Assessment of the Relevance and Experience of Undergraduate Internship Programme: A Focus on University of Cape Coast Psychology Students in Ghana

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Abstract
For an effective and a successful internship programme, the competency and motivation of all parties involved are indispensable and studies have revealed that internship experiences have surfaced as important factors that may positively improve the job placement of students. Using descriptive cross sectional survey design, the investigators assessed the relevance and experience of internships of undergraduate psychology students in the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The study adopted a validated questionnaire and a proportional stratified sampling technique, involving 200 students made up of 115 and 85 males and females respectively.Results underscored the relevance of internship experience with greater sense of responsibility and career development it provides. It also suggested that career focus is associated with positive beliefs about intern's career choice and future job satisfaction. It revealed a statistically significant association between type of organization and the relevance of internship programme to students. The results also showed significant differences in experience of internship programme across respondents' age and gender.On the basis of the findings, recommendations were made for educational institutions to provide skills that organizations can capitalize on to give work related training during internships.
Keywords: Internship, Relevance, Experience, students, gender differences, Learning Theories

1.0 Introduction
The nature of internship has been explained in various ways by various authors and researchers. Patton and Dial (1988) explain internship as a form of training in which people gain experience and practical knowledge that is relevant to a specific field. According to Di Lorenzo-Aiss and Mathisen (1996), a typical internship programme is characterised by four criteria: (1) a specified number of work hours, (2) the work may be paid or unpaid, (3) credit is awarded, and (4) oversight is provided by faculty coordinator or other university representative and corporate counterpart. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (2006) has indicated that internship is work experience in industrial, business or government work situations that leverages the class guidelines experience through practical work experience. Being a valuable component of higher education academic programme, internship is believed to create win-win situation for the students, organization as well as the university (Coco, 2000). Internships are therefore the bridge between academics and the real world because they provide students with practical experience.

A sociological analysis of internship programmes found internships that function effectively as the link between formal education and practice (Quinn, 2003). This is because students feel that an internship is the best way to learn the reality of work. Internship experiences also enhance the students' entry into the world of work by improving time management, communication skills, self-discipline and initiative (Knouse, Tanner & Harris, 1999). According to Challanan and Benzing (2004), an internship provides validation that the student has chosen the appropriate career choice by giving the student a realistic expectation of the field as well as a check for a good fit between the student and the career. It can therefore be said that internship programmes are a way to ensure that students have industry experience.

1.1 Learning theories and internships
In an attempt to understand the educational value of internships for students, one can turn to the social learning theory of Bandura (1977). According to him, learning occurs in a social context. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory posits that people learn from one another through observation, imitation and modelling. This theory has been seen as a bridge between behaviourist and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory and motivation. In the same way, internships can serve as a bridge between academia and the world of work. Internships therefore provide a unique learning experience outside the traditional academic environment where students can test the theories, concepts and methods introduced in the classroom and assess and reflect on the interaction between theory and practice.

Internship experiences of students have been drawn from research within the constructivists' learning paradigm and internships are a form of constructivists' learning environment (Cheney, 2008). Constructivists

view learning as a process of interpreting, building and modifying our understanding of reality based on life's experiences (Cheney, 2008).   Dewey (1966) believes that learning emerges only from situations in which learners have to draw them out of meaningful experiences. Therefore, internships provide opportunities for students to apply their subject matter expertise in the work place to create new knowledge and skills through social negotiation with both the faculty internship supervisor and the site supervisor. Both social learning theory and constructivists' paradigm therefore lend credence to the value of internships to bridge the gap between the academia and the world of work.

1.1.2 Determinants of Internship Effectiveness and Relevance

For a successful internship programme, the competency and motivation of all parties involved are indispensable (Coco, 2000). In the literature, eight predictors of internship effectiveness have been suggested. These are academic preparedness, positive attitude, self-initiative, challenge job, autonomy, effectiveness of supervision, task role clarity and compensation.

