

**STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES OF THE INDUSTRIAL
ATTACHMENT PROGRAMME: A STUDY OF
UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE FACULTY OF COMMERCE
STUDENTS (2010- 2011)**

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Abstract

The mission statement of the University of Zimbabwe(UZ) makes a provision for the institution to make meaningful contributions to sustainable development in Zimbabwe through the provision of high quality education, training and advisory services. Guided by such principles, the study was motivated by the desire to establish the perceptions of students as regards the Student Industrial Attachment(SIA) Programme which was introduced in 2002 to augment the theoretical backgrounds of students with the realities and demands of the practical work environment. High quality education can only be attained after taking cognisance of the views of the key stakeholders of UZ programmes, which is students and industry in the development of curricula. After two years of continuous study, students undergo a one year SIA Programme as an integral component of their undergraduate studies in the Faculty of Commerce. While it was established by more than half of the respondents that the SIA Programme is quite relevant, it is also imperative that the UZ should do a lot in improving the effectiveness of the programme. The key areas which require immediate attention include the need for at least two visits and more

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assessments by lecturers to all students on the SIA Programme, assisting all students to get attachment on time at least a semester before the commencement of the attachment period and establishing good links with companies in order to secure attachment for all students. Furthermore, the other major findings of the study were that the UZ should introduce new courses in its curricula and the fact that the SIA Programme should contribute to the overall degree class of a student.

Key words: Student industrial attachment programme, host organizations, supervisors, attachees.

Background to the study

Up and until 2001, UZ degree programmes in the Faculty of Commerce were all three years in duration. Around that time, the UZ administration mooted the idea of introducing a year of Industrial attachment for all students beginning in 2002. This was after the realization that UZ students from the Faculty of Commerce were facing stiff competition for employment opportunities when compared to their counterparts from other universities who had an industrial exposure. In addition, this was meant to augment student abilities and skills through placement at various organizations in both the public and private sector so that when students complete their studies, they would easily fit in the job market. Students are placed on attachment during the third year of study. The one year industrial attachment period acts as a link between the theoretical aspects covered during the first two years of their study and the actual practice in industry.

Mention should also be made to the fact that industrial attachment was introduced in phases. Since the programme of industrial attachment was introduced in 2002, the first batch of students to go on attachment in the third year of their study in 2002 were those studying for Bachelor of Business Studies (including students on the Bachelor of Science in Tourism and Hospitality Studies), followed by students studying for Bachelor of Business Studies and Computing Science in 2004. The last batch of students to undergo industrial attachment was of those studying for

Bachelor of Accountancy degree in 2006. In addition, it should also be noted that the Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management degree was initially offered by the Department of Business Studies until 2009 when it was now offered under the new Department of Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Studies.

There has been a progression in terms of student enrolment numbers on the industrial attachment programme since its inception as evidenced by *Table 1* below:

Table1: Student Attachment Enrolment Figures

YEAR	PROGRAMME						Total
	BBS FINB	BBS MGT	BBS MTG	BBSCT	BTHM	BACC	
2002	84		14				98
2003	117		26		21		164
2004	116		59	33	28		236
2005	125	2	34	25	29		215
2006	58	3	55	27	20	115	278
2007	86	4	47	18	56	133	344
2008	50		18	23	12	123	226
2009	61	7	37	21	36	114	276
2010	33		29	15	39	109	225
2011	67	13	47	28	48	135	338
Total	797	29	366	190	289	729	2400

Sources: University of Zimbabwe, (2002-2010) Graduation Reports, Harare

Industrial Attachment Reports, (2010-2011), University of Zimbabwe, Harare

KEY

BBS FINB- Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) degree in Finance and Banking

BBS MGT- Bachelor of Business Studies(Honours) degree in Management

BBS MTG- Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) degree in Marketing

BBSCT- Bachelor of Business Studies and Computer Science degree

BTHM- Bachelor of Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Studies degree

HACC- Bachelor of Accountancy (Honours) degree

Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the industry plays an integral part during the attachment period. A particular organization will be tracking the performance of the student and identifying possible areas for improvement. This implies that students would have to 'fit in' well within the organization and identify themselves within the broad cultural spectrum of the organization while discharging their duties. At the end of the industrial period, students are supposed to write a report documenting their experiences with the organizations they were attached to.

