



Dynamics of Student Internship System in Faculty of Art of KNUST, Kumasi, Ghana: Exploring Perceptions, Values, Access and Development Outcomes

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Abstract

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An internship programme is a great way to connect what is learnt in class with actual work experience. Existing research has underscored the positive contribution of internship to the educational process and career outcomes among students. The internship programme for students of Faculty of Art, KNUST is a requirement or considered as a compulsory 15 credit hour course for the award of undergraduate degree. As such it is a vital component of the curriculum. Nonetheless, empirical literature on the dynamics of the internship programme at the university is sparse. Without insight into these dynamics however, there will be lack of information that could inform policy and continuous improvement of the programme. To bridge this gap, this paper seeks to analyze the internship experiences of students to determine what factors seem to create the greatest perceived value. The study employed the descriptive exploratory study design approach. Data was obtained from a total of 376 students of the Faculty of Art through the use of questionnaire designed in open and close ended patterns and focus discussions. The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) computer package was used for data analysis, while descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentage were used to analyze

the facts sought from the questionnaire. The students described a variety of skills learned during the internship including mastering the use of some equipment, software, and report writing. About 80% of the participants indicated that the internship programme was important and linked the classroom work to real work environment. All the students regardless of their experiences indicated they had value for the internship which they believe will play a role in their future career objectives. On the other hand, some of the students had some unfavourable experiences including inadequate work space, provision of inadequate PPEs, boring and difficult tasks. Others were engaged in other duties that were not related to their field of studies, all of which could potentially influence the perception of students.

Key words: dynamics, internship, job market, multi-stakeholders, work experience.

1. Introduction

Internship simply means a period during which a student works for a company or organization in order to gain experience of a particular type of work. The internship procedure usually involves three parties, the university, the student and the employer who all derive various degrees of benefit from the trio relationship.¹ For the educational institution, the internship programme serves as opportunistic platform to upgrade the practical curriculum of students. It also enhances the reputation and visibility of the institutions and enhances the potential for attracting students and sponsorship.² For the students, the programme serves as a catalyst to implement the theoretical knowledge and concepts at the workplace.³ Practical experiences that cannot be fully simulated

¹ Hirst, R. The value of faculty internships in technical communication. *J Tech Writ Commun.* (1996). 26(1):79–96. Horowitz, E.M. Chasing the pot of gold: internships on the road to employment. *Iowa State University Library, Ames, IA.* (ERIC document reproduction service, no. ED401551). (1996).

² Velez, G. S. and Glenner, G.R. Effects of business internships on students, employees and higher education institutions: A system Review. *Journal of Employment counseling.* (2015). 52 (3) 121-130. Eyler, J. Comparing the impact of two internship experiences on student learning. *J Coop Educ* (1993). 29(1):41–52. Hymon-Parker, S. Benefits and limitations of internships as viewed by educators and retailers. *J Fam Consum Sci* (1998). 90(4):76–80.

³ Tynjälä, P. Perspectives into learning at the workplace. *Educ Res Rev* (2008). 3(2):130–154.

Arts, J.A, Gijsselaers, W.H, Boshuizen, H. Understanding managerial problem-solving, knowledge

in the classroom setting are usually provided by internship.⁴ Again, internship may offer students exposure to important learning experiences and access to role models which enhance their self-efficiency and beliefs.⁵ Internship further provides students valuable opportunities to begin to establish career networks from which they can draw as they transition into the labour market.⁶ On the other hand, the programme supplements companies with valuable work force.⁷

Various researchers have defined the concept of internship. Patton defines it as a form of on-the-job training in which people gain supervised experience and practical knowledge that is relevant to a specific field.⁸ Collins also defines it as 'bridge' from classroom to workplace.⁹ Internship is found in nearly every field including medicine, law, performing arts, commerce and communication. Consequently, various components of the internship concept have been studied in various disciplines. Alpert undertook a study on the goal, structure and assessment of undergraduate marketing students.¹⁰ The consequence of the national internship programme in Pakistan was also studied.¹¹ Graduate employability and labour market orientation were also examined.¹² The

use and information processing: investigating stages from school to the workplace. *Contemp Educ Psychol* (2006). 31(4):387-410.

