

## **Programme Improvement: Analysis of Internship Assessment of the Bachelors of Languages and Communication Degree at One University in Zimbabwe**

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**Abstract:** Internship has become a significant part of undergraduate training in the universities world over. It can be described as a window through which programme coordinators can see their programme-worth and improve them. This content analysis research focused on internship assessments of the Bachelor of English and Communication degree programme of one university in Zimbabwe. The study used internship assessment forms written by the supervisors of 28 students who have been on internship for 8 months from January to August of 2016 and 2017. The researcher collected and analyzed these internship supervisors' assessment forms. The obtained data was categorized according to the themes that emerged. Finding showed that strengths of the internees, as exposed by the supervisors' assessment forms, outweighed, by far, the weaknesses. The strengths of the students included: initiative and passionate for work; collaborative and time conscious; standard English language command; welcoming behavior; leadership qualities; professional dressing and potential to improve. An outstanding strength of the programme was the adequate internship period. The weaknesses revealed by the study encompasses: students' incompetence in relation to other related activities, for instance, compiling statistical reports and local language barriers. Based on these findings of the study as well as the internees supervisors' recommendations, this study recommends an increase from one to two of internship assessments. Also, the Communication component of the Bachelor of English and Communication degree need to be furnished with news writing, featured speech writing, video editing and filming as well as social media courses. The study also recommends that the university should have a radio station so that students have a fair experience of what they will encounter on attachment and job market. Finally, the university should broaden the general knowledge of the students on global events.

**Keywords:** Internship; Bachelor of English and Communication; Supervisor Reports

### **1. Background of the Study**

Internship has become a global practice for universities so as to produce graduates who have experienced practice of the theory learnt in class before they are employed in the real world. Matamande, Nyikahadzoi and Taderera (2013) said that industrial attachment (internship) is a very important component in the learning system particularly for tertiary and higher education. On the same note, Munyoro, Nyandoro and Musekiwa (2016) pointed out that student industrial attachment has become an integral part of academic programmes that seek to improve students' career prospects and employability. One framework that has been helpful in implementing effective professional experience courses includes a four-stage process: preparation, implementation, reflection and celebration (Jenkins & Sheehy,

2011). Internship experience, which is at the implementation stage, allows for greater understanding on the part of the students when students can relate their personal experiences to course activities.

Phillips, Bolduc and Gallo (2013) valued internship because students are allowed an opportunity to explore academic majors via hands-on experiences in order to understand career potential while discovering their sense of purpose. Du Pré (2010) saw it as a strategy of applied learning (learning integrated with work) which involves a structured educational program that combines productive relevant work experience with academic study and professional reflection. Phillips et al. (2013) also supports that view and clearly points out that by the student's attachment experience, a student learns to understand their career paths as well as discovering their sense of purpose.

People use different names for internship. These include: industrial attachment, practicum and work experience, among others. Internship is defined as a kind of experiential learning that integrates knowledge and theory (which is learnt by a student in the classroom) with practical application and skills development in a professional setting. It gives students the opportunity to gain valuable applied experience and make connections in professional fields they are considering for career paths and give employers the opportunity to guide and evaluate talent (National Association of Colleges and Employers quoted in University of Rochester, 2017).

There are several reasons why industrial attachment should be placed in a particular curriculum: building and strengthening disciplinary knowledge and skills, supporting student developmental stages and institutionalizing service-learning (Phillips, Bolduc & Gallo, 2013). American University (2017) expounded that internship opportunities enable students to enrich their education with hands-on experience and apply lessons learned in the classroom to professional settings. Some of the internship goals as elaborated by National Association of Colleges and Employers quoted in University of Rochester, 2017 are:

- Gain insight on career goals
- Test out different work environments
- Build one's resume and develop industry-specific skills
- Shape and grow professional network
- Practice the job search process

Some students find their internship affirming their career aspirations; this is very useful. On the other hand, other students find themselves in positions and organizations that they dislike; this is equally valuable for they can develop new skills and expand the territory of their potentials as well as building professional relationships in the industrial circles. When it comes to internship, the host organization equally needs to prepare for the interns; Cohen (2014) gave the following hosting organizational responsibilities for internships:

- Have staffing in place before committing to an internship program
- Provide accommodation when necessary
- Have dedicated mentors and back up mentors in the event that the assigned mentor don't work according to expectations
- Need to give clear guidance to the interns

- Need regular communication with interns
- Give student's upfront knowledge of what the internship involve
- Should emphasize the need for honest feedback from intern regarding whether the internship is going well so that remedial action can be taken when necessary.

