Business Educators' Appraisal of Relevance of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) to Business Education programme in Universities in South East, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The essence of the study was to appraise the relevance of the Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme to business education programme. The study sought to identify the relevance of SIWES to the development of student academic career, the relevance of SIWES to business education graduates' job placement and the place of SIWES in the exposure of students to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population consisted of 77 Business Educators from Universities offering Business Education in South- East Nigeria. The researcher adopted a survey design for the study. A structured questionnaire of 28 items was used to elicit responses for the study. The research instrument was validated by three experts, the correlation coefficient obtained using the Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was .88. This indicates that the instrument was of a high level of reliability. Research questions were analyzed using the mean with standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using t-test at .05 level of significance. The findings showed that SIWES is relevant to student academic career,business education graduates' job placement and in exposure of students to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools. The researcher recommended among others that students' should be properly and adequately oriented on the importance of SIWES to their academic and professional development from their first year of study, monitored and supervised properly by both school and industry based supervisor to enhance their seriousness for job placement and students should participate actively in SIWES for development of their academic career.

Keywords: SIWES, Business Education, Job Skills, Job placement.

Introduction

The main purpose of education is to equip individuals with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values desirable in the society. Education serves as a veritable vehicle for the actualization of the objectives of business education. Business education in particular aims at equipping its recipients with practical skills and values to become self-reliant and more employable in the world of work (that is, education for business, about business and entrepreneurial motive). Igboke (2012) defined business education as that aspect of educational programme that provides the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as producers and/or consumers of goods and services that business offers. Furthermore, Osuala (2005) posited that business education is a programme of instruction which provides student with information and competencies required by all in managing personal business affairs and to render services in the business world. Acquiring skills provide effective and comprehensive practical training to prepare all trainees to function effectively in the dynamic business world. Aliyu (2013) stated that the purpose of business education stresses the need for: specialized instruction to prepare student for career in business; fundamental instruction to help students assume their economic role as consumer, workers and citizens and background instruction to assist student in preparing for professional career requiring advanced study.

Business education is concerned with the impartation of business orientation and knowledge to students for personal and national development. Business education involves teaching students the fundamental, concepts, theories and process of business. Okoli (2010) explained that business education is an important part of total education which emphasizes on skill and competencies acquisition for the use in office and business related occupation. Similarly, Nwanewezi (2010) describe business education as encompassing education for office occupation, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. Abdulkadri (2011) noted that one remarkable important characteristics of business education programme is that, it products can function independently as self-employed and employers of labour. To this end, the tenet of business education embraces basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office environment and vocational practices. Education in this field occurs at several levels including primary, secondary and higher education, with the greatest activity in the later. However, Igboke (2005) enumerated the following

as the objectives of business education at all levels of education.

> *To develop basic skills for personal use in the future. To acquire the basic knowledge and skills for business education. To relate the knowledge and skills acquired to national development. To develop basic skills in office occupation. To provide the needed background for teaching in business education. To prepare student for further training in business education. To provide orientation and basic skill with which to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further training.*

In order to become economically literate and informed citizens, wise consumers and competent workers, each person should have some understanding in the world of business and how it functions (Igboke, 2005). It is very necessary that everyone posseses at least minimum knowledge, skills and understanding with which to make the judgment needed in our free enterprise society and to make contribution to the world of work. Business education plays a very important part in providing students at all levels with the ability to function effectively in business world. The implication of the recent privatization and investment of the various sectors for Nigeria's economy is that there was a raising demand for skilled personnel. Also, with industrial development of Nigeria to achieve Nigeria's vision 20:2020, there is need for the acquisition of new skills and adaptation of the skills to industrial structure. Okorie (2000) explained that those who lack sufficient skills live on the subsistent level, and often out of desperation and frustration, constitute a nuisance to the society. One therefore, stands to reason that for education to be meaningful, functional and relevant to the demands of the present-day industrial sector, educational institutions need to give their students a system of education which is job oriented. Okoh (2010) stated that institution of higher learning spend tremendous time on theory at the expense of developing practical skills because of the lack of teaching materials and facilities needed to impart on the student the necessary skills needed in industries. Due to lack of adequate practical training in business education as a result of shortage of the required facilities and equipment, there is high rate of unemployment amongst the graduates.

In an attempt to bridge the existing gap between classroom theory based and practical training, the federal government of Nigeria, through the Industrial Training Fund introduced the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) in the tertiary

institutions to correct the defects posed by theory based classroom training. According to Okorie (2001), students' industrial work experience is a skill training programme designed to expose and prepare students in institutions of higher learning for industrial work situation they are likely to meet after graduation. SIWES is a cooperative arrangement between the school and industries for all undergoing courses that call for exposure in industrial activities during their training in school. Ekpenyong (2008) posited that SIWES provides an avenue for evaluating participant students both as students and as prospective employees, and where defects are found in a student's job performance or attitude to work, they could be guided to correct such defects through proper supervision prior to taking up permanent employment.