- ⁴ Elarde, J. V. and Chong, F.F. The Pedagogical value of eduployment informant technology internships in rural areas. In *Proceedings of the 13th Annual Conference on informal technology Education* pp 189-194. New York N.Y. UAS. ACM. (2012).
- ⁵ Thompson, M. N. Graham, S.R. Self-efficacy beliefs. In Hartung P.J., Savickas, M.L, Walsh, W.B (Eds). *APA Handbook of career interview*, vol 2. Applications pp 171-182. *American Psychological Association*. (2015).
- ⁶ Dailey, S.L. What happens before full-time employment? Internship as a mechanism of anticipating socialization. *Western journal of communication* (2016). 80 (4) 453-480.
- ⁷ Crumbley, D.L, Sumners, G.E. How businesses profit from internships? *Intern Audit* (1998)55(10):54-55.
- ⁸ Patton, M.Q. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd *Sage Publications*; Thousand Oaks, CA: 2002. [Google Scholar].
- ⁹ Collins, A. B. Gateway to the real world, industrial training: Dilemmas and problems. *Tourism Management*, (2002). 23(1), 93-96.
Gault J, Leach E, Duey M. Effects of business internships on job marketability: the employers' perspective. *Educ Train* (2010) 52(1):76-88
- ¹⁰ Alpert, F Heaney Joo-Gim and Kuhn Kerri-aan, L. Internships in Marketing: Goals, Structures and Assessment – Student, Company and Academic Perspectives. *Australasian Marketing Journal* (AMJ). (2009). 17(1).
- ¹¹ Batool, Z. Ellahi, N and Masood, A. Academic research international national internship programme and its evaluation: a case study of Punjab region. *Academic Research International*. (2012). 2(2):562-570
- ¹² Katyal, V. and Arora, R. Graduate Employability and Students' Orientation to Labor Market(October15,2012).AvailableatSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2430279> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2430279>

effectiveness of internship variables for university students was evaluated.¹³ The effect of internship experience on the behavioural intentions of students was also studied.¹⁴ All these studies had one thing in common, that is they all highlighted the benefits of internship to the employability of students

Students' internships programmes have become a standard component of the curriculum of most tertiary institutions in the world including Ghana. Research studies have generally supported the value of student internships and touted it as a vital mechanism in workforce development policy.¹⁵ Aligned with the curriculum content and skill development, internship programmes have proved beneficial for reinforcing the transfer of theoretical concepts to practical application. Internship programmes provide a win-win opportunity whereby the student is provided with experiential learning and the industry or company receive additional human resource capacity at a reduced rate.

While there is ample evidence on the practical benefits of internships, studies have shown that the success of internship depends on the practicability of knowledge and its association with real work situation.¹⁶ It has been documented that students and academic institutions pay very little attention on gaining full benefit from the programme.¹⁷ Educational advisors or faculty members sometimes do not provide necessary guide for students to enable them obtain the full benefits of the programme.¹⁸ Students on the other hand just observe the work environment without applying the classroom knowledge to situations they encounter.¹⁹ These barriers can be overcome through proper recognition of internship plans and relevant industry participants, picking out

Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. The social psychology of organizations. New York: Wiley (1978).

¹³ Phoebe, W. K. Determinants of internship effectiveness for university students in Hong Kong. Hong Kong Baptist University. *Unpublished PhD Thesis*. (2010).

¹⁴ Chen, Chin-Tzu, Hu, Jin-Li, Wang, Chen-Cai and Chen, Chu-Fu. A Study on the Effects of Internship Experiences on the Behavioral Intentions of College Students Majoring in Leisure Management in Taiwan. *The Journal of Hospitality Leisure Sport and Tourism* (2011). 10(2):61-73.

¹⁵ Silva, P., Lopes, B., Costa, M., Melo, A. I., Dias, G. P., Brito, E., & Seabra, D. The million-dollar question: Can internships boost employment? *Studies in Higher Education*, (2018). 43(1), 2-21

¹⁶ Ronnestad, M.N, Skovholt, T.M. Supervision of beginning and advanced graduate students of counseling and psychotherapy. *J Couns Dev* (1993). 71:396-405.

¹⁷ Frantzich, S. Storming Washington: an intern's guide to national government. *American Political Science Association*, Washington, D.C. (1977).

¹⁸ Schambach, T.P, Kephart, D. Do I/S students value internship experiences? In: *Paper presented at the proceeding of the 17th International Academy for Information Management*, Barcelona, Spain. (1999)

¹⁹ Raskin, M.S. The Delphi study in field instruction revisited: expert consensus on issues and research priorities. *J Soc Work Educ* (1994). 30:75-89

motivational students' interns, internship programme evaluation, monitoring and feedback.²⁰ Internships are often times conceptualized as a singular event that students undertake with little explication of the dynamics of the experience itself. Without understanding these factors however, risks is becoming a 'black box'.²¹ This only leads to student academic work and the labour market. This study explores the dynamics of the internship programme of students of the Faculty of Art, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, (KNUST), Kumasi, Ghana.

Background to the study

One important requirement for being recruited into any new job, besides one's professional qualification is work experience.²² This makes work experience fundamental in higher educational learning. There is also a perception in the literature of a mismatch between the quality of graduate students produced and the demand of the job market. These issues have led to a concerted collaborative effort of educational institutions and organizations to find solutions by the introduction and implementation of student internship programmes also known in Ghana as industrial attachment. Universities and other tertiary institutions in Ghana have since the 1960s adopted this arrangement in various forms as a strategy for skills development and career enhancement procedure. At KNUST, the internship programme has become a vital component of the curriculum for graduation. It is considered as a compulsory or a required 15 credit course of the student's major programme. The programme is however, not without challenges. Some of the identified challenges include; no clear MOUs between the University and organizations, discrimination or turning down of students due to inadequate space by organizations, unpleasant remarks by organizations on the program, inadequate supervision by faculty members, lack of sponsorship and financial support for students' accommodation, transportation and feeding.