Academic preparedness

Studies have shown that academic preparedness is one of the determinants of internship effectiveness (Beard & Morton, 1999). Bacow and Byrne (1993) indicated that students should not attempt internships prematurely and that interns should possess a general understanding of the professional field and key concepts. Many internship programmes require students to be well prepared in terms of completion of a certain level of course work and attainment of a minimum grade point average (Clark, 2003). Research results have also shown that students with higher GPAs were more likely to do well in an internship than those with lower GPAs (Knouse, Tanner, & Harris, 1999). The academic preparation therefore, provides the interns with more opportunities during the internship programme.

Positive attitude

According to Beard and Morton (1999), interns with a positive attitude towards the internships are more likely to achieve internship effectiveness. In addition, the internship will be more beneficial if the students regard it as a potential learning opportunity and occupational experience. Studies have also shown that interns whose expectations towards internship are positive and realistic tend to find the internship experience as satisfactory, thus leading to a positive internship experience (Beard, 1997). Some studies explored the relationship between interns' interview experience during the selection process and the perception of the overall internship experience. To some extent, positive impression of internship from the interview is related to positive perceptions of the related vocational field (Feldman & Weitz, 1990).

Self-initiative

Self-initiative plays an important part in internship success (Patton & Dial, 1988; Beard & Morton, 1999). Students on internship programme are therefore responsible to themselves to take full advantage of the internship by asking questions, making suggestions, enhancing interpersonal relationships with other employees, accepting and learning from constructive feedback and demonstrating interest in the organization they are serving (Patton & Dial, 1988). Bacow and Byrne (1993) also encourage students to volunteer for assignments and make their wants and needs known. It was also found by Beard (1997) that both supervisors and interns share the assumption that interns should show initiative by aggressively finding something to do.

Task Role Clarity

According to Sawyer (1992), role theory has distinguished between task outputs (e.g. task goals and standards) and activities (e.g. how work is accomplished). Specifically, task output clarity consists of the task goals and standards expected of the intern. Some studies found that clarity of tasks can improve internship effectiveness while the periodic lack of work or poor planning of work assignments caused frustration among interns (Rothman, 2007). In addition, unclear roles contribute to stress and poor performance of employees (Kahn et. al., 1964). Some researchers therefore make recommendations such as explaining rationale behind work assignments to the interns, developing a job description, providing a reasonable time frame for accomplishing tasks and establishing a clear understanding of what is to be accomplished (Rothman, 2007).

1.1.3 Compensation

The literature indicates that compensated interns have more successful internships. Compensation is therefore strongly recommended to make the experience realistic and also to keep interest level and productivity high (Madoch, 1980; Ames, 1986). Berger (1992) sees offering compensation as a sign of support to interns. Although compensation for an intern's work can be a certain unit of academic credit, studies have shown that the best way to pay compensation is monetary reward. Bacow and Byrne (1993) in a survey found that interns receiving payment evaluated their internships higher. According to Hamilton (1992), even if it is a minimum wage, compensation acts as a reminder that students are in the real world where they are supposed to think and feel like employees or professionals. Furthermore, by paying the interns, the sponsoring organization can demonstrate its commitment in making the internship meaningful.

Career skills (relevance)

Four categories of preparation skills have been found to be of great significance in the literature. The

first is academic skills comprising analytical skills, computer applications, creative thinking, information search, and problem solving. The second is Communication skills such as oral communication, written communication and proposal writing (Kelley & Gaedeke, 1990; Floyd &Gordon, 1998). The third is interpersonal skills which consist of leadership/teamwork and relationship building (Boatwright & Stamps, 1988; Kelley & Gaedeke, 1990). The fourth is job acquisition skills comprising resumes writing, job interviewing and job networking. These career skills are crucial determinants of any successful internship programme. This is because students on practical internship programmes must possess these career skills in order to be efficient and productive.