For the university in question, it is mandatory for its entire undergraduate population to go on internship for duration of 8 to 12 months depending on the faculties and departments. For the Department of Languages and Communication, which is the center of this study, internship period is 8 months and is undertaken by students in their third year. Whether that internship time is sufficient or not is subject to this research since **Quality Standards for Service Learning Activities (2017) said that adequate time frames must be offered** in order to make learning experiences in community settings or with community partners effective and sustainable. Other factors affecting effective internship are also discussed in this study.

## 2. Related Literature

Internship area has attracted a number of researchers at home and abroad. Literature has it that internship is a valuable part of a student's training. D'Abate (2010) alleged that internship helps students move beyond the classroom to interactively develop skills, perspective, understanding, knowledge and savvy for the workplace. Internship has objectives to fulfil; Chibwe (2014) gave a summary of the major objectives as follows:

- To provide an opportunity for students to link theory with practice and further serve as a bonus work force to those organizations that have committed to participate in the internship program.
- To enable a student to compare theoretical ideas learned in the classroom to that of the real world experience regarding their areas of specialization.
- To provide a student with experience in an actual work environment before entering the job market. Such experience not only increases student's job prospects but also teaches what is expected in terms of professional behavior.
- To permit a student to apply the principals and technical skills learned in the classroom to real-life problem solving situation.
- To provide students with the opportunity to test their interest in a particular career before permanent commitments are made.
- To enhance and strengthen linkage between the university and various organizations and companies.
- To help students get prepared to enter into full -time employment in their area of specialization upon graduation.
- To ensure students develop employment records/references that will enhance employment opportunities.

Worldwide, educators and scholars have carried out researches in order to understand internship as well as to find out how best it can be done. A California comparison study found that students who participated in academic service learning programs scored higher on all of the study's academic

measures than did those students who did not participate in academic service learning. These academic measures included mastery of course content, skills, and attitudes towards learning (Furco, 2010).

Connor and Raile (2015) in a study realized that developing a deeper awareness of stakeholder relations is essential in order to sensitize our understanding of these relationships and how stakeholder voice and power impact the industrial attachment experience.

In Ghana, Donkor, Nsoh, and Mitchual (2009) produced a research paper which is part of their larger study that assessed supervised industrial attachment of a technical and vocational teacher education program in Ghana. It assessed the attainment of program objectives and program usefulness. The researchers collected data from 13 lecturers, 90 students and 22 workplace supervisors through a self-completion questionnaire. Findings showed that the three groups under study (lecturers, students and workplace supervisors) rated highly elements of program usefulness and the attainment of program objectives with no statistically significant differences in their ratings. The only exception was for their ratings regarding the opportunity for host organizations to reduce recruitment and training costs of workplace staff during attachment.

Another study was carried out in Ghana by Ayarkwa, Adinyira and Osei-Asibey, (2012) at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology to assess the perception of organizations that have trained construction students from the Department of Building Technology. The results showed that industrial training exposes students to real work environment and helps them to apply theory to practice. Also, students showed high level of performance achievement in their ability to carry out instructions, ability to function as team players and ability to apply knowledge gained from the university among others. However, they showed a low level of performance achievement in negotiation skills, independence, social and multi-racial awareness and ability to make decisions.

