research questions were raised and three hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consisted of six hundred and nine (609) third and final year business education students in the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. The entire population was used for the study. A questionnaire designed from literature was used for data collection. Mean and Standard deviation were used in answering the research questions while Z-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that the Business Education students faced difficulties while trying to get an Industrial Training attachment place, during the I.T. placement and while trying to round off the training. The results also showed that the students did not differ in the level of difficulties faced as a result of gender and their option of study while they differed in the level difficulty faced as a result of the industry where they underwent the industry training. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that tertiary institutions should partner with organizations in the private sector to enable students have the industrial training without much difficulty.

KEYWORDS: SIWES, Institution-private sector partnership, industrial training, Business Education, collaboration.

Introduction

The Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) was established by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in 1973 to solve the problem of lack of adequate practical skills preparatory for employment in industries by Nigerian graduates of tertiary institutions (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2008). The main objective of the Scheme was to expose undergraduates of Nigerian tertiary institutions to the experiential knowledge of the theories that they have been learning in school. This is to help them to establish a connection between the theory and the practical happenings in the world of
work (Nse, 2012). Ugwuanyi and Ezema (2010) saw the SIWES as an innovative phenomenon in human resources development and training in Nigeria whose specific objectives were summarized by the Federal Government in its Gazette of April, 1978 as follows:

- To provide an avenue for students in institutions of higher learning to acquire industrial skills and experiences in their course of study.
- To provide students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge in real work and actual practice.
- To make the transition from school to the world of work easier and to enhance students contacts for later job placement.

However, the conduct of the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme has been challenging in different fields. Some of the challenges of the SIWES as posited by Wodi and Dokubo in Ukwueze (2011) include, lack of adequate supervision, non-signing of necessary materials like ITF Form 8 and students’ logbooks at their places of attachment, difficulties of students in getting placement, unnecessary delay in the payment of students’ and supervisors’ allowances among others. According to Martins Library (2016), other problems encountered during the SIWES include late payment of IT allowance, problems of light (power supply), inadequate facilities, poor communication between staff in the organization and the IT students, poor security arrangements and problems of security a place for the IT placement. Though Taiwo (2016) pointed that the employers are supposed to participate fully in the assessment of students by completing the necessary forms (ITF form 8/log books), and also allow students access to their facilities, it appears that this is not the case. Students on industrial training do not seem to be given the access to information and practical knowledge as they ought to. This poses a challenge to students.

The Business Education program is a unique program of study that exposes the students to skills and knowledge about the present business world. Usoro in Akpan (2014) noted that, Business Education is an aspect of Vocational Education that deals with the acquisition of skills needed for business success. Business Education is education for and about business which involves the learning that relates businesses and their environment systematically. It is a career undertaken and focused on one or more cognate fields classified as education. Business education is an educational process or context which has its primary aim at preparing the individual for a role in enterprise such as employees, entrepreneurs, employer or simply self employed. Not only does business education prepare students to succeed in business, it also prepares students to become teachers of business subjects and courses. This will not be possible if the students do not get practical knowledge of the business activities. So then, the need to expose the students
to practical experiences in the business world, through the SIWES, is exigent to the 
Business Education program.

The need for tertiary institutions to partner with business organizations for the 
training of students was also a major reason for the formation of the Industrial Training 
Fund (ITF) which is the parent body overseeing the Students Industrial Work Experience 
Scheme. There appears to be a wide gap between the knowledge possessed by University 
graduates and the requirements of business organizations. Ibrahim and Dandago (2013) 
posited that business education students are not equipped with the generic skills required 
for their employability in the Nigerian labour market in the present advanced 
technological era. The SIWES is actually supposed to bridge the gap and provide the 
students with the current knowledge of the business world. This has not been the case as 
students appear to face a lot of difficulties before, during and after the SIWES 
programme. Infact, personal observation shows that some students do not even undertake 
the industrial training which is scheduled for 3 months after their second year in the 
University. The above reasons, made the researcher to carry out this study to futher 
discover the challenges faced by Business Educaiton students during their SIWES.

Purpose of the Study
The main purpose of the study was to assess the challenges faced by business education 
students during their SIWES training. Specifically, the study sought to:
1. Determine the level of difficulty that business education students face while 
trying to get a place for industrial training.
2. Determine the level of difficulty that business education students encounter while 
receiving industrial training.
3. Determine the level of difficulty that business education students encounter while 
trying to round off the industrial training.

Research questions
1. What level of difficulty did business education students face while trying to get a 
place for Industrial training?
2. What level of difficulty did business education students encounter while receiving 
industrial training?
3. What level of difficulty did business education students encounter while trying to 
drop off the industrial training?

