

## Internship, Employability and Organisational Commitment in the Hospitality Industry in Bauchi Metropolis, Bauchi State, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the relationship between internship and employability in the hospitality industry in Bauchi State. The study adopted the cross-sectional survey in its investigation of the variables. Primary source of data was generated through self-administered questionnaire. The population of the study consist of 81 respondents made up of management staff, human resource managers, internship supervisors as well as interns themselves drawn from two purposefully selected hotels (Larema Hotels & Suites and Command Guest House) in Bauchi metropolis. The sample size of 72 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table. After data cleaning, only data of 67 respondents were finally used for data analysis. Data generated were analysed and presented using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Statistics. The findings revealed a positive but weak relationship between internship and employability in the hospitality industry in Bauchi metropolis, Bauchi State. The study recommended that organization should truly see internship as a recruitment process and commit resources to it which enable them to initiate requests for interns in desired areas of interests. This will lead to greater commitment from hosting organizations. The task of looking for internship placement should not be entirely left to the students.

**Keywords:** Organisational Commitment, Internship and Employability Skills

### **Introduction**

Human capital management involves an approach to managing people that regards them as assets and emphasizes that competitive advantage is achieved by strategic investments in those assets through employee engagement, retention, training and development. According to Armstrong (2010), formally organized education at all levels and on-the-job training are some of the means whereby investments in human beings are undertaken. Amoah and Baum (as cited in Dario & Snezana, 2017) argue that the increasing wave of globalization demands that organizations seek for qualified personnel who can work with people trained from all around the world. In addition to the structural shift caused by globalization; technological changes and innovation,

changes in work organization, environmental changes and demographic trends have taken very different forms across countries resulting in rapid changes in skill requirements (World Bank Report, 2016). Also, unemployment and underemployment are becoming widespread among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) graduates (Amimo, 2012; Ponge, 2013). To this end, internships are increasingly seen as a central strategy in solving the so-called “skills gap,” such that newly trained workers would fill open positions and boost local economies (Hora, Wolfgram & Thompson, 2017). It is believed that students get real-work experience and establish professional networks, educators give their students the opportunities to translate theory into practice, and that employers get inexpensive and educated workers that may turn into new hires.

Increased demand for knowledge workers promoted the importance and development of formal internship by business schools in the late 1960s. Consequently, internship has increasingly become an integral part of the school-to-work transition and Universities took the lead in establishing internship programs and making them appealing by allocating course credit and pushing the experience in competing for jobs (Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth & Rose, 2013). Organizations began using internships as a recruiting tool (Spradlin, 2009) while students started using them as a way to test-drive careers they might not even be interested in or only because they need to have the work experience on their records (Allen, Quinn, Hollingworth & Rose, 2013).

This work-based learning is currently one of the most influential ideas in public higher education and workforce development policy in many countries. Silva, Lopes, Costa, Melo, Dias, Brito, *et al.* (as cited in Hora, Wolfgram & Thompson, 2017) are of the view that the advocacy for work-based learning is based on the fact that hands-on experiences in authentic and real-world contexts are an essential complement to theoretical knowledge and a mechanism that facilitates students’ transition from higher education to work. According to Prajapati (2013), internships also help students to improve their other personality attributes such as get better oral and written communication, management, direction, time, and project management skills. A student who has undertaken internship has better market value in the business world which means that organizations are always willing to engage them at high remuneration. Crumbley and Summers (2019) are of the view that internships significantly diminish the risks of pre-employment screening in cases where offers of stable employment might be contemplated and allow the students to also learn about the organization.

Internships are an important part of academic curriculum in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Nigeria and have often been required for graduation by institutions of higher education because they are perceived to help students increase their employability as well as provide educational value (ITF, 2016). Employability is the capability to gain and maintain employment with emphasis on developing critical, reflective abilities, to empower and enhance the learner. Although unemployment rates are expected to decrease with more education, a gap exists between the quality of graduates produced by HEIs and what the market demands (Ajiboye, Oyebanji & Awoniyi, 2013; Asuquo & Agboola, 2014; Oluwatayo, Opoko, Ezema & Iroham, 2016; Chen, Shen & Gosling, 2018). There is a growing concern that graduates of higher institutions lack adequate practical knowledge which theoretical education was not capable of producing

(Oyekanmi, 2017) thus creating a gap between the intended results and the actual impact of internships on employability. Majority of graduates in Nigeria remain unemployed and for those employed, there are allegations by their employers that most of them lack job-related skills and perform below expectations (Olofintoye & Prince, 2013; Sodipo, 2014; Oyekanmi, 2017). The questions to ask are: how effective is internship in developing employability skills and promoting employment? What organizational supports and opportunities are available with respect to internship in enhancing employability? Are internship experiences influential in employment today in the hospitality industry? This study will be guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between Internship and Employability skills in Hotels in Bauchi State?
- ii. Does Organizational Commitment Moderate the Relationship between Internship and Employability skills in the in Hotels in Bauchi State?