Background of UZ

According to www.uz.ac.zw, the UZ was established in 1953 by Royal Charter as the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, and was affiliated to the University of London, the last intake for qualifications of the University of London being in 1970 except those in medicine. The Faculty of Medicine was formally affiliated to the University of Birmingham, which issued degrees to medical students until 1975. However, with the advent of independence on 18 April 1980, the institution was renamed the University of Zimbabwe and in 1982, the Royal Charter, the rules by which the University was governed, was replaced by the University of Zimbabwe Act and amended by the 1990 Amendment Act. The vision of the UZ is to be (and be recognized

by others) as a leading University working for prosperity, peace and dignity in Zimbabwe and beyond. Also, from the mission statement of the UZ, its purpose is to enable its customers (public and private sectors) to make meaningful contributions to sustainable development in Zimbabwe through the provision of high quality education, training and advisory services. The UZ guarantees the above through maintaining excellence in teaching, learning and service to the community.

Programmes Offered by the Faculty of Commerce

The Faculty of Commerce is one of the ten faculties at the UZ offering diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The Faculty is composed of four departments offering the following programmes:

- 1) Department of Accountancy: Bachelor of Accountancy (Honours) degree
- 2) Department of Business Studies: Diploma in Business Management(DBM), Bachelor of Business Studies (Honours) degree with the following areas as majors: Management/Human Resources, Finance and Banking, Marketing; Bachelor of Business Studies and Computing Science degree as well as Master of Strategic Marketing degree
- 3) Department of Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Studies: Bachelor of Science in Tourism and Hospitality Management degree and Master of Science in Tourism and Hospitality Management degree
- 4) Graduate School of Management(GSM): Master of Business Administration degree.

In addition, the Faculty can offer Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy degrees depending on availability of Supervisors.

Administration of Industrial Attachment

Industrial attachment normally takes place in the students' third year of study. The minimum period of attachment should be thirty two weeks, the maximum being twelve months. The Industrial Liaison Officer in the Faculty of Commerce maintains a database of prospective employers and is tasked with the responsibility of placing all third year undergraduate students at

various organizations and companies. On the other hand, it is also incumbent upon the students as well to make an effort in placing their resumes with different companies so as to secure a place for attachment. During the attachment period, students follow the usual working hours of host organizations. Payment of subsistence allowances to students is at the discretion of the host organizations. During their attachment period, students are expected to be rotated to different departments of the host organizations. This gives them an insight of what happens in all departments of the organization.

While on attachment, students are expected to write reports which will be submitted to the UZ for assessment purposes, after which a grade will be assigned. Reports compiled by students should benefit the host organizations since the students would include some recommendations in terms of operational procedures within the companies they would have been attached to. Supervisors at the host organizations will also compile reports on the performance of the students, detailing all the departments visited and the duties that the students performed.

It is also noteworthy that the economic crisis that prevailed prior to dollarization in 2009 negatively affected the operations of all organizations in Zimbabwe and the UZ was not spared. Due to operational challenges brought about by hyperinflation, with the last official inflation figure recorded at 231 million percent as of July 2008 (Barclays Bank, 2008), it was very difficult to visit all students on the SIA Programme due to mobility constraints especially in 2008. As such, the Faculty had to rely on the reports that were compiled by students during the attachment period. Resultantly, students were awarded the same grading (third class) for the reports and currently the attachment report does not contribute anything to a student's degree class.

For control purposes, it is the duty of the lecturers, together with the Industrial Liaison Officer to follow up students' performance for at least twice during the industrial attachment period. Supervisors will be the first port of call since they are responsible for the students during the attachment period. Lecturers should also take note of students' concerns at their places of

attachment, after which they would compile a report concerning student visits to the UZ administration before the commencement of the fourth/final year.