1.1.4 Career focus (relevance)
Taylor (1988) posits that career focus is the recognition of personal value, work-related outcomes and the vocational abilities and interests needed to attain satisfaction from the work. According to Madoch (1980), interns benefit from developing career aspirations and self-concept. Some studies argue that students with internship experience reported a greater sense of responsibility and career development (Williams, 1990; Eyler, 1992). It is also suggested in the literature that career focus is associated with positive belief about intern's career choice and future job satisfaction. In addition, interns who enjoy a successful internship experience feel positive changes in personal and social efficacy and career self-efficacy (Braswell & Cobia, 2000).

2.0 Internship Experiences
Studies have revealed that internship experiences have surfaced as important factors that may positively improve the job placement of students (Fang, Lee, Huang & Lee, 2004). Pianko (1996) indicated that internships offer a mutually beneficial experience for companies and students. Taylor (1988) in a study found that academicians, practitioners and students themselves have widely extolled the benefits of internships. They view internship as structured career and relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from academic programmes. Schambach and Kephart (1997) submitted that internships during college offer variety of benefits to students such as increasing opportunities for finding jobs upon graduation, reinforcing the skills learned from courses, gaining better understanding of organizations and solidifying career focus. In a study to identify the single-most influential college preparation for the job market and job placement (Scott, 1992) found that graduates and current students strongly agreed that internships are the best.

The strategic role of supervisors is a crucial determinant of whether the internship experience is positive or not. Gabris and Mitchell (1999) found that interns' perception of supervision effectiveness is significantly correlated with job placement success and overall job performance. Effective supervision during internship, with characteristics such as being supportive, demonstrates high work standard and competence. It also provides frequent feedback and opportunities for individuals to explore career interests (Taylor, 1988).

2.1 Relevance of internship in (public / private) organizations
The best outside classroom learning activities are through an internship attachment (Burnett, 2003). Several studies have reported that conventional colleges and universities (public) have the rationale in offering attachments as part of the academic programmes to the conventional student through gaining experience and exposure. The colleges underscore improvements in career-related direction, gaining practical experience (Lubbers, 2001), improved marketability of graduates (Swift & Kent, 1999; Hymon-Parker, 1998), interpersonal skills (Beard and Morton, 1999) and understanding of the theories of classroom learning (Cook *et al.,* 2004; Hymon-Parker, 1998).

Results of a survey conducted by the RAND National Defense Research Institute (2004) indicated that there is a significant difference between public and private sectors on the emphasis they place on internships. It was revealed that non- profit and government (public) sectors hire more co-op and part-time students than just summer interns with the reverse being true in private sectors (service and manufacturing industries).

However, Brooks and Greene (1998) on public-private sector internships intimated their sample of firms that, for profit companies (private) offered an average of 55% of their summer interns permanent positions compared to only 5% for not-for- profit(public) companies. This suggests that the not-for-profit (government sectors) may be lagging the for- profit private sectors in effective use of summer internships as a recruiting tool. Again the report gives an impression that organizations which place high level of investment in new employees also place stronger emphasis on the importance of pre-employment internships as a tool for recruitment and screening (e.g. Ford Motors Company, Hewlette- Packard).

2.1.2 Older students demonstrate higher internship experience than younger students.
The findings of a longitudinal study conducted by McCunea, Hounsell, Christiec, Viviene & Tett (2010) on 'mature and younger students' reasons for making the transition from further education into higher education' showed a positive picture of the motivations of the whole cohort. They intimated that the mature students seemed to have a particularly rich understanding of the meaning and relevance of their studies than the younger students.

Findings from the ETL project suggested a more positive picture of young students' motivation, as

these students often identified with intrinsic reasons for study, but they did show slightly lower scores on 5questionnaire items relating to intrinsic interest than the older students (Hounsell, 2005). There is also some evidence that mature students are more likely than younger students to approach their learning in ways which emphasize a search for understanding (Richardson, 2005).

2.1.3 Gender differences in internship experience

Sagen (2000) in a study found that, males benefited from relevant internship work experiences than females. The explanation for male success in internship experience is however, not clear except that success might be linked to a predominantly male profession such as computer science and engineering. A study by Carol and Kardash (1999) on the perceptions of undergraduate interns and their faculty mentors revealed that male and female interns did not differ significantly in their ratings of skills levels at the beginning of their undergraduate research experience. By the end of students' undergraduate research experience, male interns rated themselves significantly higher than did female interns with respect to their ability to understand contemporary concepts in their field.