Hypotheses
1. Male Business Education students did not significantly differ from their female 
counterparts in the level of difficulty they encountered during their Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme.
2. Business Education students did not differ significantly in the level of difficulty they encountered during their students Industrial Work Experience Scheme as a result of their Options.

3. There is no significant difference in the level of difficulty that business education students encounter during SIWES based on the place of their industrial training.

Method

The design used for the study was a descriptive survey design as it sought to obtain the opinions of the business education students on the difficulties they encountered during their industrial training. The population of the study comprised of 609 Third year and Final year Business Education students in the Rivers State University of Science and Technology during the 2015/2016 academic sessions. The entire population was used for the study and as such no sample and sampling technique was necessary. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled: *Questionnaire on Challenges faced by Business Education Students During SIWES*. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A, Demographic data, sought information on the respondents’ gender, option, place of IT placement and who helped them to get the IT placement. Section B contained 10 items that helped to gather information on what level of difficulty that the business education students faced during their industrial training. The response options were Very Difficult, Difficult, slightly Difficult and Not difficult. The questionnaires were administered directly to the students by the researchers who also retrieved them after they were completed. The data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Z-test was used to test hypothesis 1 while ANOVA was used to test hypothesis 2 and 3. The decision rule was to retain the hypotheses if the Z-cal or F-cal was less than the Z-crit or F-crit respectively, and to reject the hypotheses if the Z-cal or F-cal was higher or equal to the Z-crit or F-Crit values, respectively.
Results

Research Question 1
What level of difficulty did business education students face while trying to get a place of Industrial Training?
To answer Research Question 1, the mean and standard deviation of students’ response to questionnaire items 1 to 4 were gotten. The data is presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Mean ratings of business education students’ response to the level of difficulty they faced while trying to get a place of Industrial Training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>SIWES Experience</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Getting to meet the Human Resources manager of the organization to seek for I.T. placement</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Submitting a request for I.T. placement to the organization</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Getting feedback on my application for I.T. placement</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agreeing on the amount that I will be paid by the organization.</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand Mean</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 1 indicate that the respondents found it difficult to get a place for industrial training. Students found it difficult to meet the Human Resources manager of the organization to seek for I.T. placement (mean of 2.67); submitting a request for I.T. placement to the organization (mean of 2.12); getting feedback on the application (mean of 2.47); and Agreeing on the amount to be paid (mean of 2.82). The grand mean of 2.52 indicates that, in all, business education students found it difficult to obtain a place for their Industrial Training.

Research Question 2
What level of difficulty did business education students encounter while receiving Industrial training?
To answer Research Question 2, the mean responses of business education students to items 5, 6 and 7 were obtained and they are presented in Table 2.
Table 2: Mean Ratings of Business Education students’ response on the level of difficulty they encountered while receiving Industrial Training?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>SIWES Experience</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learning from the Staff of the organization</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>Slightly difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Relating with the management of the organization</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Receiving supervision from my lecturers in the University</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Mean 2.21 0.35 Difficult

The data in Table 2 shows the responses of Business Education students on the level of difficulty they encountered while receiving Industrial training. The students found learning from the staff of the organization slightly difficult (mean of 1.96). They indicated that it was difficult to relate with the management of the organization (mean of 2.03). Also, the students indicated that receiving supervision from lecturers in the University was difficult (mean of 2.65). The grand mean of 2.21 shows that the business education students encountered difficulties while receiving Industrial training.

Research Question 3
What level of difficulty did business education students encounter while trying to round off the industrial training?

To answer Research Question 3, the mean and standard deviation of business education students’ response to items 8, 9 and 10 were used. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Mean Ratings of Business Education students’ response on the level of difficulty they encountered while rounding off their Industrial Training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>SIWES Experience</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>REMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Writing my SIWES report</td>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Submitting my SIWES report</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>Slightly Difficult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Getting my stipend from the I.T. office</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>Difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Mean 2.26 0.34 Difficult

The results in Table 3 show that business education students in Rivers State University of Science and Technology found writing the SIWES report difficult (Mean of 2.19). They also found it difficult in getting the Stipend from the Industrial Training Fund office (mean of 2.63). However, the results show that the students found it easy to submit their SIWES report to the SIWES coordinator in the department. The grand mean of 2.26
shows that business education students found the rounding off of the I.T. process difficult.

**Hypothesis 1**

Male business education students did not significantly differ from their female counterparts in the level of difficulty they encountered during their Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme.

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance and the results presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: z-test showing results on the significant difference in the level of difficulty encountered by business education students during SIWES based on gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Known Variance</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized Mean Difference</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z – cal</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(Z&lt;=z) one-tail</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z Critical one-tail</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P(Z&lt;=z) two-tail</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>z Critical two-tail</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 4 show that the calculated $z$ of 0.17 is lower than the $z$ critical for a two tailed test @ 0.05 level of significance. As a result, the hypothesis is retained. Therefore, it is maintained that male Business Education Students did not significantly differ from their female counterparts in the level of difficulty they encountered during their Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme.