²⁰ Harrison RW, Kennedy PL. A framework for implementing agribusiness internship programs. *Agribusiness* (1996) 12(6):561-568

²¹ Loeb, S., Dynarski, S., McFarland, D., Morris, P., Reardon, S., & Reber, S. Descriptive analysis in education: A guide for researchers. NCEE 2017-4023. Washington, DC: *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*. (2017).

Silva, P., Lopes, B., Costa, M., Melo, A. I., Dias, G. P., Brito, E., & Seabra, D. The million-dollar question: Can internships boost employment? *Studies in Higher Education*, (2018). 43(1), 2-21

²² Verhaest, D., and Baert, S. The effects of workplace learning in higher education on employment and match quality: Is there an early-career trade-off? *Empirical Economics*, (2018). 55(3), 1229-1270.

This therefore calls for a critical understanding of the perceptions, values and development outcomes of the programme. The existing literature on the proposed problem is sparse to greatly inform and influence policy direction in Ghana. Some of the existing literatures studied were related to regulations governing the internship programme in Ghana.²³ Other studies reported on curriculum design for improved internship practices.²⁴ The relevance experience of undergraduate internship programme was also reported.²⁵ The findings of this current study will therefore enrich the stream of literature and contribute to inform continuous improvement of the internship programme.

Theoretical framework

John Dewey proposed the integration of classroom work and industrial attachment as a component of higher educational curriculum a century ago.²⁶ It was conceived that academic knowledge provided in the classroom could be transferred to the field of work regardless of the discipline. By so doing students could be facilitated to better implement their conceptual knowledge at the work place. This learning process is further meant by design to provide students with opportunities for developing their skills and improve upon their professional work experience.²⁷ As a learning process this study is situated within the social learning theory context which was developed.²⁸ This was later extended in

²³ Ndure, K., Anderson, I. K., Peprah, J. A., & Twenefour, F. B. K. Industrial training programmes of polytechnics in Ghana: The pertinent issues. *World Journal of Education*, (2015). 5(1), 102-113.

Nyarko, D., & Amegbor, F. Enhancing the legal and regulatory framework for industrial training in Ghanaian polytechnics. (2019). Retrieved, 2023, from <https://ssrn.com>.

Arthur, P., Boampong, G.T., and Dare, G.A. Regulations governing student internship programme in Ghana: a sequential explanatory multi-stakeholder approach. *African Journal of Applied Research*. (2022). Vol. 8, No. 2 pp. 137-158.

²⁴ Akomaning, E. Improved Internship Practices as a Result of Collaborative Curriculum Design. In: Pieters, J., Voogt, J., Pareja Roblin, N. (eds) Collaborative Curriculum Design for Sustainable Innovation and Teacher Learning. *Springer, Cham*. (2019).

²⁵ Amponsah, M.O. Milleotzi, E.Y. Ofosuhene-Mensah Kwarteng, J. Assessment of the relevance and experience of undergraduate internship programme. A focus on University of Cape Coast Psychology students in Ghana. (2014).

²⁶ Steffes, J. S. Creating powerful learning environments beyond the classroom. *Change*, (2004). 36(3), 46.

²⁷ Gault, J., Redington, J., Schlager, T. Undergraduate business internships and career success: are they related? *Journal of Marketing Education*, (2000) 22, 45-53.

²⁸ Bandura, A. Social learning theory. New York. *General Learning Press*. (1977).

principle by Lave and co.²⁹ Bandura proposed in this theory that people learn through both observation and experience, which is basically the framework of internship programme. He explained his theory to comprise four components: attention (behaviour must be noticed before it can be imitated), retention (behaviour must be remembered), reproduction, (behaviour in memory must be put into practice) and motivation (that which are perceived to be positively rewarded are enacted). It was advocated that training that incorporates observation and experience can increase successful acculturation by helping participants associate positive outcomes with appropriate behaviour thereby increasing self-orientation.³⁰

2. Literature Review

Brief Historical perspective of internship

An internship is a professional learning experience that offers meaningful practical work related to a student's field of study or career interest. The internship system has existed since the 11th century as a way of learning a profession.³¹ Popularly known as apprenticeship, a trainee was placed with a master craftsman to learn the skills of a profession for a period of time ranging between two and five years or more.³² The apprenticeship system was however revolved around the family of the master craftsman. Over time, with the increase of education vocational training became more apparent leading to the diminishing of the apprenticeship system. The apprenticeship system was re-introduced in the early 1900 but this time as an integrated programme combining classroom learning with work place practices. In some countries such as the US guidelines for internship has been established to ensure that an internship is a learning experience and does not violate employee rights.³³ The

²⁹ Lave, J., and Wenger, E. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University (1991) Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815355>.