### **Internship and Employability**

Within a background of increasing competition in the graduate labour market and uncertainty over the exact combination of skills required, work experience has become increasingly important in the selection of graduates (Golden & Baffoe-Bonnie, 2011). Work experience is now primarily used to distinguish among otherwise equally qualified graduates (Siebert & Wilson, 2013). Internships are an effective approach to bridging the gap between education and employment demands (Sapp & Zhang, 2009). Internship is not a new phenomenon and has been defined variously by experts. Taylor (1988) defined internships as structured and career-relevant work experience obtained by students before graduation from an academic program. According to American Institute of Certified Public Accountants as cited in Wen (2010) internship is work experience in industrial, business, or government work situations that leverages the class guidelines experience through practical work experience.

Furco as cited in Bukaliya (2012), define internships as programs engaging students in service activities that primarily provide them with hands-on experience that enhances their learning relevant to a particular study area One outstanding definition of internship was given by National Association of Colleges and Employers [NACE], (2018) as a form of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. An internship, therefore, must be in the form of experiential learning and must integrate knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skills development in an organizational setting. Also, Yang, Cheung, and Song (2016) consider it the most useful of the possible experiential learning activities to enhance employability. Internships have significant benefits in improving employability among students (Ishengoma & Vaaland, 2016). Students reported being 2.5 times more confident in their employability when exposed to an internship (Qenani, MacDougall, & Sexton, 2014; Cohen, 2014).

Jung and Lee (2017) argued that participation in an internship shortens the duration of time between graduation and acquiring a job, and increases wages and overall job satisfaction. Those who participate in an internship are hired sooner by top organizations with higher salaries relative

to students without internships (Weible & McClure, 2011). Nunley, Pugh, Romero, and Seals (2016) believe that internships increase the callback rate for interviews, suggesting that internships make applicants more employable than those without. On their part, Silva et al. (2017) found that graduates with internships had unemployment rates below the national average particularly through providing new skills, knowledge, and abilities that would help the transition from college to work. Completion of internships effectively increases the chances of students getting a job, and businesses generally prefer graduates with prior internship experience. The experiences gained in internships have also been found to strengthen management competencies in preparing new entrants to progress in the hospitality management industry (Jack, Stansbie, & Sciarini, 2017). Students who do not participate in internship programs are said to ultimately find themselves at a disadvantage (Narayanan, Olk & Fukami, 2010; Binder *et al.*, 2015). Galloway *et al.* (2014) submit that internships benefit both interns and host organizations being useful for developing soft skills such as interpersonal skills, professionalism, confidence, and self-efficacy. Employers value interpersonal skills and interns are perceived to require less need for socialization or training to help them adjust to the work environment (Holyoak, 2013).

The combination of institutional learning and practical work experience is necessary to develop technical and problem-solving skills, enhance communication skills, team working, customer service skills, creativity and increase the probability of finding employment but decrease the likelihood of postgraduate studies (Saniter & Siedler, 2014). Internships have a positive impact on earnings (Gault, Leach & Duey, 2010). Internships provide useful labour at low cost to employers (Maertz *et al.*, 2014). Recruitment and training costs can be reduced by employing interns (Dobratz, Singh & Abbey, 2014). Many graduates continue to suffer disproportionately from decent or low-quality jobs measured in terms of low pay, employment status, exposure to occupational hazards and injury. New and emerging forms of 'non-standard' employment are coming to dominate young people's

In assessing the impact of mandatory internships on employability of college graduates in Mexico, Galvan, Fisher, Casman and Small (2013) focus on whether students' performance as interns and the number of internships they completed were significant in determining their employability in various labor-market conditions. The research evaluated the records of 1,184 graduates from a Mexican private university who graduated in the company, engineering, design, and compulsory internships. This research has found that internship performance played a vital part in terms of jobs and employability depends on the interaction between the resources of the graduate and his / her family, and whether or not the labor market contracts.