Statement of The Problem

The Student Industrial Attachment (SIA) programme has been in operation since 2002. However, there has been a multiplicity of concerns emanating from students who have undergone such a programme. The research sought to solicit students' perceptions of the programme. What were the challenges faced and benefits that accrued to students during the attachment period spanning from August 2010 to August 2011?

Research Proposition

The UZ does not have proper policies and guidelines on how industrial attachments should be run. This is left to the discretion of individual faculties.

Research Objectives

- 1) To establish the relevance of the attachment programme from the students' viewpoint
- 2) To examine the reception of industry to students on industrial attachment
- 3) To establish the areas of improvement of the industrial attachment programme from the students' perspective.

Significance of Research

The study will benefit the UZ as it will be able to devise an effective student industrial attachment programme so that students may gain skills required by the industry through exposure in various organizations. Problems that are faced by students during the one year attachment period will be minimized and resultantly they will derive maximum benefit from the programme.

Literature Review

Definition of industrial attachment

Industrial attachment refers to an on- the job training in which a student learns while working within a normal working environment, using the actual tools and actually doing the job, (Leong, 2004). The Industrial Training and Trade Testing Department (ITTTD) defines industrial attachment as a process that moulds a student's knowledge; which is the students ability, skill and understanding of information that every student requires to perform efficiently and effectively. Abiodun (1999) concurs with ITTT's definition but goes on to say this process requires that the student be under the supervision of a qualified person. Abiodun (ibid) goes further to explain that trainees subjected to the right environment contribute to increased productivity. Oguntimehin (2001) supports Abiodun's assertion by postulating that industrial attachment conducted in the right atmosphere improves skills, knowledge, understanding and attitude, as well as enhanced use of tools and machines. Arikewuyo (1999) argues that effective industrial attachment is an indispensable component of developing students' competences in their areas of specialization. He further states that this process can only achieve desired results if students are placed under the supervision of experienced and seasoned personnel.

Therefore one can conclude that industrial attachment is an expert supervised process of transferring skills, knowledge, attitudes and information to students as a way of enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness in their area of specialization.

Importance of Industrial Attachment

As discussed above industrial attachment aims at enhancing students' efficiency and effectiveness at the workplace. However, the above statement is an over generalization of the true benefits of the SIA. Leong (2004), and Ryan and Imel (1996), postulate that SIA imparts knowledge to students through active behaviour as it is through what a person does that effective learning takes place. Bailly and Merritt (1997) reinforce the argument by explaining that SIA allows students to effectively learn as it allows them to acquire job experience and reinforce academic instruction through the use of applied learning opportunities.

According to the National Employer Leadership Council, (NELC), (1999) host organisations economically benefit from SIA as their productivity increases and labour hiring costs reduce

during the attachment period. Thus host organisations make savings through reduced costs and increased output.

On the other hand institutions of learning, from which students come, also benefit from SIA as it provides them with an opportunity to improve their curricular. This can be inferred from the studies that were carried out by Samuel (2005) in which he reports that the Industrial Training Fund in Nigeria established the existence of a wide gap between theory and practice of engineering and technology and other practically oriented courses. Therefore one can conclude that findings of this nature spur learning institutions to improving their curricula to meet industry needs. This is confirmed by Ogunlade's findings (2009) at Riyadh College of Technology which asserted that students had their academic skills improved after attachment as they had relevant academic knowledge.

Conditions for Effective Attachment

Relevance of curricula

Baechle and Earle (2008) argue that effective SIA should achieve desired objectives. They go on to outline objectives as specific and quantifiable statements of what a programme should achieve. Derrick (1969) postulates that students should be made aware of the objectives of industrial training- namely acquisition of professional, social and skills recognition, enhancement of personality and acquisition of status and money. Truelove (1997) argues that making students aware of the objectives makes students gain intrinsic motivation and confidence.

Rae (1998) argues that the school curricula must be relevant to the needs of society as a curriculum that does not address the needs of society is not considered worthwhile by society. Buckley (1990) supports Rae's assertion by adding that society determines what is worthwhile knowledge; desirable attitudes and relevant skills as it is the ultimate employer of the student after school. Dickinson (2010) concurs with the need for relevance of curricula but suggests that industry must play a key role in the development of curricula, thus the need for strategic link between industry and institutions of learning.

