

BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS' ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF STUDENTS INDUSTRIAL WORKS EXPERIENCE SCHEME IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN EDO AND DELTA STATES

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Abstract

This research paper specifically investigated Business Education students' assessment of the effectiveness of Students Industrial Works Experience Scheme (SIWES) in Colleges of Education in Edo and Delta States. Two research questions were raised to guide the study and were answered descriptively. The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 941 Business Education students and the proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting a sample size of 188 Business Education students for the study. The instrument used was the structured questionnaire and it was validated by experts. The test re-test method of reliability was used in ascertaining the reliability of the instrument and it yielded a co-efficient of 0.87. The mean and standard deviation were used in analyzing the data collated and some of the findings include: SIWES is effective in meeting work experience and that SIWES is not well managed by organizations. One of the major recommendations advanced in this paper was that Students' Industrial Works Experience Scheme (SIWES) needs to be strengthened by all concerned stakeholder in order for its objectives to be realized

Keywords: Business Education, SIWES and Assessment

Introduction

Business Education is a part of technical and vocational education which is studied in secondary and tertiary institutions in the country. That is, universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. According to Osuala (2004), Business Education is divided into two parts: office education, which is vocational in nature for office careers and general business education which is a programme that provides information and competences needed for managing businesses. The primary objective of Business Education is to foster the acquisition of the necessary business competencies needed to effectively function in the world of work, either as an employee or an employer of labour. The need for ensuring that the theoretical knowledge acquired by students is matched with their practical knowledge gave room to the establishment of Student Industrial Works Experience Scheme (SIWES).

SIWES is one of the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) programmes and it was introduced in 1974 due to the inability of engineering and technology students in Nigeria universities and polytechnics to meet the practical aspects of their training. That is, the needs to enable students match their theoretical school knowledge with the practical aspect of their training in industry. According to Ekpenyong (2011), one of the principles underlying any industrial work experience scheme for students in institutions of learning is the desire to marry the practical with the theoretical learning which characterizes conventional classroom situations with a view to striking a balance between theory and practice. The author stressed further that it was in realization of this that the ITF when it was established, set out to study the extent to which the theoretical knowledge that students in engineering technology and other allied fields in Nigerian institutions offering technology based courses related to the kind of work experience expected of them by employers. The result of the ITF survey showed a great disparity between students' knowledge and their ability to apply it in relevant jobs. In order to bridge the gap between the two, the ITF in 1974 established a co-operative internship programme, which enabled students of technology to spend some part of their courses for relevant on-the-job

practical experiences in appropriate areas of the Nigerian industry (Ekpenyong, 2011). The author further stressed that the internship programme, SIWES, can therefore be seen as that which is intended to give Nigerian students studying occupationally related courses experience that would supplement their theoretical learning. The objectives of SIWES according to Ekpenyong (2011) include:

- i. To supplement the theoretical learning of students from academic institutions with practical industrial activities in the various disciplines;
- ii. To expose and prepare students for the industrial work situation they are likely to meet after graduation;
- iii. To expose students to work methods and experience in handling equipment and machinery that may not be available in the educational institutions;
- iv. To enlist and strengthen employers' involvement in the entire educational process of preparing students for employment in industry; and
- v. To prepare the students for a business career by merging their analytical power with self-reliance.

The above objectives of SIWES are laudable but for these objectives to be achieved there must be conscious efforts by all that have stake/stakeholders in SIWES. The effective administration of SIWES falls on the ITF, a student's own institution and the employers. The ITF is saddled with several responsibilities aimed at ensuring the effectiveness of SIWES and some of the responsibilities include: prospecting for places for students on industrial attachment, provision of logistic materials needed to administer the programme, supervision and assessment of the performance of students on industrial attachment, ensuring payment of student monthly allowances, arranging Group insurance scheme for students on attachment and disciplining defiant students and those who perform poorly on the programme. The institution equally has a peculiar role to play in ensuring effectiveness of the scheme. The institution is to ensure the preparation of students for industrial attachment and subsequent placement of students with employers. It also ensures that there is proper and comprehensive supervision of students on attachment (Ekpenyong, 2011). The employers have a role to play in accepting the students on attachment and assigning them to relevant jobs where there will be utmost skill acquisition and supervision. The employer also ensures that students are given their monthly allowances and also abide by the rules and regulations governing the scheme. The students' primary roles are being punctual and regular to the place of attachment; and ensuring that the student log book is completed.