³⁰ Chao, R. C.-L., Wei, M., Good, G. E., & Flores, L. Y. Race/ethnicity, color-blind racial attitudes, and multicultural counseling competence: The moderating effects of multicultural counseling training. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, (2011). 58(1), 72–82. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022091>.

³¹ Rorabaugh, W. J. *The Craft Apprentice from Franklin to the Machine Age in America*. New York: Oxford University Press. (1986).

³² Burke, D. and Carton, R. The Pedagogical, Legal, and Ethical Implications of Unpaid Internships. *Journal of Legal Studies Education* (2013). 30(1).

³³ USDOL. 2009 Findings on Worst Forms of Child Labor. Scientific Research. (2010). Available at <http://www.dol.gov/ilab/programs/ocft/pdf/2009>

work base learning did not grow in prominence until the 1960s. The growth and formalization of the work base learning represents a convergence of numerous social and culture and its rise has been facilitated by government policies.³⁴ The ascendancy of internship model is consistent with the changing culture of work in the post-industrial era.³⁵

Internship has grown as a pure market regime contrary to apprenticeship system. Over time what began as a model to facilitate the transition from school to work has grown into a system where companies embrace interns as unpaid labour.³⁶ Internship in principle has now become a mechanism and a system for the rationalization of the transition from school to work.

The term “intern” was first applied to medical students in the 1920s.³⁷ Government and business eventually adopted the term and internship and co-op programs began to be offered on college campuses in the 1960s, to provide students with real world experiences outside of the classroom.³⁸

Students' perception, values and outcomes regarding internship

Perception is defined as a complex process that causes a person to receive or summarizes information obtained from the environment.³⁹ Perception is relative, selective and orderly.⁴⁰ Perception was categorized into positive and negative perceptions. Positive perception describes all information and knowledge positively, interpret and evaluate things in the environment positively.⁴¹ On the other hand, negative perception describes information not

³⁴ Rose, Mike. *The Mind at Work: Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker*. New York: Viking/Penguin. 2004.

³⁵ Beck, J. E., and Halim, H. Undergraduate internships in accounting: What and how do Singapore interns learn from experience? *Accounting Education*, (2008). 17(2), 151-172.

Ross, A. No-collar. *The humane work place and its hidden costs*. New York. *Basic Books*. (2003).

³⁶ Frenette, A. Making the intern economy. Role and career challenges of the music industry. *Intern work and occupation* (2013). 40. (4) 364-397.

³⁷ Pellin, R. *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy*. Verso Books. (2012)

³⁸ Spradlin, J. I. The evolution of interns. *Forbes.com*. (2009). Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/2009/04/27/intern-history-apprenticeship-leadershipcareers-jobs.html>.

³⁹ Tosi H L, Rizzo JR, Carrol SJ, “Handbook of Organizational Behaviour”, (2000). ISBN 81-87233-34-6

⁴⁰ Robbins, S.P Judge, T.A. *Sangh Organizational behavior*. 13th Ed. (2009).

⁴¹ Lee, M.H., Lu, H.T., Jiao, Y.H. & Yeh, P.H. Research on correlations between off-school internship systems and work performances in hospitality and tourism education. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, (2006). 6 (3), 69-87.

suitable for the perceived object. Perception can thus be explained as cognitive activities of selecting, analyzing, organizing, interpreting and integrating stimuli of any kind of information, physical or social objects. Perception is said to be closely related to attitudes or central to how people react.⁴² That people interpret stimuli into something meaningful to them based on their previous experiences. However, what one perceives may be substantially different from reality⁴³. Also, two persons may perceive the same phenomenon differently⁴⁴.

Several authors in the literature have defined personal values. For instance Kluckhohn and co defined value as a conception, explicit, or implicit distinctive of an individual desirable state, which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action.⁴⁵ Schwartz and co. also defined value as a belief about desirable states guiding the evaluation or selection behaviours based on order of importance.⁴⁶ Kamakura and co. furthermore indicated that personal values are more stable than other types of personal variable such as attitudes because they occupy a central position in a person's cognitive system.⁴⁷

The perception of internship by students is the perceived values applied and derived during the internship programme which could be developed into personal trait.⁴⁸ Student perceptions are categorized as attitudes students possess which influence the satisfaction outcome of the internship experience.⁴⁹ Hergert also indicated that students perceived values influence the success of internship.⁵⁰

⁴² Lindsay P.H and Norman, D.A. Human Processing Information: An Introduction to Psychology. (New York: Academic Press, (1972). p.90.

⁴³ Lindsay P.H and Norman, D.A. Human Processing Information: An Introduction to Psychology. (New York: Academic Press, (1972). p.90.