Quality of available resources

Olugbenga (2009) argues that for effective training to take place and to create skills that are relevant to the future during industrial attachment, institutions of training must have up to date

technology. However, the technological environment is constantly changing making it difficult for institutions of higher learning to keep abreast with the changes. Finch and Crunkilton (1999) agree with Olugbenga's assertion and goes further to acknowledge that failure by institutions of higher learning to keep abreast with technology is difficult due to numerous constraint including finances. This has the effect of compromising quality of training, a view shared by Anderson (1993) and Rae (1998) who argue that a student who is given inappropriate or inadequate tools may perform below their expected capabilities. Lucas (2005) emphasizes that learners must have access to the full range of modern equipment utilized in industry for training to be effective.

Quality of trainers

Monarth (2008) acknowledges the role that trainers play in making students relevant in meeting society's expectations by emphasizing the need for trainers to keep their skills up to date and up to scratch. He further states that cutting edge trainers get inside the heads of trainees and creates new thinking and always sends to them the message of always finding new and better ways of doing things. This implies that the trainer has a critical role of shaping trainees and the quality of a trainee is determined by the trainer. Bottoms and McNally (2008) and Dicknison (2010) agree with Monarth (ibid) but add that the trainer must ensure that training is timely and meet the real needs of society.

Rae (1998) adds another dimension to the role of the trainer by arguing that the trainer must be a role model of trainees. He postulates that trainers have a responsibility of moulding the attitudes, beliefs and values of trainees through setting examples to be followed. Thus trainers have power to change the lives of their trainees by being role models.

Lucas (2005) Rae (1998) and Furnham (2005) add other important elements for effective trainers as the need for them to be flexible (open minded) so that they are able to learn new things or receptive to new ideas; ability to motivate and reinforce trainees; should not be too qualified neither should they be under qualified for their job; should be professionally qualified in the area in which they are training and that they should be employable.

Attitude of students

Curacy (1976) argues that effective training takes place where trainees have practical knowledge of workmen in industry setting. Little (2010) concurs with Curacy, when he articulates the need

for trainees to have a positive attitude towards work, fully committed, engaged and being prepared to take learning back into the work place.

Dickinson (2010) states that trainees need to be bold, confident and ready to move into action during the learning process. Rae (1998) lists the following as critical elements of attitudes that should be found in students:

- Responsible- they should take responsibility of their own learning, thus the need to be attentive, observant and seek clarity where understanding is lacking;
- Open- trainees should be able to say what they think and feel during training, thus the ability to share their opinions with others;
- Punctual- trainees should be time conscious, thus to come to work early and return from break times on time and
- Co-operative- trainees must not be difficult to work with, thus should allow the trainer to show them the right way (correct procedures) of doing things from the start as unlearning may be difficult.

Challenges to industrial attachment

Carlson (2002) identified the following as challenges that are associated with industrial attachment:

- Competition for attachment places from other institutions;
- Rough and tough work environment for students;
- Male dominated working environment for female trainees and
- High expectations by firms accepting attachées

Carlson's (ibid) assertions on industrial attachment are corroborated by Afonja et al (2005), however Olugbenga (2009) concurs with the former authors but adds that students on industrial attachment also face financial challenges.

Despite the challenges faced one can conclude from the reviewed literature that industrial attachment remains important and relevant in training students in tertiary institutions.

Methodology and Sampling

Data Sources

Both secondary and qualitative data were used. Secondary were to review relevant literature pertaining to the industrial attachment by students at tertiary institutions. The importance, relevance to curricula development, availability of resources, quality of trainer's attitudes of students and challenges associated with attachment were examined. The primary data were used to hear students' perceptions and perspectives about the whole industrial attachment exercise and how UZ is administering and managing it.

Target Population

The study population consisted of all level four students who are in the Faculty of Commerce. As a mandatory requirement, all these students would have done an industrial attachment for a period of at least eight months during their third year of study.