Apart from the school and other supervisory agencies of the government (that is National Universities Commission, National Board for Technical Education and National Commission for Colleges of Education), the organizations play a very crucial role in ensuring that business education students are properly and adequately trained in line with the demands of the modern office. For there to be effectiveness and the realization of the overall mandate of SIWES, there must be proper collaboration between the schools where students are exposed to theoretical knowledge and the organization where they are exposed to detailed practical knowledge. Once the gap between the school and the industry (organization) has been bridged, there would be assurance of greater quality and productivity of the graduates from the various institutions.

Statement of the Problem

As indicated in the background of this study, SIWES was established in the year 1974 by Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to meet a felt need for individual efficiency by those who left school to work; precisely that of ensuring that engineering technology and management students who graduate from the universities and allied tertiary courses in technical and business education in colleges of education have not only theoretical but also practical competence in the areas of their studies.

Since business and technical education are industry related, the students of these courses are equally enlisted on the scheme. Over the years, there has been no clear evidence of effectiveness of SIWES, particularly as it relates to business education students enlisted on the scheme. Since there are diverse and unsubstantiated views of the effectiveness of the scheme particularly in Edo and Delta States; the researcher became interested in finding out from Edo and Delta business education students who have taken part in the scheme, how they would evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme in the two states. The problem of the study, succinctly put, is that the level of effectiveness of SIWES in the area of Business Education in Edo and Delta is not clear. The researcher is, therefore, interested in using business education students who have taken part in the scheme to evaluate its effectiveness in various areas of its management.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of SIWES as seen by Business Education students that have taken part in the scheme in meeting the objectives for which it was established. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. assess the effectiveness of SIWES in meeting the work experience needs of business education students tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta State;
- ii. assess how effective SIWES is managed by the establishments that have students on industrial attachment;

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the research work, the following research questions have been raised to guide the study:

- i. to what extent is SIWES effective in meeting the work experience needs of Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta State?
- ii. to what extent is SIWES being effectively managed by the establishments that have students on industrial attachment?

Scope of the Study

This study was on the Assessment of Business Education Students' Effectiveness of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme in Colleges of Education in Edo and Delta States. The study covered the five Colleges of Education in Edo and Delta States and they include: College of Education, Ekiadolor, College of Education, Igueben, College of Education, Agbor, College of Education, Warri, and College of Education, Asaba. Some of the variables useful in the study includes: students, sex and business education. This study has specifically covered the effectiveness office skills and the management formalities involved in SIWES.

METHODOLOGY

This section is concerned about the methods and strategies the researchers adopted in carrying out the work and they are further discussed as follows:

Design of the Study

This study utilized survey design since the researcher was interested in assessing Business Education students' perceptions of the effectiveness of SIWES in Colleges of Education in Edo and Delta states. This is in agreement with Omoroguiwa (2006) where the author stressed that a research survey is one in which a group of people or items is studied by collection and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire population.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all year two Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Edo and Delta states that have participated in the SIWES exercise. The total population is nine hundred and forty one (941) students in 2014/2015 academic session.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was 188 students representing 20% of the population. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in drawing up the sample from the entire population and which was considered to be representative of the whole population.

Instrumentation

The instrument used was the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was used in drawing data from respondents it was titled: **Business Education Students' Assessment Questionnaire (BESAQ)**. BESAQ consists of two (2) sections with eleven (11) opinion statements designed in a 4-Point Rating Scale showing Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The breakdown shows that research question 1 has items 1 – 5 and research question 2 has items 6 – 11.