⁴⁴ Mouly, G. J. Psychology for effective learning. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston (1973). p.49

⁴⁵ Kluckhohn, C. Values and Value-Orientations in the Theory of Action: An Exploration in Definition and Classification. In: Parsons, T. and Shils, E., Eds., Toward a General Theory of Action, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, (1951) 388-433. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4159/harvard.9780674863507.c8>

⁴⁶ Schwartz, S. H., and Bilsky, W. Toward a universal psychological structure of human values. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, (1987). 53(3), 550-562. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.53.3.550>.

⁴⁷ Kamakura, W. A., & Mazzon, J. A. Value segmentation: A model for the measurement of values and value systems. *Journal of Consumer Research*, (1991). 18(2), 208-218. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209253>.

⁴⁸ Green, B.P. Graybeal, P and Madison, R.L. An exploratory study of the effects of professional internships on students' perception of the importance of employment traits. *Journal of Education for Business* (2011). 86 (2) 100-110.

⁴⁹ Yongmei, L.I.U. Jun, X.U. and Weitz B.A. The role of emotional expressions and mentoring in internship learning. *Academy of Management Learning and Education* (2011). 10 (1) 94-110.

⁵⁰ Hergert, M. Student perceptions of the value of internships in business education. *American Journal of Business Education* (2009). 2 (8) 9-13.

Other studies have shown that the amount of task students undertake routinely is strongly associated with motivation and job satisfaction.⁵¹ For instance, Cha and co. indicated that employee's perception of workplace support and working environment affect employee organizational relationship.⁵²

It has been predicted by human capital theory that knowledge, skills and competence that are additionally accumulated during internship result in employability and higher remuneration compared to those who do not undertake internship.⁵³ This assertion was supported that internship enhances the employability of graduates and lead to higher earnings.⁵⁴ A systematic review assessment of 185 organizations regarding internship was done and observed that majority preferred to employed interns to non-interns.⁵⁵ Regression analysis of the study showed that the preference for interns was linked to the perception that they showed initiative and were committed to quality work. Following this brief research review, the current study aims at exploring the perception and values of students regarding internship in Ghana using students of the KNUST, Faculty of Art as case study.

3. Methodology

Research Design

The study employed the descriptive exploratory research design, to enable us obtain a better understanding of the problem as indicated.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Virtanen M, Oksanen T, Batty GD, Ala-Mursula L, Salo P, Elovainio M. Extending employment beyond the pensionable age: a cohort study of the influence of chronic diseases, health risk factors, and working conditions. *PLoS ONE*. (2014). 9(2): e88695. doi: 10.1371

⁵² Cha, M. Y., and Carrier, C. Contingent faculty perceptions of organizational support, workplace attitudes, and teaching evaluations at public research university. *J. Study Postsecondary Tertiary Educ* (2016). 1:121-51

⁵³ Saniter, N., & Siedler, T. Door Opener or Waste of Time? The Effects of Student Internships on Labor Market Outcomes, IZA Discussion Papers 8141, *Institute for the Study of Labor* (IZA). (2014).

⁵⁴ Velez, G. S. and Glener, G.R. Effects of business internships on students, employees and higher education institutions: A system Review. *Journal of Employment counseling* (2015). 52 (3) 121-130.

⁵⁵ Gault J, Leach E, Duey M. Effects of business internships on job marketability: the employers' perspective. *Educ Train* (2010) 52(1):76-88

⁵⁶ Brown, R.B. "Doing Your Dissertation in Business and Management: The Reality of Research and Writing" *Sage Publications*, (2006) p.43.

Target population

The target population is the entire population or group, that a researcher is interested in researching and analyzing.⁵⁷ A sampling frame is then drawn from this target population. As a result, the current final year students of the Faculty of Art, KNUST were the study's target population.

Sampling Technique

The convenience sampling method was used for data collection. This method focuses on gaining information from participants who are convenient to access. By this method the researcher can subjectively select people at random, who are happy to be approached and become part of the research.⁵⁸

Sample Size

The sample size for the study was arrived at by adopting the formula developed for population target size.⁵⁹ According to this formula the sample size of 399.9 students is appropriate for a known target population of 4300 students.

Data collection

Primary data obtained for this study were acquired through the use of questionnaire. The design was adopted because of its appropriateness in describing the current situation of the internship programme.⁶⁰ The questionnaire consisted of a mixture of Likert-scale multiple choice and open and close ended patterns. The questionnaires were self-completed by the respondents due to their high educational levels. The questionnaire was pilot tested and it yielded a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.83. This coefficient

⁵⁷ Wahyumi, The Research Design Maze: Understanding Paradigms, Cases, Methods and Methodologies. *Journal of Applied Management Accounting Research* (2012). 10(1).

⁵⁸ Patton, M.Q. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd Sage Publications; Thousand Oaks, CA: (2002). [Google Scholar].
Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. *Research Methods for Business Students*. Pearson Education Ltd., Harlow. (2012)

⁵⁹ Yamane, Taro. *Statistics, An Introductory Analysis*, 2nd Ed., New York: Harper and Row. (1967).