The study recommended the need for learning institutions to provide guidelines for industrial training for use by host organizations and to monitor trainees during industrial attachment; training organizations should design training programmes which emphasize all competencies. Kathuri-Ogola, VanLeeuwen, Kabaria-Muriithi, Weeks, Kieru and Ndayala (2015) argued that there is little published research that examines the supervision experience of field attachment supervisors in Kenya; they studies the challenges encountered by field supervisors during student field attachments with community organizations. Fifteen organizations that had hosted third year students from the Department of Community Resource Management and Extension (CRM&E) at Kenyatta University during their practicum attachment were sampled using purposive and convenience sampling. Researchers collected data using face-to-face key informant interviews with field supervisors (n=15) and analyzed it qualitatively. Emerging themes included: supervisors largely lacked a clear understanding of practicum expectations and the academic preparation of students in the Community Resource Management and Extension program. The main supervision challenge was largely on orienting students to community based field work so as to enable them link theory to practice.

The study recommended a better understanding of the challenges that field supervisors' encounter as fundamental to the enhancement of the practicum experience of university students since the requisite

and appropriate support can be provided to the host organizations. This, according to the researchers, can make students more likely optimize the intended benefits of the practicum as a result of the host organizations enhancing the quality of field-based learning.

In South Africa, Cohen (2014) studied the key benefits of internships and discussed ways institutions can develop successful on-going relationships with host organizations. The study realized that internship experiences bridges students' academic preparation with the real world, thus, making it possible for the students to gain skills that cannot be acquired solely from coursework. Internship also provides students with opportunities for job offer at the company after graduation. A student on internship is granted opportunity to use coursework in applied setting, learn to work in an environment with deadline and network with many professionals who can give great advice to the interns.

Another study was done in South Africa by Diab (2013) who explored the views of students involved in rural community-based medical attachments during their final year at medical school in South Africa. The study describes the first two phases of quality improvement project: namely to describe the problem state and to discuss possible activities to improve the programme. It adopted a mixed research method combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Findings showed that students were generally positive about their rural attachment experience. The majority (86%) believed that their skills adequately prepared them to enter the world of work. Allocation of a supervisor and rostering were found to be of great importance. However, technological support was lacking with less than 50% of students having access to such facilities. The study concluded that community-based education in a rural district hospital can provide unique learning opportunities for students if the opportunities are identified and the programme is well managed.

A study by Sivotwa, Rudhumbu and Chikari (2014) in Botswana examined perceptions of industry on the Botho University's student industrial attachment programme. They examined the stakeholder perceptions on the industrial attachment in Botswana since its introduction in 2011. The study findings showed that the majority of the industry sector respondents highlighted that the attachment programme was relevant. The study recommended the university to review the attachment period and involve industry in curriculum development.

In Zimbabwe, a number of studies were carried out on internship; Rupande and Bukaliya (2013) explored the potential challenges faced by students at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) in fulfilling the requirements of industrial attachment. The study focused on all the four faculties of ZOU employing questionnaires and interviews to solicit data from the 100 respondents chosen through convenience sampling. Findings revealed that although the majority of the students were in favor of the attachment programme, they exposed a number of challenges militated against the effectiveness of the programmes, for instance, the students, as fulltime employees, their employers were not prepared to release them for the duration of the industrial attachment, some employees in the field were also reluctant to disclose important information to students on industrial attachment and some supervisors were too busy to provide effective supervision. In some instances, the ZOU supervisees were much older than the supervisor leading to the supervisor not providing effective supervision. Also, some employees regarded the students on attachment as potential threats to their positions. The study recommended that those

students studying programmes relevant to their current jobs should be supervised whilst on the job by both university lecturers and work supervisors.

Similarly, Munyoro et al. (2016) evaluated the attachment programme from the perspective of students and university lecturers in Zimbabwe. A sample of eighty-seven (87) participants comprising lecturers, students and parents were interviewed using self-administered questionnaires, semi-structured and focus group interviews. They analyzed data using descriptive analysis and content analysis. The majority of the respondents concurred that the student industrial attachment programme helps to bridge the gap between theory and practice. There were perceived variations with respect to the grading of the assessments, mismatch between equipment and technology available in the university and industry. These challenges were revealed by the study: challenges in securing attachments and student allowances, lack of resources to cover industrial supervisors' transport and accommodation costs. The study recommended the need for the university to establish a Unit to coordinate the programme and foster closer liaison with industry, monitor quality assurance procedures, upgrade equipment and technology as well as regular reviews of the student attachment programme in line with changing and challenging business environments.