However, Walter, Xiaoyan and Carlotta (2008) found that positive internship experiences have a larger impact on the future academic experiences of female students compared to male students. Female students compare to male students reported that they were more likely to 'take a leadership role in study groups or team-based projects. Female students compared to male students also reported that they are more likely to 'speak up or voice their ideas in a formal or informal group environment. The students reported a positive effect of the internship experience on their professional skills, and confidence. The female students who reported having an internship stated that they gained confidence in their ability and felt 'important' as a result of their internship. They reported that they felt as if their male teammates contribute more on academic teams but following their internships they see this is not the case.

According to Rosenbloom, Ash, Dupont and Coder (2008) research indicate that men and women differ in what they value in their work. They intimated that men and women who enjoyed using machines or tools were more likely to be in IT; however men and women who enjoyed working with other people were more likely to choose other careers. It was suggested that men were indeed more likely to enjoy manipulating machines and be in IT, while women were more likely to value working with other people and be in other fields.

Further, gender differences discuss how differences in learning styles influence on-the-job learning. In this perspective Keri (2002) noted that both males and females prefer to collaborate with other people on learning activities; that is, they like to work in groups and on teams, while Pomerantz, Altermatt and Saxon (2002) found that girls do better in school than boys in the sense that they are more critical of their performance but boys, on the other hand, have unrealistically high estimates of their performance. Therefore females can be more critical of their internship than boys.

2.1.4 Differences in experience gained from internship across hours of work per week

Holman, Joyeux, and Kask (2008) intimated that, in a given industry in the US, longer hours may be associated with greater output, but they are also associated with diminished output per hour. Shepard and Clifton (2000) established that manufacturing productivity does not necessarily improve when hours are lengthened. Their empirical study of aggregate panel data for 18 manufacturing industries within the US economy suggests that a 10-per cent increase in overtime resulted, on average, in a 2.4-per cent decrease in productivity measured by hourly output.

However an adoption of reduced hour arrangements for employees, mainly in order to retain talent improved workers' self-reported performance on the job (Kossek & Lee, 2008). This buttresses findings that employer provision of better work/life balance practices such as job flexibility is associated with significantly higher productivity and self-assessed performance (Bloom, Kretschmer, & Van Reenen, 2009). The foregoing may indicate that longer hours of internship could increase experience yet work out put could diminish.

3.0 Problem statement

As a significant part of preparation for careers beyond graduation, internships in higher education are gaining popularity with students' and faculties' recognition of their potential values. With regard to current trends in the job market, employers require workers with a college degree can apply their academic knowledge. Workers have practical work experience in which they demonstrate their abilities (Reardon, Lenz, & Folsom, 1998). Hence students in post secondary education have found that participation in applied learning experiences such as internships and cooperative education programmes provide opportunities to build a network of contacts, which become invaluable in the job search process, as well as gain the necessary practical experience to eventually be successful in their careers (Cates-McIver, 1998).

Students who engage in several career related work experiences while in college, including internships, are able to secure employment more quickly after graduation, are more likely to be employed within their field of study, and are generally more satisfied in their current work positions than graduates with no career related experience (Kysor & Pierce 2000). From the foregoing review, it could be deduced that none of the researchers

studied students' internship experiences within the Ghanaian environment. In addition, it has been observed that little research has been devoted to exploring the first major internship experiences of psychology students. Hence the study was guided by the following research question and hypotheses.

4.0 Research Question
The main research question is:

What are the relevance and experience of internship programmes to Bsc Psychology students in the university of Cape Coast?

4.1 Hypotheses
In addition to the main question, the following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. Relevance of internship programme depends on the type of organization where internship is held (public / private).
2. Older students demonstrate higher internship experience than younger students.
3. Male and female students do not exhibit the same internship experience.
4. Differences exist in experience gained from internship across hours of work per week.