Ojukwu, Emeahara, Aboyade & Chris-Isreal, (2015) explained that .SIWES is also an effort to bridge the existing gap between theory and practice and expose students to necessary skills for smooth transition from the classroom to the world of work. It enables students to acquire technical skills and experience for professional development in their study. Business Education programme is expected to be related to the world of work. Business Education is expected to prepare its recipient to earn a living/wage by providing them with vocational skills.

Therefore, for industrial work experience to give the student the opportunity to utilize some of their academic knowledge and skill in a real-life industrial job environment, industries routine operation management have to be related to their academic discipline. Consequent upon the training offered in the workplace during the industrial attachment period, most of the students after graduation may be found worthy to gain permanent employment in those industries or companies where they had their training. This goes a long way to reducing graduate unemployment thereby bridging the existing gap between the classroom theory-based and practical training, which seems to be the hallmark of the students industrial work experience in our institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. The objectives of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme according to Industrial Training Fund (2004) include:

1. To provide opportunity for students to supplement the theoretical learning with practical industrial activities in their various discipline.
2. To expose and prepare students for industrial work situations they are likely to meet after their graduation.
3. To expose students to work method and experiment in handling equipment and machinery that may not be available in their various educational institution.

4. To enlist and strength employers' involvement in the entire educational process of preparing students for employment in industry; and assessing the pedigree of students available for job opportunities in the future.

5. To prepare the students for a business career by merging their analytical power with self-reliance thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice as well as making transition from school to work easier.

The duration for student attachment is expected to be for a period between three to six months and the scheme to be organized and implemented by three bodies, namely: the government, institution, and the industry with the collaborative effort of educational agencies such as the national universities commission (NUC), the National Board Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) playing supervisory roles. The institutions are expected to have a coordinating unit each with special personnel designated to integrate relevant industries into the process by making investigation on their relevance and ensuring their readiness to accept students for placement. Both the institutions and the industries are expected to work with collaborative effort for the students' effective and efficient practical training.

Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is a skill development programme, geared towards bridging the gap between theories learnt in the class and the actual practice. However, in spite of its laudable objectives, the scheme has been faced with a lot of challenges such as non-acceptance of students by some employers, lack of supervision of students by some institutions, lack of finance for running of the scheme among others. This neccessitated the study on the relevance of SIWES to Business Education Programme in South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is a human capital formation programme through industrial attachment for which students are expected to have a practical experience on the basis of theories and principle acquired in teaching and learning process. However the prevalence of the inability of participants of SIWES to secure employment after the programme or even perform effectively if given employment cast doubt on the continuing relevance of SIWES to the contemporary industrial development drive in Nigeria. Erin (2015) stated that often jobs are readily available, but the graduates lack what is needed to get and keep job. Oduma (2006) also opined that

the technological trends in modern offices today do not only cause some jobs to disappear in direct correlation with the amount of training in such jobs, but also result in up-grading of other jobs and the emergence of previously unknown office occupations. Thus, employers of labour continue to invest funds on human resources development to enable them fit into the organizations and perform their duties professionally. This is as a result of graduate skill mismatch to the expectation of employers on the professional employment and stay in it especially in modern organizations. Many graduates of business education find it very difficult to secure a job or start up a business on their own and be self-reliant due to lack of requisite skills and competencies. It is against this backdrop, that the study sought to find out the relevant of SIWES on business education programme as perceived by business educators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the relevance of SIWES to Business Education programme in universities in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study assessed:

1. the relevance of SIWES to the development of students' academic career.
2. the place of SIWES in the exposure of students to work methods in acquiring skills and handling tools.
3. the relevance of SIWES to Business education graduates' job placement.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered for the study.

1. What are the relevance of SIWES to the development of students' academic career?.
2. Where is the place of SIWES in the exposure of students to work methods in acquiring skills and handling tools?
3. What are the relevance of SIWES to Business Education graduates' job placement?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the relevance of SIWES to the development of students' academic career.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the place of SIWES in the exposure os students to work methods in accquiring skills and handling tools.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the relevance of SIWES to

Business Education graduates' job placement.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a survey design for the study. The population of this study is 77 business educators in universities in South-East, Nigeria. There was no sample because the whole population was used for the study. The instrument for data collection was questionnaire designed by the researcher titiled Business Educators' Appraisal of relevance of SIWES to Business Education Programme Questionnaire (BEASBEPQ). The questionnaire was made of two sections; section A and section B. Section A is made up of the demographic profile of the respondent while section B contained three clusters with twenty eight (28) items that were used to answer the research questions. Cluster one had eleven items, two had eleven items, and three had six items. The research instrument utilized a 4-point rating scale with the following response option: strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and strongly Disagree (SD). The research instrument was face validated by experts. The test-re-test reliability method was adopted. The correlation coefficient obtained using Spearman's Brown Prophesy Formula was .88. This indicates that the instrument was of a high reliability. Method of data collection was the use of questionnare. Mean with standard deviation was used for analyzing the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. When the mean value of an item was 2.50 or above it was regarded as Agreed and below 2.50 was regarded as Disagreed. For the hypotheses, when the t-calculated value was less than the t- tabulated, it suggested that there was no significant difference in the responses and the null hypothesis was not rejected otherwise it was rejected.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the relevance of SIWES in the development of the students academic career?