In the same country, Mupfumira and Mutsambi (2012) evaluated strategies adopted in implementing the industrial attachment programme for the clothing programme at Masvingo Polytechnic in Zimbabwe. Their findings reported that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the industrial attachment despite the fact that students found themselves using sewing machines and related technology that was not available at the Polytechnic.

Yet another study in Zimbabwe by Gumbe, Sivotwa and Mupambireyi (2012) examined students' perspectives on the industrial attachment at the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Zimbabwe. The findings showed that the majority of the respondents stated that industrial attachment was relevant to the academic training at the institution. Further, the study findings pointed out that the programme was introduced by the university in 2002 in order to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to counter the competition to the University degree programmes posed by Bachelor of Technology degrees introduced by Polytechnics which had an attachment component launched in 2002. This development posed significant levels of competition for university graduates who were viewed as lacking industry experience. The study recommended an upgrade of the technology used for industrial attachment and further recommended that the industrial attachment should have at least two assessments and that the grades/credits should contribute to the degree classification.

Still another study was carried out in Zimbabwe; Matamande, Nyikahadzo and Taderera (2013) said that industrial attachment is a very important component in the learning system particularly for tertiary and higher education as it relates to those who are pursuing careers in commerce. Their paper sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the industrial attachment programme undertaken by the University of Zimbabwe, faculty of commerce. A questionnaire was used to obtain information to enable successful extraction of information from the intended sample. It was distributed to fourth year students to assess the effectiveness of the programme by obtaining perception of their attachment programme. The responses show that students were impressed by being attached as this enhanced their

industrial/commercial exposure. Generally students liked the idea of being exposed to the practical world. Continuous evaluation and an assessment of courses covered prior to them being attached were highlighted as important in ensuring that the industrial attachment is really successful. Work related learning at the University of Zimbabwe in various faculties varies depending on the emphasis on the programme. The researchers felt that issues raised in their paper would be beneficial to the other faculties at the same university.

### 3. Statement of the Problem

The employability of university graduates in the job market gives the associated university a better reputation; thus attracting higher calibre prospective students (Bringle & Richard, 2010). Universities have realized that internship create such well-rounded graduate who can skillfully function in a community of work. However, as Bringle and Richard (2010) stated, there is a gap between what employers appear to want and what higher education provides. The greatest challenge in Zimbabwe is that graduates have stiff employment competition (Matamande et al., 2013) because the universities have increased in numbers, but with the dwindling employment opportunities, employers seek those that have undergone attachment experience. Universities in Zimbabwe are therefore responsible for the production of graduates with sufficient background and excellent qualification to meet the expectation of the industry (Ayarkwa, Adinyira & Osei- Asibey, 2012).

### 4. Research Questions

1. What are the internship strengths and weakness of the Bachelors of English and Communication students at the university in question?
2. How can the Bachelor of English and Communication degree be improved?

### 5. Research Methodology

The study used a content analysis approach analyzing internship assessment supervisors' reports.

### 6. Sample of the Study

All the 2016 internees, 11 who were attached in Zimbabwe ant one in Swaziland as well as the 2017 internees (14 attached in Zimbabwe and 2 in Zambia) made the sample of the study as shown on the table below.

Table 1: Participants (N=28)

Year	Number of students by country of internship	Total
2016	11 in Zimbabwe and 1 in Swaziland	12
2017	14 in Zimbabwe and 2 in Zambia	16

They were attached in various sectors of the industry, for instance: Ministry of Women Affairs; Town Councils; Magistrate Courts, Studios, Media Centre, Marketing Agents, Public Policy Institutes, colleges, Rural District Councils, Broadcasting Cooperation, News Houses, First Mutual and airports. They were engaged in various disciplines including public relations, interpreting, broadcasting and news collecting, among others.

## **7. Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis**

The researcher analyzed the 2016 and 2017 internship assessment supervisor's reports of the students who were pursuing an English and Communication Bachelor's degree at Solusi University in Zimbabwe. The obtained data was categorized according to themes.