Sampling Procedures

Table 2 below gives the total number of students (N=184) under each of the degree programmes offered by the faculty and the targeted sample size of seventy five students. It should be noted the total of Accountancy students excludes those who are doing part time as they do not go for industrial attachment. The sampling technique adopted was stratified random sampling where the strata were the four departments offering undergraduate programmes. This sample was weighted in order to reflect the population configuration in the departments. Within each department, names of students were assigned random numbers which were then used as the sampling units to come up with the final list of respondents.

Instrumentation and Questionnaire Administration

A structured questionnaire was used for this study. The questionnaires contained questions on the attachment procedures, background of the host organisation, relevance of UZ taught courses and

UZ support for industrial attachment. There were a few questions which were open ended to allow respondents to buttress some of their responses.

In terms of questionnaire administration, the respondents were given the questionnaire to go and fill in and bringing it back the following day. On submission, the researchers checked for completeness of all the questions. The data were then captured, cleaned and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS).

Table 2: Distribution of Level Four Students and Targeted Respondents

Programme	Population (N)	Targeted Sample (n)
Accountancy	69	28
Business Studies	62	25
Business Studies and Computing Science	15	6
Tourism, Leisure & Hospitality Studies	38	16
Total	184	75

Results and Discussion

Response Rate

Of the seventy five questionnaires that were distributed, sixty three of them were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 84 percent(See *Table 3* below).

Table 3: Distribution of Targeted and Actual Respondents by Department

Programme	Targeted Sample	Analysis Sample
Accountancy	28	22(34.9)
Business Studies	25	20(31.7)
Business Studies and Computing Science	6	6(9.6)
Tourism, Leisure & Hospitality Studies	16	15(23.8)
Total	75	63

Sectors of Host Organizations

Table 4 below shows the distribution of respondents according to the sectors where they were attached to. The predominant sectors were Services(38.1%), followed by Accounting(20.6%) as well as Hotels and Safaris(20.6%).

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Company Sector

Company Sector	Percent Distribution n(%)
Accounting	13(20.6)
Finance and Banking	4(6.3)
Hotels and Safaris	13(20.6)
Mining	1(1.6)
Manufacturing	8(12.7)
Services	24(38.1)
Total	63

Demographic Variables of the Respondents

The majority (60.3%) of the respondents were males as shown in Table 5 below. This finding confirms the gender disparities in terms of enrolment figures at most institutions of higher learning. Fewer females than males are admitted into the faculty. Ironically, the national demographic profile based on the 2002 census figures, females constitute about 52% of Zimbabwe's population. However, it must be noted that Zimbabwe has made tremendous strides in trying to redress this anomaly. At UZ there is now a quota system used to admit female

students, though its still tilted in favour of males. More than nine tens (95.2%) of the students were aged below 25 years, which is expected considering six years of primary and seven years of secondary schooling.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Selected Sex and Age

Selected Demographic Variable		Percent Distribution	n(%)
Sex of Respondent	Male	38(60.3)	
	Female	25(39.7)	
Age years	22 to 25	60(95.2)	
	More than 25	3(4.8)	
Total		63(100.0)	

Securing of Attachment

As regards the securing of attachment, 81.0% of the respondents were attached on time, for a minimum period of eight months and a maximum period of twelve months. However, it is noteworthy that more than two thirds of the respondents were not assisted by the Faculty in securing attachment and had to rely on their own contacts in the majority of cases. In light of this aspect, it is apparent that the Faculty is not doing enough in assisting students to get attached in various organizations. As regards the duration of the attachment, 76.2% of the respondents were attached for more than eight months which confirms the finding that the majority of the students were attached on time. *Table 6* below shows the number of students who were attached on time as well as those assisted by the Faculty.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Attachment Period and Assistance Rendered by Faculty

Securing of Attachment	Percent Distribution n(%)
Attachment Secured on Time	51(81.0)
Yes	12(19.0)
No	23(36.5)
Attachment Secured by Faculty	40(63.5)
Yes	
No	
Means of Getting Attached	
Own contacts	23(36.5)
Friends	6(9.5)
Relatives	5(7.9)
Other	6(9.5)
Total	63