According to the report published by the Fair Internship Initiative (2018), undertaking a paid internship plays a positive role in future career outcomes in international organizations. On the contrary, despite the positive educational impact, unpaid internships are perceived as unfavourable in terms of their likely impact on participants' future job prospects. The findings showed that although internship programs are sometimes more often than not associated with an improvement in post-program employment prospects as broadly understood; paid internship programs are clearly associated with better post-program outcomes than unpaid ones.

Asuquo and Agboola (2014) examined the outcomes of Nigerian universities and their employability for the labour market in the region using multi-stage sampling to select a sample of 1,200 graduates from universities, 600 from private and 600 from government institutions in South-South, Nigeria. The descriptive design of exposit facto type was employed while frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the demographics of the employers. The result showed that the employability of Nigerian Universities outputs was significantly below average and concluded that Nigerian universities outputs are not employable irrespective of differences in gender, organization type, educational qualification, and age of the respondents.

### **The moderating Role of Organization Commitment**

Researchers have argued that internship programs are beneficial to students, HEIs, as well as host organizations (Abu Bakar, Harun, Yusof, & Tahir, 2011). King as cited in Callanan and Benzing (2014) admit that in today's highly competitive job market, a certificate from a top HEI no longer guarantees a job for the graduate. There is an increase in the demand by HEIs and students for well-organized internship programs that will guaranty the acquisition of industry required professional skills. Organizations also seek effective ways to train student trainees as a means of reducing uncertainty in the hiring process in later years. An organization's participation in an internship can mean a positive recruiting image of an organization and provide a pool of talented graduates to work in that organization (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2010). An intern returning to HEI may play the role of the secondary recruiter of other students for a particular organization as a preferred place to work (Pianko, 1996).

Internships create opportunities for early networking among HEI students with the employers which also allows the interns or graduates privileged access to job openings and find references for future career moves (Alpert, Heaney & Kuhn, 2009). Hiring interns provide a risk-free method to evaluate possible future employees (Knemeyer & Murphy, 2011). It reduces recruitment costs, training costs and allows a company to assess a potential competent employee (Alpert, Heaney & Kuhn 2009). Also, Holyoak (2013) reported that recruitment and training costs are reduced if firms employ interns after the internship is completed. Through internship programs host organizations get a chance to fulfill their corporate social responsibilities (Mgaya *et al.*, 2014). Mgaya *et al.* (2014) also found that during the internship period, work ethic, attitude, and technical competence are easily assessed than during an interview for a prospective employee. An internship is a risk-free method of evaluating students' capabilities as potential hires. It also helps to provide a steady stream of motivated human resources which are relatively cheaper than existing full time staff. Employers can assess the likelihood of a fit between a prospective employee and the organization (Dobratz *et al.*, 2014).

It is expected that many companies will hire their most competent interns for full-time positions after graduation. According to the Edge/SCRE Centre (2011), graduate skills and attributes that are valued by employers are a combination of relevant transferable skills that include team working, problem-solving, and self-management, knowledge of the business, literacy, and numeracy pertinent to the post. Other attributes are ICT knowledge, excellent interpersonal and communication skills, ability to use own initiative but also to follow instructions as well as

leadership skills where necessary. In addition to these skills, the Edge/SCRE Centre also highlighted employers' need for motivation, tenacity, and commitment of interns.

From the foregoing point of view, we hereby hypothesized thus:

- Ho<sub>1</sub>**. There is no Relationship between Internship and Development of Employability skills in the in Hotels in Bauchi State.
- Ho<sub>2</sub>**. Organizational Commitment does not Moderate the Relationship between Internship and Development of Employability skills in the in Hotels in Bauchi State.