## **8. Research Findings**

Findings of this study have been grouped basically into three main thematic categories that answer the research questions: strengths and weaknesses of the students and recommendations. Further groups of these major themes have also been created.

### *Strengths of the students*

A number of strengths of the internees were exposed in the supervisors' assessment forms. In fact, the strengths outweighed, by far, the weaknesses. These findings tally those by Donkor, Nsoh and Mitchual (2009) who found programme usefulness highly rated in Ghana.

### *Quality time frame of the internship*

Most of the supervisors were satisfied with the period of internship, that is, 8 months. They said that it gave the students ample time to acquire the necessary hands-on industrial skills. This is in line with what Quality Standards for Service Learning Activities (2017) that said when referring to internship period; adequate time frames must be offered in order to make learning experiences in community settings or with community partners effective and sustainable. The findings are unlike those by Sivotwa et al. (2014) whose study at Botho University in Botswana made them recommend the university to review the attachment period.

### *Initiative and passionate for work*

The supervisors applauded the internees for being able to follow instructions and complete given tasks on time. The internees also showed initiative, for instance, in solving challenges faced by the companies where they were attached. Thus, what Chibwe (2014) proposed as one of the objectives of internship: *permit a student to apply the principals and technical skills learned in the classroom to real-life problem solving situation*, has been fulfilled in this study.



One supervisor wrote:

*Excerpt 1:* She has shown great passion in the Public Relations Office and brought up initiatives that we have implemented in the PR's office.

Most of the internees were also recommended for being highly innovative and hardworking. A supervisor wrote:

*Excerpt 2:* She has worked extremely hard since joining the corporation and she is one of our best performing attaches in the News and Current Affairs department.

Still two other supervisors wrote:

*Excerpt 3:* The student could not dismiss from work before accomplishing a given task.

*Excerpt 4:* The student is very excellent in her performance of work in all areas. She could also manage 15 rooms in housekeeping alone. She was performing very well.

And another said:

*Excerpt 5:* Generally hardworking, she contributed to the growth of the media centre through writing stories and organising citizen engagement platforms. She was willing to do other duties outside her stipulated duties.

Internees' willingness to do work and their fastness to learn were also noted by the majority of the supervisors as indicated by one supervisor:

*Excerpt 6:* He is a very quick learner who has a very keen interest in editing and video editing; these activities seem to be his passion.

Other common terms that were used to describe the internees in terms of initiative included: innovative, initiative, self-starter, does not need constant supervision, can do work with minimal supervision and motivated. The terms: quick learner, hardworking, keen to learn, hard worker, willing to do even extra work, industrious, committed, responded well to extra duties, can adapt easily to new environment, she has zeal to learn and adjust, at times comes earlier than the normal time, adapts well to work environments and willing to work after hours were used to describe the internees' passion for work. This shows that the internees were willing to work and they worked hard. This is also an indicator that the internees could manage tasks allocated to them.

#### *Collaboration and time conscious*

Most of the internees were highly applauded for their teamwork spirit as well as their time consciousness. They were said to be good at interacting and working together with other employees as shown by the comments below:

*Excerpt 7:* A good team player with some initiative.

*Excerpt 8:* She was able to learn fast, innovative and interact well with other employees.

*Excerpt 9:* Maintains discipline amongst the internees especially through punctuality.

*Excerpt 10:* She influenced the internees that we have here to do what is right.

The following terms were used to describe the internees by their supervisors: team player, able to interact with the public both internally and externally, works well with other colleagues, cooperative, cooperates, very good in teamwork and able to work with others. Punctuality is another aspect that the supervisors were happy about; one supervisor wrote:

*Excerpt 11:* Her strength was punctuality

Terms like: usually on time, punctual, values time were used to describe the internees. These findings are similar to those by Ayarkwa et al. (2012) at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology which showed high level of performance and achievement by attaches in their ability to carry out instructions, ability to function as team players and ability to apply knowledge gained from the university among others.

*English language command*

The internees were applauded for their high standard communication skills and articulation as exposed in the following excerpts:

*Excerpt 12:* He has very good communication skills

*Excerpt 13:* She exhibited the qualities of what is expected from students. She has strength of being able to communicate in both Ndebele and Shona.