⁶⁰ Kothari, C.R. *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques* Wishwa. Prakashan, New Delh. (1990)

signified high internal consistency and reliability.⁶¹ Data collection lasted for two weeks and the response rate for the questionnaires was 94.85.

Data Analysis

The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software, version 21.0 was used to process data, while descriptive statistical tools such as frequency and percentage were used to present facts sought from respondents.

3. Results and discussion

Demographic Characteristics of students

Implementation of internship programmes at the university is becoming a key strategic component of cultivating ‘employability in the 21st century.’⁶² The internship programmes of the KNUST Faculty of industrial Art has existed over the past 25 years, partly due to the practical nature of courses offered. All the 376 students interviewed were final year students of the Faculty of Industrial Art who had undergone an internship programme the previous year, comprising the following departments; Industrial Art, Publishing studies, Communication design, Painting/Sculpture and Indegenous Art and Technology. The majority were males (54%). Their ages ranged from 21 to 30 years with the majority (97.8%) being in the range of 22-26 years (Table 1). The period on internship lasted for three months.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of students.

Factor Age years)	Frequency	Percentage
< 20	0	0
21-26	368	97.8
27-32	8	2.2
>31	0	0

⁶¹ Pallant, J. SPSS survival manual A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS for Windows version 10. Buckingham Open University Press. (2001).

⁶² Tomlinson, M., & Holmes, L. Graduate employability in context theory, research and debate. Palgrave Macmillan. (2017).

Factor Age years)	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	203	54
Female	173	46
Department		
Industrial art	128	34.0
Publishing studies	66	17.6
Communication design	15	4.0
Painting/Sculpture	64	17.0
Indigenous art and Technology	103	27.3
Placement selection		
Self	0	0
Lecturer	376	100
Length of internship		
4 weeks	0	0
8 weeks	0	0
12 weeks	376	100
24 weeks	0	0

Perceptions of internship programme

The expectations of internship experiences are usually obtained from conversation with other interns, or what they read about. These expectations guide them during the course of their internship.⁶³ The study observed that all the students had preconceived ideas or expectations regarding the internship process and organizations and the type of work to be under taken during the internship. Some students actually desired to work in some specific organizations based on their expectations.

⁶³ Weick, K. Sensemaking in organizations. *Sage*. (1995).

The study observed that all the participants were interested to work outside the classroom even before the internship programme. The internship was the first working experience for majority (96.2%) of the students. The students indicated that they participated in the programme because it is a departmental requirement and as such very important to complete academic credit (Table 2). The internship was undertaken during the second semester. About 80% of the participants indicated that the internship programme was important and linked the classroom work to real work environment as such they had gained practical experiences in their field of specialization. This statement agrees to one who reported that internship programmes provide the needed opportunities for students to gain practical experience by implementing their classroom knowledge and concepts in real work environment.⁶⁴

Table 2. Perceptions of internship programme

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Interest in undertaken internship programme		
Yes	376	100
No	0	0
Reasons for participation		
Department course requirement	376	100
Own decision to gain practical experience	0	0
Others	0	0
Expectation from internship		
Knowledge improvement	78	20.7
Gain practical experience	293	77.9

⁶⁴ Beenen G, Mrousseau DM. Getting the most from MBA internships: promoting intern learning and job acceptance. *Hum Resour Manag* (2010) 49(1):3.

Muhamad, R., Y. Yahya, S. Shahimi and S. Mahzan, Undergraduate internship attachment in accounting: The intern's perspective. *International Education Studies*, (2009). 2(4): 49-53

Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Help secure a job after school	5	1.3
Work place safety		
Adequate work space	120	31.9
Adequate staff office	26	6.9
Provision of adequate PPEs	12	3.2
First aid in place	18	4.8
Financial Challenges		
Accommodation	40	10.6
Living expenses	263	69.9
Transportation	73	19.4
Received incentives		
Yes	6	1.6
No	370	98.4

Four items were measured for work place safety (adequate work space, adequate staff office, provision of adequate PPEs and first aid). All these items were considered poor in all the organizations that the students undertook their internships and need immediate attention. Poor working environment including overcrowding of employees, have been shown to affect the ability of workers to work effectively impact on the productivity of the organization.⁶⁵

Financial challenges encountered were measured by three statements; (living expenses, transportation and accommodation) (Table 2). The study observed that some of the students had access to financial support from parents/family, but for the majority (69%) personal finances was a barrier so allowances from organizations was a key determinant factor for the success of their internship. Some of the students expressed dissatisfaction on organizations because they did not provide any incentives.

⁶⁵ Banbury S & Berry D. Office Noise and Employee Concentration: Identifying Causes of Disruption and Potential Improvements *Ergonomics*, (2005). Vol 48 No 1 pp25-37.