Table 1: Mean ratings and Standard deviation of the relevance of SIWES in the development of students academic career

N = 77

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	MALE		FEMALE		DECISION
		X	SD	X	SD	
1	It enhances the intellectual development of the student.	3.51	0.70	3.54	0.67	Agreed
2	Students are exposed to work rules and experience for the first time.	3.11	1.15	3.08	0.60	Agreed
3	It enhances student's training and development in their profession	3.52	0.70	3.52	0.54	Agreed
4	Student finds ways and means for the improvement of the skilled, knowledge and attitude on the job.	2.70	0.77	3.08	0.61	Agreed
5	Students learn work ethics and relation.	3.29	0.67	3.56	0.68	Agreed
6	It promote the spirit of creativity and innovativeness in the student	3.11	0.85	3.40	0.67	Agreed
7	It provides students the opportunity to practice what they learnt theoretically.	3.56	0.51	3.50	0.54	Agreed
8	It improves the quality of practical training in Business Education.	3.03	0.76	3.10	0.73	Agreed
9	Career guidance initiatives to students by industrialists.	2.96	0.81	3.14	1.13	Agreed
10	Enhances education training to meet market needs and enhancing innovation in students' academic career.	3.00	0.48	3.42	0.54	Agreed
11	Increases entrepreneurial development in students academic career	3.41	0.70	3.58	0.50	Agreed
	Cluster mean	**3.20**	**0.74**	**3.36**	**0.66**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The data presented in Table 1 showed mean values ranging from 2.70 - 3.58 and a cluster mean of 3.28. It reveals that SIWES enhances students intellectual development, students learn work ethics and relation, students learn career guidance initiatives, increases students enterpreneurial development, improve students quality of practical training among others. This showed that the respondents believed that SIWES is relevant to the development of students academic career.

Research Question 2

Where is the place of SIWES in the exposure of students to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the place of SIWES in the exposure of students to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools.

N=77

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	MALE		FEMALE		DECISION
		X	SD	X	SD	
1	Effective communication skills.	3.48	0.64	3.04	0.83	Agreed
2	Skill in the performance of the profession.	3.77	0.51	3.18	0.70	Agreed
3	Personal and group relation skill.	3.00	0.68	2.78	0.79	Agreed
4	Ability to work with others effectively.	3.18	0.74	2.70	1.14	Agreed
5	Problem analysis and solving skills.	2.96	0.76	2.76	0.96	Agreed
6	Time management skills.	3.26	0.45	3.12	0.77	Agreed
7	Effective management principles and skills.	2.96	0.76	3.44	0.76	Agreed
8	Development of reflective, creative and innovation skill on the job.	2.78	0.64	3.40	0.53	Agreed
9	Financial management skill.	3.11	0.68	3.56	0.67	Agreed
10	Ability to recognize a novel business opportunity.	3.30	0.56	3.28	0.64	Agreed
11	SIWES exposes students to new work method	3.07	0.68	3.40	0.70	Agreed
	Cluster mean.	**3.17**	**0.65**	**3.15**	**0.77**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The data presented in table 2 showed mean values ranging from 2.78 - 3.77 and a cluster mean of 3.32. The respondents show that communication skills, problem analysis and solving skills, time management skills, financial management skills, creativity and innovative skills among others are developed during industrial training. This showed that SIWES helps in the exposure of students to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools.

Research Question 3: What are the relevance of SIWES to Business education graduates' job placement?

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the relevance of SIWES to Business education graduates job placement.

N=77

S/N	ITEM DESCRIPTION	MALE		FEMALE		DECISION
		X	SD	X	SD	
1	SIWES provides chance of direct employment for students after graduation.	3.14	0.77	3.58	0.64	Agreed
2	SIWES guides the students to acquire skills that will enable him get employed after school.	3.37	0.56	2.96	0.83	Agreed
3	Some industries retain students that performed well in SIWES after graduation.	3.48	0.64	3.54	0.58	Agreed
4	SIWES enables graduate student to compete globally in the world of work.	3.29	0.82	2.96	0.83	Agreed
5	SIWES provides skill match of graduates to the labour market.	3.74	0.64	3.34	0.75	Agreed
6	SIWES acquaint students to industries that offer job placement in future.	3.11	0.80	3.54	0.68	Agreed
	Cluster mean	**3.35**	**0.71**	**3.32**	**0.72**	**Agreed**

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The data presented in Table 3 showed mean values ranging from 3.11 - 3.74 and a cluster mean of 3.28. The respondents show that SIWES provides chance of direct employment for students after graduation, guides the students to acquire skills that will enable them get employed, some industries retain students that performed well in SIWES after graduation, compete globally in the world of work and so on. This showed that SIWES is relevant to business education graduates job placement.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the relevance of SIWES to the development of students' academic career.