5.0 METHOD
Participants, sample and procedure

The target population for the study was all 300 level BSc Psychology students in the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Cape Coast. However, the accessible population was 300 level BSc Psychology students who pursued their internship programme in Central, Western, Eastern and Greater Accra Regions. In order to obtain a representative sample for the study, a list of the students were collected from the Educational Foundations department. Each region was given a sample size of 50 students. From the list, a proportional stratified sampling technique was employed to select 200 students made up of 115 and 85 males and females respectively for the study.

5.1 Design
The study was basically a descriptive cross sectional survey (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) of students' personal characteristics, relevance and experience of internship programmes. The design, therefore, involved collecting data from the selected sample through the administration of a questionnaire concerning the current thoughts and experience of students and analyzing the responses (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). This design was chosen because judging from the main thrust of the study; it was deemed the most appropriate.

5.1.2 Instrument
Items measuring relevance and experience of internship programme were developed based on the scholarly works of (Patton & Dial, 1988; Knouse, Tanner & Harris, 1999; Gault, Redington & Schlager, 2000; Wen, 2010). A questionnaire of the Likert type scale was developed and used in the collection of data for this study. Responses were measured on a five point scale ranging from 1= *strongly disagree* to 5= *strongly agree*. In all, 11 items made up of 4 and 7 for relevance and experiences respectively were developed. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, Cronbach's coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951), an internal consistency test was employed. The alpha value for the items measuring relevance and experience was computed as 0.65 and 0.79 respectively.

The final questionnaire was made up of twenty items in two parts. The first part was made up of information on the demographic characteristics of respondents. This included items like age, gender, name of organization and average working period per week. Part two of the questionnaire was made up of 11 Likert type scale items that measured relevance and experience of internship programme. Example of items that measured the relevance of internship included:

- I learned new skills in my internship;
- My internship assignments were relevant to my interests.

However, the items formulated to measure internship experience of students had the following statements as examples:

- I was assigned meaningful tasks in my internship;
- I had regular guidance from my supervisor;
- My internship guided my career path.

5.1.3 Data analysis
Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) with an accompanying Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to analyse the main research question. In addition, analysis of the results of the hypotheses, one nonparametric and two parametric tests were employed. These were the chi-square (x^2) and independent samples t-test and the one way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) respectively. All the hypotheses were

tested at the 5% level of significance. The data were analysed with Microsoft Excel 2007 for Windows.

6.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary thrust of this study was to find out respondents' thought on the relevance and experience of internship programmes and to determine whether differences exist in this two constructs across their personal characteristics.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach Alpha for Items Measuring Relevance and Experience of Internship Programme by Students

Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
Relevance of Internship			
1. My internship assignments were relevant to my academic course work	4.16	1.01	
2. My internship assignments were relevant to my interest	4.12	1.01	0.65
3. I learned new skills in my internship	4.51	0.77	
4. I learned something new about myself in my internship	4.27	0.87	
Experience of Internship			
5. I was assigned meaningful tasks in my internship	4.39	.82509	
6. I had regular guidance from my supervisor	4.11	.99421	
7. My supervisor and/or other staff were available if I had any questions	4.35	.89072	
8. I gained new knowledge in my internship	4.61	.71801	0.79
9. I would go back to my internship place when invited	4.01	1.32625	
10. I would recommend my internship place to others	4.13	1.17790	
11. My internship guided my career path	3.95	1.20381	

N= 196; RIWMA=4.26; EIWMA=4.22; OIWMA=4.24

The means, standard deviations and the Cronbach's alpha for the items that measured the dependent variables are presented in Table 1. Using the Relevant Item Weighted Mean Average (RIWMA) of 4.26 as a standard, items number 3 and 4 fell on the high side with items 1 and 2 falling on the low side as shown in Table 1. In addition, the Experience Items Weighted Mean Average (EIWMA) score of 4.22 portrays items 5, 7, 8 and 11 as being on the high side whereas items 6, 9 and 10 were on the low side. Finally, the Overall Item Weighted Mean Average (OIWMA) score of 4.24 was also recorded portraying most of the items as being on the high side in terms of measuring ability. The respective Cronbach's alpha for the internal consistency measure was computed as 0.65 and 0.79 for relevance and experience of internship.