Block L & Stokes G. Performance and Satisfaction in Private Versus Non-private Work Settings *Environment and Behavior*. (1989). Vol 21 pp277-297.

Leaman A. Dissatisfaction and Office Productivity Facilities. (1995). Vol 13 No 2 pp13-19.

Impact of internship on student skills development

The impact of internship on skill development of the participants is summarized in Table 3. All the students regardless of their experience and expectations indicated they had value for the internship which they believed will play an important role in their future career objectives. They viewed internships as opportunities to learn new skills and establish networks.

Table 3. Impact of internship on student skills development

Factor	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Interpersonal skill development	3.2	4.3	3.3	54.8	24.5
Communication skill development	1.9	5.3	53.0	31.9	8.0
Learning of new skills	0	1.1	10.7	57.2	30.6
Confidence build up	0	0	3.2	94.1	2.6
Network building	0	0	1.8	96.3	1.8
Contribution to personal growth	0	0	20.4	78.1	1.4
Difficult/ heavy workload	10.5	58.6	6.1	24.8	0
Good staff cooperation	0	12.8	8.6	72.2	6.3
Changed perception of internship programme	0	48.4	12.8	36.2	2.2
Usefulness of internship	0	0	8.4	68.2	23.3
Internship aspirations met	0	4.4	6.8	82.3	6.4

It was reported that a positive organizational work environment enables interns to work comfortably and acquire the relevant practical knowledge and

skills.⁶⁶ Interpersonal relationships with coworkers in organizations such as giving a helpful hand, encouragement, standing in for, and other welfare matters all contribute to job satisfaction.⁶⁷ Results obtained in this study observed that the interpersonal relationships between interns and employees was very good with about 294 (79%) of the students agreeing to enjoying good relationships with the employees at the various organization (Table 3). This according to the students allowed them to feel part of the companies thereby enhancing their psychological states at the work places.

An internship may be viewed by the student as a learning experience, but not necessary seen that way by the internship employer.⁶⁸ This assertion came to light in this study as some (24%) of the students complained of too much work or so much expected from them by their employers. Another complained of some of the students was the issue of undefined nature of jobs and role of interns. These factors depend on the structure and needs of organizations at a given time. Again, organizations do not have special jobs designated for interns. This however, contradicts the reports of studies that have shown that well-structured organizations allow for constancy under conditions of constant turnover of personnel.⁶⁹ Such arrangement advocates for the role of an intern to remain relatively constant. It has also been established that internships provide excellent opportunities for students to synthesize the classroom knowledge with actual workplace experience and familiarize themselves with industrial work.⁷⁰ This assertion confirms the findings in this study, where the students indicated that the internship programme allowed them to acquire new skills, and built up their confidence. The students described a variety of skills learned during the internship including, mastering and use of some equipment and tools, software and report writing, and communication skills.

The study observed that a proportion (48%) of the students encountered a mismatch between expectation and experience which probably could lead to job

⁶⁶ Tracey, J. B., Tannenbaum, S.T and Kavanagh, M. J. Applying Trained Skills on the Job: The Importance of the Work Environment. *Journal of Applied Psychology*. (1995). 80(2):239-252.

⁶⁷ Rothman, M. Internships: most and least favored aspects among a business school sample psychological reports. (2003). 93(3 pt,1): 921-4.

⁶⁸ Lundsteen, N. Learning between university and the world. Education. (2011).

⁶⁹ Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. The social psychology of organizations. New York: Wiley. (1978).

⁷⁰ Coco, M. Internships: A try before you buy arrangement. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, (2000). 65, 41-43.

dissatisfaction. This finding agrees with that of⁷¹, who reported in his study that the overall quality of the internship programme of South Korea universities did not meet the expectations of students. This also affirms an earlier study in the UK that observed discrepancies between what was expected from the internship and what the interns experienced.⁷² Similar finding between unfulfilled expectations and disappointment was also found in Australia as half of the students began to consider other careers after internship.⁷³

Impact of work place characteristics on student internship

The general characteristics of the work environment in addition to the work itself influence job satisfaction.⁷⁴ Another important related characteristic is the degree to which the work environment offers interns substantial learning opportunities. A significant correlation between workplace learning opportunities and general job satisfaction was observed.⁷⁵

Another work place characteristics that relates to job satisfaction is superior support.⁷⁶ Studies have shown that supervisory support reduces work stress; create a friendly work atmosphere which also enhances job satisfaction.⁷⁷ Supervisor support is associated with higher perceived developmental value of internship. It is therefore considered as very important since the supervisor

⁷¹ Cho, M. Student Perspectives on the Quality of Hotel Management Internships. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, (2006). 6, 61-76. https://doi.org/10.1300/J172v06n01_04.

⁷² Leslie, D., & Richardson, A. Tourism and cooperative education in UK undergraduate courses: Are the benefits being realized? *Tourism Management*, (2000). 21, 489-498.