Table 4: t-test analysis of mean differences in the mean ratingss of male and female Business Educators on the relevance of SIWES to the development of students' academic career.

Gender	Mean	SD	N	DF	T-Cal	T-Critical	P value	Decision
Male	3.20	0.74	27	75	-0.97	1.960	0.334	NS
Female	3.36	0.66	50					

NS = Not significant

The t-test analysis presented in Table 4 revealed that the t-calculated value of -0.97 is less than t-critical value of 1.960 at 75 degree of freedom (df). This showed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of the male and female business

educators on the relevance of SIWES to the development of students' academic career. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the place of SIWES in the exposure of students to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools

Table 5: t-test analysis of mean differences in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators on the place of SIWES in the exposure of students to work method in aquiring skills and handling tools.

Gender	Mean	SD	N	DF	T-Cal	T-Critical	P value	Decision
Male	3.18	0.72	27	75	.17	1.960	0.861	NS
Female	3.35	0.71	50					

NS = Not significant

The t-test analysis presented in Table 5 revealed that the t-calculated value of .17 is less than t-critical value of 1.960 at 75 degree of freedom (df). This showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the place of SIWES in the exposure of students' to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female respondents on the relevance of SIWES to business education graduates job placement.

Table 6: t-test analysis of mean differences in the mean ratings of male and female Business Educators on the relevance of SIWES to business education graduates job placement.

Gender	Mean	SD	N	DF	T-Cal	T-Critical	P value	Decision
Male	3.32	0.72	27	75	.18	1.960	0.861	NS
Female	3.35	0.71	50					

NS = Not Significant

The t-test analysis presented in Table 6 revealed that the t-calculated value of .18 is less than t-critical value of 1.960 at 75 degree of freedom (df). Therefore, there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the

relevance of SIWES to business education graduates in job placement. Therefore the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The result of the study in table one showed that SIWES is relevant in the development of the student academic career. The present findings however, is supported by Mofesola (2012) who stated that the placement of students for industrial training through SIWES is relevant to the student course of study because it fulfills the number one objective of the federal government for establishing SIWES which is an avenue to make student acquire practical skills compared to classroom theoretical studies. Also this finding agree with the findings of Okolocha (2012) which showed that the student agreed generally that SIWES helped to make what was learnt in the classroom more meaningful by exposing and equipping them with practical experience. In the same vein, Ojukwu, Emeahara, Aboyade & Chris-Isreal (2015) in their findings agreed that SIWES provides avenue for technical skill, experience and professional development. The study also revealed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the relevance of SIWES to the development of students' academic career.

The result in table two showed that SIWES helps in the exposure of students to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools. This finding is supported by Oyeniyi (2011) which noted that SIWES affords students the opportunity to familiarize and exposing themselves to the needed experience in handling industrial equipment and machinery that are not usually available in their institution. Angela & Prince (2012) in their study also noted that SIWES afford students the opportunity to acquire practical skills and familiarize themselves to office equipment and machines. This study also showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the place of SIWES in the exposure of students' to work method in acquiring skills and handling tools.

The result of the study in table three showed that SIWES helps the business education graduates in job placement. This is in line with the finding of Mafe (2009), who stated that when students conscientiously participated in SIWES they acquire skills and competencies leading to their professional development. This is because the skills acquired during SIWES are internalized and become relevant in job placements. This assertion was supported by Okoh (2010) who also find out in her study that students were able to learn about development in their course of study through their

participation in SIWES that it added a good deal to their knowledge, and they were able to apply the knowledge gained at school to the real life situation. The study also showed that there was no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female business educators on the relevance of SIWES to business education graduates in job placement.

Conclusion

The study concludes that SIWES is relevant to the student course of study because it fulfills the number one objective of the federal government for establishing SIWES which is an avenue to make students' acquire practical skills compared to classroom theoretical studies. SIWES helps in the job placement of students after graduation, development of students' academic career and also exposure of students to work methods in acquiring skills and handling tools.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Student should be properly and adequately oriented on the importance of SIWES to their academic and profession development from their first year of study.
2. Student should be properly monitored and supervised by both school and industry based supervisors to enhance their participation.
3. Students should participate actively in SIWES for development of their academic career.

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