**Hypothesis 2**

Business education students did not differ significantly in the level of difficulty they encountered during their students Industrial Work Experience Scheme as a result of their Options.

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance and the results presented in the Table 5 below.
Table 5: ANOVA result showing the level of difficulty encountered by students during SIWES as a result of their options.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>177.00</td>
<td>420.50</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGT</td>
<td>243.00</td>
<td>575.30</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKG</td>
<td>103.00</td>
<td>237.90</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEC</td>
<td>82.00</td>
<td>188.80</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 5, show that the F-cal (1.14) is less than the F-crit (2.62) at 0.05 level of significance. This then means that the hypothesis is retained. Therefore, business education students did not differ significantly in the level of difficulty they encountered during their Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme as a result of the options of study.

Hypothesis 3
There is no significant difference in the level of difficulty that business education students encounter during SIWES based on the place of their industrial training.

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance and the results presented in Table 6.

Table 6: ANOVA result showing the level of difficulty that business education students encounter during SIWES based on the place of their industrial training.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>11.90</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking</td>
<td>73.00</td>
<td>174.30</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>104.90</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>33.00</td>
<td>78.70</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoration</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>45.30</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data in Table 6 shows that the F-Cal (2.05), which was tested at 0.05 level of significance, was higher than the F-Crit (1.80). This implies that the hypothesis 3 is rejected. Therefore, Business Education students differed significantly in the level of difficulty they encountered during their Students’ Industry Work Experience Scheme as a result of the place of their IT attachment.

**Discussion**

The findings of the study on Research Question 1, which is presented in Table 1, reveal that Business Education students found it difficult trying to get a place of attachment for the industrial training. With a grand mean of 2.52, the respondents had indicated difficult to all the items on the table. This includes getting to meet the Human Resources manager to seek for I.T placement, submitting I.T. request to the organization, getting feedback on the application and agreeing on the amount that will be paid. The results are in line with those of Oladiran, Benjamin, and Aiyelabowo (2012) who found that students faced challenges in getting the right place of the Industrial training. Oladiran et al. also found out that students are rejected by industries and this brings more challenges.

The findings of the study in Research Questions 2, which is presented in Table 2 show that the respondents face difficulty during the Industrial Training (Grand Mean of 2.21). Although the students found it slightly difficult to learn from the staff of the organizations, they found it difficult to relate with the management of the organizations. The reason for this, may be because the management are busy with more pressing issues...
and also the timing of the training is so short to allow for more interaction. The respondents also noted that they found it difficult receiving supervision from lecturers in the institution. This result agrees with those of Oladiran et al. (2012), who found out that there is inadequate supervision of students by both teachers and supervisors during work experience. This had earlier been pointed out by Wodi and Dokubo (as cited by Ukwueze, 2011) as one of the challenges that students faced during the industrial training. It is important that lecturers go to supervise the students in their places of attachment. This will help to encourage the students, increase the teachers’ knowledge of practical activities in the business world, and increase the partnership between the educational institutions and the Industries.

The findings of the study in Research Question 3, as presented in Table 3, show that students found it difficult while trying to round off the Industrial training. The grand mean of 2.26 show this. The students found it difficult in writing their SIWES report and getting their SIWES allowance while they found it slightly difficult to submit their SIWES report. This result can be understood clearly from the fact that since the students face challenges and difficulties in getting the IT placement and during the training, it is obvious that they will certainly face challenges in writing up their reports. Oladiran et al. (2012) and Martins Library (2016) agree that late payment of students’ allowance is a challenge that students face. Also Students fail to fill and submit their form in time for proper placement and assessment.

The findings in the three Hypotheses, show that the Business Education students do not differ in the level of difficulty they faced before, during and after the SIWES as a result of gender and the options of their study and the place of attachment. This means that both male and female business education students face similiar levels of difficulty during the SIWES. The business education students in the different options of study (Accountancy, Management, Marketing and Secretarial Education) also faced similar levels of difficulty during the SIWES. However they differed in the level of difficulties faced during the SIWES based on the different industries where they did the SIWES.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Department of Business Education, RSUST, should seek for partnership with companies in Port Harcourt to which students with good academic performance can be sent to for Industrial Attachment.
2. In return for the above favour, the department should over research services to these companies at reduced rates. This will encourage the partnership between the two parties.
3. More time should be allocated for the SIWES. The three-month period should be changed to Six months.
4. Lecturers should be schedule to supervise the students in their places of attachment.

References


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