⁷³ Richardson, S. Undergraduate Tourism and Hospitality Students Attitudes toward a Career in the Industry: A Preliminary Investigation. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism*, (2008). 8, 23-46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/153>.

⁷⁴ Steers R. M., Porter L. W. Work and motivation: Some concluding observations. *Motivation and Work Behavior*, (1991). 1991, 573-582.

⁷⁵ Rowden, R.W. and Conine Jr., C.T. The Impact of Workplace Learning on Job Satisfaction in Small US Commercial Banks. *Journal of Workplace Learning*. (2005). 17, 215-230. <https://doi.org/10.1108/13665620510597176>.

Schmidt, K. H. Organizational Commitment: A Further Moderator in the Relationship between Work-Stress and Strain? *International Journal of Stress Management*, (2007). 14, 26-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.14.1.26>.

⁷⁶ Ellickson. M.C. and Logsdon, K. Determinants of Job Satisfaction of Municipal Government Employees. *Public Personnel Management*, (2002) 31, 343-358. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009102600203100307>.

⁷⁷ Babin, B. J., & Boles, J. S. The Effects of Perceived Co-Worker Involvement and Supervisor Support on Service Provider Role Stress, Performance and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Retailing*. (1996). 72, 57-75. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359\(96\)90005-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4359(96)90005-6).

indirectly represents the organization.⁷⁸ Pellin similarly indicated that a hostile or unfriendly supervisor could impact negatively on interns.⁷⁹ Almost all (95.6%) the students in this study indicated that they received the needed support from their supervisors which contributed greatly to the success of their programme. It is noteworthy that some employees/staff of the reorganizations continued to play a post internship role of work colleague relationship whereby E-mails and other messages are sent to check on some of the students.

Table 4. Impact of work place characteristics on student internship

Factor	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
Job relatedness to course work	0	0	2.1	21.8	76.0
Meaningfulness of work	0	0	0.5	18.0	81.4
Allow Independent work	95.2	3.0	0	1.0	0.5
Encourage Team work	0	0.6	0	18.6	79.8
Available learning opportunities	0	5.0	0	65.4	423.4
Supervisor support	0	0.5	0	95.2	4.3
Job satisfaction	0.5	1.2	0	96.3	2.0

A sense of responsibility, amount of decision making and independence of work allowed, all motivate and expand domain relevant skills.⁸⁰ Unfortunately, only (1.5%) of the student were allow independent working atmosphere.

⁷⁸ McHugh, P. P. The impact of compensation, supervision and work design on internship efficacy: Implications for educators, employers and prospective interns. *Journal of Education and Work*, (2017). 30(4), 367-382

⁷⁹ Pellin, R. Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy. Verso Books. (2012).

⁸⁰ Coelho, F., & Augusto, M. Job characteristics and the creativity of frontline service employees. *Journal of Service Research*, (2010). 13, 426-438.

Nonetheless the interns attested to good supervisory support and team work including proper guidance, job specifics and good monitoring attitude. This contributed to a rich learning experience as explained by the interns.

Excellent work environment was observed to be a determining factor of job satisfaction for majority of the students (Table. 4). This is unsurprising since the potential to learn had long been shown to be one of the key motivational for participating in internships⁸¹. The finding in this study therefore collaborates with that of D'abate.⁸² Students shared the way that the internship contributed to their personal growth and career development for instance learning to adapt to new working environment with different day to day work routine. The students were of the view that the experience gained during the internship process had provided them the opportunity to have a realistic understanding of anticipated future job characteristics. In spite of the observed and experiences work place characteristics, the students remained optimistic as they envisaged the futures.

4. Conclusion

The study explored the dynamics of the student internship programme in Ghana, focusing on perceptions, values, access and development outcomes. The data of the study was obtained from 376 final year undergraduate students of the Faculty of Art, KNUST. It was indicated that the outcome of internship experience is always the critical concern for the student who participated in the programme.⁸³ The results show that all the students regardless of their experience and expectations believed they had value for the internship which they believed will play an important role in their future career trajectories. The findings also showed that some of the organizations did not provide the necessary good working environment and incentives to interns. Research has shown that when interns expectations are not met, they turn to derive motivation from other attractions thereby negating the purpose of the programme. Therefore, since internship has become a key component of the university curriculum, students'

⁸¹ Daugherty S. N. Internships and co-ops: An excellent way to preview and plan your future. *The Black Collegian*, (2000). 31, 52-56.

⁸² D' abate, C. P. Youndt, M.A. and Wenzel, K.E. Making the Most of an Internship: An Empirical Study of Internship Satisfaction. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, (2009). The 8(4):527-539

⁸³ Gupta, P.B. Burns, D.J. and Schiferl, J. S. An exploration of student satisfaction with internship experiences in marketing Business Education and Accreditation (2010). 2 (1) 27-37.

perceptions concerning the programme should be considered as critical for the continuous success of the programme.

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