Validity of the instrument

The instrument was subjected to content and face validity. It was given to two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and Business Education in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin (UNIBEN) and their inputs to the draft instrument were incorporated into the final questionnaire.

Reliability of the Instrument

A test – retest method was used in establishing the reliability of the questionnaire. The instrument was administered to twenty (20) respondents in the population who were not part of the sample. It was re-administered after two weeks on the same subject/respondents. The two scores were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation co-efficient (r) formula to determine the reliability of the instrument and a coefficient of 0.78 was obtained.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher utilized the face to face method of data collection. The researcher engaged the services of two (2) research assistants who were exposed to a short training on how to go about the data collection in the institutions for the study; the questionnaire was thereafter collated by the researcher within a space of four (4) weeks.

Method of Data Analysis

The descriptive statistical tools were used in analyzing the data collated. The descriptive statistics used include mean and standard deviation and they were used in answering all the research questions. Any mean value of 2.50 and above was considered as accepted while below 2.50 was considered as rejected.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data collected and the discussion of findings. The results of the analysis were presented according to the order of the research questions that guided the study and it was presented under the following:

- Answering of Research Questions
- Discussion of Findings

Answers to the Research Questions

The data collected to answer the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation and the results are shown below.

Answering of Research Questions

This section is concerned with the analysis and presentation of the data regarding the two questions. The descriptive statistics used here are presented in tables and they include mean and standard deviation; and the mean value of 2.50 was used in taking decision.

Research Question 1: To what extent is SIWES effective in meeting the work experience needs of Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta State?

Questionnaire items 1 – 5 were designed to address the research question. The summary of responses is as given in table 1.

Table 1: Examination of the Effectiveness of SIWES in Meeting Work Experience Needs

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
1	SIWES ensures that business education students acquired those relevant skills that are needed in modern business organizations.	3.53	.500	Agree
2	SIWES ensures that students are exposed to new technologies that are in used in business organizations.	3.57	.496	“
3	SIWES exercise promotes the mastery of saleable skills which are in use in business organization.	3.74	.437	“
4	SIWES exercise makes it possible for students work with or without supervision which is a virtual most employers are seeking for.	3.71	.511	“
5	SIWES is effective in empowering the students on attachment with up-to-date knowledge about business world.	3.80	.403	“
Aggregate		3.67	0.469	Agreed

Source: Author's field work (2015)

Table 1 show that all the mean scores are above 2.50 which is the mean score for decision making. The highest mean score of 3.80 was recorded in item 5 while the lowest mean score was recorded in item 1. The aggregate mean and standard deviation are 3.67 and 0.469 respectively. Since the aggregate mean score is 3.43 and it is above the mean value of 2.50, all the items are therefore accepted which means that SIWES is effective in meeting work experience needs.

Research Question 2: To what extent is SIWES being effectively managed by the establishments that have students on industrial attachment?

Questionnaire items 6 – 11 were designed to address the research question. The summary of responses is as given in table 2.

Table 2: Examination of the Management of SIWES by Organization

S/N	Item Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
6	Organizations always provided for the necessary logistics needed for the smooth running of the scheme.	2.66	1.316	Agree
7	Organizations provide the necessary materials and equipment needed to properly expose the students to practical knowledge.	2.51	1.092	“
8	Regular monthly allowances for students on attachment are paid promptly to the students.	2.26	.852	Disagree
9	Students are always accepted by organizations and they are subsequently assigned to relevant jobs.	1.98	.801	“
10	Experienced staff members are often made to train the students on attachment.	3.35	.836	Agree
11	Students learning progress are closely monitored and supervised by experienced staff.	1.85	.840	Disagree
Aggregate		2.44	0.956	Disagreed

Source: Author's field work (2015)

Table 2 show that some of the mean scores are above 2.50 which is the mean score for decision making. The highest mean score of 3.35 was recorded in item 10 while the lowest mean score was recorded in item 11. The aggregate mean and standard deviation are 2.44 and 0.956 respectively. Since the aggregate mean score is 2.44 and it is below the mean value of 2.50, all the items are therefore not accepted which means that SIWES is not well managed by organizations.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the research questions raised in the study have revealed some interesting findings that are worth considering and discussing based on some relevant literature to either corroborate or contradict the findings. They are discussed sequentially and systematically in the following paragraphs.