*Excerpt 14:* She has good command of English

*Excerpt 15:* He is a good communicator who has the command of Queen's language

*Welcoming and flexible behavior*

The internees' behavior was also highly recommended as shown below:

*Excerpt 16:* She performed exceptionally well and demonstrated maturity in executing her duties beyond expectations.

*Excerpt 17:* He is a pleasant young man. He is a great team player with a pleasant character. He has high standards and responsible, a gesture that goes beyond call of duty.

*Excerpt 18:* She is a well-groomed young woman.

*Excerpt 19:* A mature and respected young man who is willing to learn.

*Excerpt 20:* She demonstrated the correct attitude and knowledge of the subject matter.

*Excerpt 21:* She is such a pleasure to work with.

*Excerpt 22:* He can be depended on.

*Excerpt 23:* It's a pleasure working with her, she is always positive in her approach.

*Excerpt 24:* She has a good character, quiet, honest and humble. She is above board. She is so responsible that she can manage the department alone eg, sales department, front office, receptionist.

*Excerpt 25:* She exhibited the qualities of what is expected from students.

*Excerpt 26:* She was reliable and well behaved.

The internees were also valued for their orderliness. The terms: can adapt easily to new environment and she has zeal to learn and adjust indicated the flexibility and adaptation to the new environment of work.

#### *Professional dressing*

Internees were highly recommended for their attire; both ladies and gentlemen but mainly ladies whose dressing was said to be professional, covering the necessary body parts and of decent lengths. The terms, well-dressed and well-presented were commonly used.

#### *Noted potential*

Supervisors' comments revealed high potential for the internees, thus, they wrote:

*Excerpt 27:* She has great potential and a talent in writing and designing.

*Excerpt 28:* She is very eager to learn, quiet promising, could write well.

*Excerpt 29:* With more time, he can become an asset in the area of media especially where audio and visual equipment and activities are concerned.

*Excerpt 30:* She exhibited ability to learn.

*Excerpt 31:* She asks a lot of questions with regards to her work and is not afraid to try even difficult tasks.

*Excerpt 32:* She has grown significantly and is now well prepared for the world of work. She has a teachable spirit.

*Excerpt 33:* He has room for improvement on effort put on work. Has done generally well but needs to cover more beats.

#### *Managerial qualities*

Leadership qualities were noted by the supervisors, hence the comments:

*Excerpt 34:* She has conducted her duties so well that I strongly recommend her for any work environment.

*Excerpt 35:* She manages to supervise, is dedicated and well organised.

*Excerpt 34:* She was innovative, confident and has managerial skills.

*Excerpt 35:* She was able to handle the classes well in an interactive, friendly and firm manner.

#### **Weaknesses**

##### *Incompetency in related and other activities*

Although most the internees were reported to be competent in their activities, few internees were reported to have challenges; one was reported to have problems in sourcing stories for the newspaper where she was affiliated and another lacked some reporting skills:

*Excerpt 36:* She should acquire more knowledge on reporting skills and be more marketable in the media industry.

Still another had poor communication skills:

*Excerpt 37:* Her communication and writing skills need improvement, she need to be innovative. Few of the internees had challenges in doing other activities (not necessarily the English related ones). Examples are reflected in the following supervisors comment:

*Excerpt 38:* She needs help in terms of compiling statistical reports and she needs to improve on confidence.

Related to lack of confidence were the comments:

*Excerpt 39:* Sometimes she is frightened by big crowds.

*Excerpt 40:* She is timid and scared of embarrassment and disappointment which causes her to feel as if what she has done is not good enough or up to standard.

*Excerpt 40:* He is a bit slow in gaining confidence maybe because of lack of practical elements in their course work but once he has an idea he is confident and willing to learn even more.

Sometimes the internees, especially the ladies, were reported to be so reserved that it affected their operations and activities. Two supervisors report read:

*Excerpt 41:* She is reserved but has potential to do better.

*Excerpt 42:* She is rather reserved and should be more involved with the public.