The foregoing gives credence to what was revealed by (Kelley & Gaedeke, 1990; Floyd & Gordon, 1998) that interns learn new academic, Communication, interpersonal and job acquisition skills which are on the high side of the RIWMA ('I learned new skills in my internship', and 'I learned something new about myself in my internship'. Again the outcome of the study underscores the relevance of internship experience reported by (Williams, 1990; Eyler, 1992) in line with the greater sense of responsibility and career development it provides. It also suggested that career focus is associated with positive belief about intern's career choice and future job satisfaction which also gives support to successful internship experience and positive changes in personal and social efficacy and career self-efficacy (Braswell & Cobia, 2000).

The Overall Item Mean Score (OIMS) based on respondents' observed score on the relevance of internship programmes was computed to be 4.26. This value shows a high relevance on the five-point Likert scale established because 3 was the established cut-off point between low and high relevance as described in the foregoing section. More so, the number of students who scored above and below the cut-off point was also determined using Individual Item Mean Scores (IIMSs). Out of the 196 respondents, 187(95.4%) fell on the high side of the scale whereas the rest 9(4.6%) were on the low side of the scale. The number of students falling in the two categories was tested for significance using x^2 test of independence (Yates correction formula applied because of the 2x2 contingency table with one degree of freedom). Table 2 presents the results.

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Table 2. Organisational type and Relevance of Internship Programmes by Students

Relevance of Internship	Type of Organisation		Total
	Public	Private	
High	116	3	119
Low	6	71	77
Total	122	74	196
$x^2_{\text{computed}} = 246.55$; $x^2_{\text{critical}} = 3.84$; df $= 1, p < 0.05$			

The result shows a statistically significant association between type of organization and the relevance of internship programme to students. Since x^2 computed value of 246.55 is found to be greater than x^2 critical value of 3.84 at 0.05 alpha level with a degree of freedom of 1, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate retained. However, respondents' view on the relevance of internship programme is on the high side in the public sector than the private sector which corresponds with Lubber's assertion that (*public*) organizations have the rationale in offering attachments as part of the academic programmes to the students through gaining experience and exposure. He underscores improvements in career-related direction, gaining practical experience (2001). The foregoing though provides a strong argument for public sector contribution to the relevance of internship; Brooks and Greene (1998) on public-private sector internships intimated the opposite. The results of their study revealed (private) organizations offered an average of 55% of their summer interns permanent positions compared to only 5% for not-for- profit (public) companies. This suggests that the public sectors may be lagging the private sectors in effective use of internships as a recruiting tool and place stronger emphasis on the importance of pre-employment internships as a tool for recruitment and screening.

To investigate the differences in experience of internship programme across respondents' age and gender, an independent samples t-test was employed. The criterion variable (experience of internship programme) was entered first followed by the factor variables (age and gender).

Table 3. Independent samples *t*-test for the experience of internship programme by Age and Gender

Factor Variables	N	Mean	SD
Age			
Below 25	151	4.28	0.65
25 and above	45	4.02	0.79
$t_{\text{computed}} = 2.26$; $t_{\text{critical}} = 1.98$; df $= 194, p < 0.05$			
Gender			
Male	114	4.18	0.73
Female	82	4.29	0.65
$t_{\text{computed}} = -1.11$; $t_{\text{critical}} = 1.98$; df $= 194, p > 0.05$			

The results in Table 3 show a statistically significant difference in experience of internship programme between younger (M =4.28, SD =0.65) and older (M =4.02, SD =0.79) students, [t (194) =1.98, p < 0.05]. On the contrary, no gender difference was found in the internship experience of students, [t (194) =-1.11, p > 0.05]. The mean difference, however, shows that females (M =4.18, SD =0.73) are slightly ahead of their males (M =4.18, SD =0.73) in terms of experience of internship programmes.