**Fig.1 Operational Framework for the hypothesized relationship between internship and the employability with organizational commitment as a moderating variable**

**Source:** Author's Desk Research, 2019

## Methodology

The study adopted a cross sectional design that solicited responses from employees of First Bank branches in Bauchi Metropolis. A pilot study was carried out to determine the organizations with interns as a the time of carrying out this research/ The population of the study consist of 81 respondents made up of management staff, human resource managers, internship supervisors as well as interns themselves drawn from two selected hotels (Larema Hotels & Suites and Command Guest House) in Bauchi metropolis. The sample size of 72 was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan table.. After data cleaning, only data of 67 respondents were finally used for data analysis based on descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank correlation and hypothesis testing. The study which is dominantly quantitative in nature, adopted a structured, self-structured questionnaire. The validity of the research instrument was achieved through the supervisor's scrutiny and approval while the reliability of the instrument was achieved using the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank order Correlation with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

## Results and Discussions

### Bivariate Analysis

Secondary data analysis was carried out using the Spearman's rank correlation at a 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the tests cover a Ho1 hypothesis that was bivariate and declared in the null form. We have based on the statistic of Spearman's rank correlation to carry out the

analysis. The level of significance 0.05 is adopted as a criterion for the probability of accepting the null hypothesis in ( $p > 0.05$ ) or rejecting the null hypothesis in ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Table 1 Correlation Matrix for Internship and Employability Skills**

			Internship	Employability Skill
Spearman's rho	Internship	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.128
		Sig. (2-tailed)		.061
		N	67	67
	Employability Skills	Correlation Coefficient	.128	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.061	.
		N	67	67

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Research Data , 2019 (SPSS output, version 23.0)

Table 1 illustrates the test for the two previously postulated bivariate hypothetical statements.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>. There is no Relationship between Internship and Employability in Hotels in Bauchi State.**

From the result in the table above, the correlation coefficient (rho) shows that there is a positive relationship between internship and employability. The *correlation coefficient* 0.128 confirms the magnitude and strength of this relationship and it is statistically significant at  $p < 0.000 < 0.05$ . The correlation coefficient represents a very weak correlation between the variables. Therefore, based on empirical findings the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and the alternate upheld. Thus, there is a relationship between internship and employability in the hotels in Bauchi State.

**Table 2 Moderating Effect of Organizational Commitment**

			Internship	Employability Skill
Spearman's rho	Internship	Correlation	1.000	.114
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.061
		df	0	213
	Employability Skills	Correlation	.128	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.095	.
		df	213	0

**Source:** Research Data , 2019 (SPSS output, version 23.0)

The hypothesis **HO<sub>2</sub>: Organizational Commitment does not moderate the Relationship between Internship and Development of Employability skills in the in Hotels in Bauchi State** was tested (where  $r_1: 0.128 > r_2: 0.114$ ) and the result shows a significant moderating effect. Therefore based on this finding we reject the previously stated null hypothesis of no moderating effect and restate that organizational commitment moderate the relationship between internship and development of employability skills in the in hotels in Bauchi State.

### **Discussing of Findings**

The first and second hypotheses sought to examine the relationship between internship and development of employability skills and the moderating effect of organizational commitment. Hence it was hypothesized in the null. These hypotheses were tested using the Spearman rank order correlation technique and partial correlation. The study findings revealed a positive relationship between internship and development of employability skills in the sample of hotels in Bauchi State and that organizational commitment moderates the relationship. This finding is in line with the views of Tumuti *et al.* (2013). The study provided evidence that organization commitment provides an important but inadequately used tool for developing generic skills that may enhance graduate employability. The result also agrees with Chen, Shen and Gosling (2018) who argued that employability is an important goal for students undertaking an internship and that programs that enhance student's employability will increase student's overall satisfaction with the internship program. The study explores the relationship of employability and student satisfaction with the major stakeholders involved in internships through linear structure equation analysis. This study found that many students are not satisfied with the internship program as a result of the stress experienced in seeking placement and the fact that many organizations do not pay interns. Furthermore, Pitan (2016) found that for enhanced graduate employability, there is the need for an enabling environment, which must be provided by the relevant stakeholders including the universities, industry and the government.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study was basically aimed at determining the relationship between internship and employability in the hospitality industry in Bauchi State with organizational commitment moderating the relationship. From the data generated and analysed, it was empirically discovered that a weak relationship exist between internship and employability in the hospitality industry in Bauchi State and a positive moderating effect exist between organizational commitment and the other variables. Based on results, the study concludes that internship and employability skills has a weak relationship and that support and creation of opportunities by organization where interns carry out their programme is significant but does not moderate significantly to the other variables.

Based on the discussion and conclusion above, the following recommendation was hereby made:

Organization should truly see internship as a recruitment process and commit resources to it which enable them to initiate requests for interns in desired areas of interests. This will lead to



greater commitment from hosting organizations. The task of looking for internship placement should not be entirely left to the students.

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