Some of the internees, a few though, could not copy the industry pressure:

*Excerpt 43:* However, she needs to work on her ability to manage excessive pressure required in modern work places.

*Excerpt 44:* The weakness of the student was working under pressure but she tried her best to keep up.

*Excerpt 45:* She has to improve in meeting deadlines.

Considering the above deadline issues, one can say that what Cohen (2014) said about the internees (that they learn to work in environments with deadlines and network with professionals who can give them useful advice) is proved true.

#### *Local language barrier*

Local language barrier was a problem to some great extent especially in Zimbabwe where some Shona speaking internees (unable to speak Ndebele) were attached in the Ndebele speaking geographical areas

or vice versa. This had some negative impact on the day to day activities of the companies, thus the supervisors gave the following comments:

*Excerpt 46:* He has a challenge as far as languages are concerned especially Shona but was able to deliver in isiNdebele.

*Excerpt 47:* She has a challenge in the Shona language but she was able to deliver in the Ndebele language. She should learn a lot of Shona.

*Excerpt 48:* She had a challenge in Shona but she tried her level best. Interpreting from vernacular to English was a challenge.

*Excerpt 49:* Struggles in Shona language.

#### *Limited number of assessments*

While the majority of the supervisors were satisfied with the internship period (8 months) they were unhappy with one assessment by the industry supervisors and the university; the strongly felt that it was not enough. Supervisors' argument was that the internees should be given room to improve after the first assessment. This tallies Gumbe et al. (2012) study in Zimbabwe who recommended for at least 2 assessments for students on internship.

The above weaknesses tally those found by Ayarkwa et al. (2012) in a study at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana which comprised low level of performance achievement in negotiation skills, independence, social and multi-racial awareness and ability to make decisions. These findings also go hand in hand with those by Diab (2013) in South Africa in a similar study who found technological support lacking. Similarly, Munyoro et al. (2016) in Zimbabwe realized a gap between theory and practice, a mismatch between equipment and technology between the university and the industry.

#### ***Supervisors' recommendations***

These recommendations by the supervisors were meant for the university and the English and Communication Department.

*Excerpt 50:* The department should teach the students news, featured speech writing and social media.

*Excerpt 51:* The university to have a radio station so that students have a fair idea of how it is even after attachment they can continue. It should take advantage of those from attachment and it should have video editing and filming.

*Excerpt 52:* Training institutions must work on in-house media outlets for purpose of continuation of practice.

*Excerpt 53:* The University should broaden the general knowledge of the students on global events.

## 9. Conclusion

The study concluded that what Musekiwa (2016) said about student industrial attachment, that it has become an integral part of academic programmes that seek to improve students' career prospects and employability, is true. It also concluded that the Bachelors of English and Communication at the university in question is a standard one although there is still room to improve. The strengths of the internees, as exposed in the supervisors' assessment forms, outweighed, by far, the weaknesses. The strengths of the students included: initiative and passionate for work; collaborative and time conscious; standard English language command; welcoming behavior; leadership qualities; professional dressing and potential to improve. An outstanding strength of the programme was adequate internship period. The weaknesses encompasses: students' incompetence in relation to other related activities (for instance, compiling statistical reports) and local language barriers.

Supervisors criticized the programme for limited number of assessments; only one assessment against two and three from contemporary universities in the country. Supervisors called for the programme to put emphasis on news writing, featured speech writing and social media. The supervisors recommended for the installation of a radio station so that students will have a fair idea of how it is and even after attachment, they can continue. It should take advantage of those from attachment and it should have video editing and filming. Training institutions must work on in-house media outlets for purpose of continuation of practice. The university should broaden the general knowledge of the students on global events.

## 10. Recommendations

The study recommendations are based on the findings of the study as well as the internees supervisors' recommendations.

- Internship assessment should be increased from one to two assessments.
- The Communication aspect of the Bachelor of English and Communication need to be furnished with news writing, featured speech writing, video editing and filming and social media courses.
- The university should have a radio station so that students have a fair experience of what they will encounter on attachment and job market. It should take advantage of those from attachment on radio station operation.
- The university should broaden the general knowledge of the students on global events.

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