The analysis of research question one (1) reveals that Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is effective in meeting work experience needs. This position is strongly supported by the objective of SIWES as emphasized in the Industrial Training Fund's Policy document No. 1 of 1973 (ITF, 1973). This finding is equally supported by Imeokparia and Ediagbonya (2012) and Ediagbonya and Oyadongha (2013) where the authors stressed that SIWES is an organized scheme that is expected to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The authors further stressed that SIWES will ensure that Business Education students acquire those relevant skills that are needed in modern business organizations. In a similar vein, Isah (2003) also corroborate this finding by emphasizing that SIWES prepares business education students to fit in readily for employment in industries and commerce. This finding also affirmed the study of Mohammed (2001) where the study stressed that SIWES provides an opportunity to relate academic training to job requirements and makes business education students to acquire skills needed for self-reliance. Ekwue and Eluro (2002) also corroborates this finding where the authors stressed that through SIWES, business education programme equipped graduates with the right skills to engage in a life of work in office as secretary as well as for self-employment.

The findings from the analysis of research question two (2) shows that SIWES is not effectively managed by the establishments that have students on industrial attachment. Ekwue and Eluro (2002) also corroborate this finding where they stressed that organizations and employers do not provide the required environment for students to benefit during the programme. Item 9 in the

questionnaire was not accepted and it implies that students in are not always accepted by organizations... and this position equally corroborates the finding of Ekwue and Eluro (2002) where they observed that many Nigeria banks do not consider students of business education for SIWES programme in their establishments. This finding also corroborates the findings of Uramah (2003) where the study revealed that SIWES is poorly managed and undermines the achievement of desired set objectives of the programme. Awojobi (2002) also has similar findings where the author stressed that many students for SIWES programme could not find relevant placement that would enhance their course of study. The study further revealed that a significant number of students claimed that the SIWES programme was not relevant to their studies as they considered it to be a waste of time and exercise. The finding of Wodi and Dokubo (2009) also supports this findings where the authors stressed that the difficulties students go through in getting placement and the undue delay in paying students' and supervisors' allowances.

Conclusion

This article has been able to examine in a reasonable extent issues concerning SIWES which is a core scheme in the effective teaching and learning of skill based course such as Business Education. Based on the data collated and the subsequent analyses, this paper therefore concludes that SIWES is effective in meeting the work experience needs of Business Education students in tertiary institutions in Edo and Delta states. It therefore implies that the proper and effective administration of SIWES will go a long way in boosting and enhancing the competencies of the workforce. It therefore means that organizations will have to spend less in training and retraining of employees. It can equally be concluded that SIWES is not effectively managed by the establishments that have students on industrial attachment. The implication of this development is that the morale of these students undergoing SIWES training will be low and the overall objective of this scheme may not be realized.

Recommendations

This empirical investigation has revealed outstanding findings and based on that, the following recommendations are therefore advanced:

1. Students' Industrial Works Experience Scheme (SIWES) needs to be strengthened by all concerned stakeholder in order for its objectives to be realized;
2. Regular monthly allowances for students on attachment should be paid promptly;
3. Organizations should always accept students for SIWES and subsequently assign them to relevant jobs;
4. Experience staff should always be made to train the students on attachment;
5. Business education students learning progress should be closely monitored and supervised by experienced staff;
6. Employers of labour should be more willing to absorb Business Education students for SIWES;

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