The report gives an impression that younger students have deeper experience than older students with regard to internship. It is therefore not in support of results of the study conducted by McCunea, Hounsell, Christiec, Viviene and Tett (2010) on 'mature and younger students' reasons for making the transition from further education into higher education'. They intimated that the mature students seemed to have a particularly rich understanding of the meaning and relevance of their studies than the younger students which also supports strongly evidence that mature students are more likely than younger students to approach their learning in ways that emphasize a search for understanding (Richardson, 2005).However, Hounsell (2005) indicated that younger students often identified with intrinsic reasons for their studies, but they did show slightly lower scores on questionnaire items relating to intrinsic interest than the older students.

On the issue of gender differences the result of the current study provides credence for the study by Carol and Kardash (1999) on the perceptions of undergraduate interns and their faculty mentors that male and female interns did not differ significantly in their ratings of skills levels at the beginning of their undergraduate research experience. It also in line with the perspective of Keri (2002) who noted that both males and females prefer to collaborate with other people on learning activities.The foregoing is in sharp contrast to Rosenbloom, Ash, Dupont, and Coder (2008) research which indicated that men and women differ in what they value in their

work, which also underscores the results revealed in a study by Pomerantz, Altermatt, and Saxon(2002) that girls are more critical of their performance but boys, on the other hand, have unrealistically high estimates of their performance. Therefore females can be more critical of their internship than boys.

With regard to students' experience gained during internship across hours of work per week, analysis indicates that there is no statistically significant difference. The one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test this hypothesis. Table 4 presents the results of the analysis.

Table 4. Average Internship Experience Score, by Hours of work per week

Hours of Work Per Week	Number	Mean	SD
10-20 hours	16	4.45	0.53
21-30 hours	23	3.90	1.02
31-40 hours	85	4.26	0.68
41-50 hours	67	4.22	0.61
51-60 hours	5	4.34	0.39
$F_{computed} = 1.78; F_{critical} = 2.24; df = 4,191; p > 0.05$			

The computed value of $F_{4,\ 191}$ at 0.05 level of significance, 1.78 is less than the critical value of 2.24. Hence, the decision rule, $F_{computed} > F_{critical}$, is to fail to reject the view that "no difference exists in experience gained by students from their internship programme across the hours they worked per week." This is obvious as shown by the means and their respective standard deviations in Table 4. The general trend indicates that, whether an intern works longer hours or not has no influence on the level of experience that he or she gains. This corroborates Shepard and Clifton (2000) arguments that manufacturing productivity does not necessarily improve when hours are lengthened which is evident in their empirical study of aggregate panel data for 18 manufacturing industries in the United States which suggested that a 10-per cent increase in overtime resulted, on average, in a 2.4-per cent decrease in productivity measured by hourly output. This is underscored by (Kossek & Lee, 2008) that reduced hour arrangements for employees improved workers' self-reported performance on the job. It may therefore be imperative for organizations to look at optimum hours that could increase experience and output at work.

6.1 Conclusions

It is important therefore to state that without objectives and assessment initiatives, the credibility of an internship can be compromised. Therefore any successful internship programme should have a comprehensive assessment in ways that allow for the interns to be reflective of their experiences. Corroborated in Sorenzon (1992) cited in (Implementing Assessing Internships, 2002) assessment process should be longitudinal and collaborative with formal objectives and a well developed guide of activities and communication that evaluate the interns' experience.

6.1.2 Recommendations

Results from the study underscore the relevance and experience of internships to undergraduates and also empirical studies have shown the relationship between internships and academic skills. Therefore, we can submit that internships must influence students' academic skills in different ways including problem solving. Students can therefore build a broad range of experiences during their internship periods if academic skills are related to internships. Providing interns with real work is number one to ensuring the programmes's success. Interns should be doing work related to their major, that is challenging, that is recognized by the organization as valuable, and that fills the entire work term.

It might be prudent for organisations that need interns to sponsor social or professional development events, and help to orient the interns to their company's cultures. Providing students with access to in-house training in work-skills-related areas, including computer and general skills as well as time management can be a tangible way to show students that they are interested in their development.

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