Adaptation to the Working Environment

The majority of the respondents did not encounter major problems in adapting to the working environment, with 61.9% of them being absorbed by big private companies which had staff complements in excess of two hundred. With regard to the number of departments visited by the respondents during their attachment, 63.3% were attached to more than three departments. This finding indicates that there was some form of job rotation at the companies where the respondents were attached to. Whilst performing their duties, 88.9% of the respondents were inducted which highlights good induction practices at the host organizations which is beneficial for new employees fitting into a new working environment. For those who were not inducted, they had to ask, use their own knowledge and learn on the job. This implies that students had to be responsible for their own learning as confirmed by Rae(1998) in the review of literature.

Relationship between Theory and Practice

One of the research questions sought to establish the link between the taught courses(theory) and practice, with 88.9% of the respondents confirming that there are strong links between theory and the practical aspects of work. In addition, there was a strong feeling, as indicated by 84.1% of the respondents that the UZ should introduce new courses such as Business Ethics and Corporate Governance, Strategic Management for Accountancy students, E-Marketing, Sales Management and Event Management. In addition, other major courses include Branding, Networking, Food and Beverages practicals, Public Relations, Financial Modelling as well Purchasing and Supply Management. The aim of introducing the new courses would be to improve the UZ curricula where gaps exists between theory and practice which is consistent with the assertion by Samuel(2005). *Table 7* below indicates some of the views of the respondents with regard to linking theory and practice as well as the introduction of new courses.

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents by Linking Theory to Practice, New UZ Courses

Relationship between theory and practice	Percent Distribution n(%)
Is there a link between theory and practice	56(88.9)
Yes	7(11.1)
No	
Should the UZ introduce new courses in curricular	53(84.1)
Yes	10(15.9)
No	
Total	63

Supervisors Views on Students' Performance

84.1% of the respondents' supervisors were happy with the attachees' performance on the job. One may argue that students had a positive attitude and were fully committed to their work which was also confirmed by Little(2010). On the other hand, the expectations of the

respondents on the new jobs were met in the majority of cases with 73.0% showing an affinity to this fact. *Table 8* below indicates the views of supervisors as regards the performance of students as well as the expectations of students on the SIA Programme.

Table 8: Distribution of Supervisors Views and Expectations of Students of the SIA Programme

Supervisors' views on Student Performance	Percent Distribution n(%)
Supervisors happy with students' performance	53(84.1)
Yes	10(15.9)
No	
Students' expectations met by the SIA programme	46(73.0)
Yes	17(27.0)
No	
Total	63

UZ Support to the SIA Programme

In line with the findings, 85.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that there is no UZ support for the SIA programme and 54 respondents suggested the following key aspects as depicted by *Table 9* below:

Table 9: Suggestions on what the UZ should Do to Supporting the SIA Programme

Key Area of Focus	Percent Distribution n(%) n=54
For those respondents who made suggestions:	

Assess all students	16(29.63)
Increase student visits by Lecturers	20(37.04)
Conduct seminars for students before attachment	1(1.85)
Supervise the attachment programme	1(1.85)
Assist students to get attachment	9(16.67)
Award grade according to student's performance	1(1.85)
Timely Assessment	1(1.85)
Cultivate good public relations with companies	2(3.7)
Negotiate for student allowances with companies	3(5.56)
Total	54

Student Payments for Industrial Attachment

Respondents were asked to express their opinions as regards the payment of tuition whilst they are on industrial attachment and 85.7% were of the view that they should not pay and the reasons cited varied as shown in *Table 10* below:

Table 10: Distribution of Respondents' Views on Paying Tuition During Attachment

Reasons why students should not pay tuition whilst on attachment	Percent Distribution n(%) n=54
For respondents who said students should not pay tuition:	
No Student Assessment	5(9.26)
Students not attending Lectures	5(9.26)
No UZ resources being utilized	39(72.22)
Students should pay half the tuition fees	5(9.26)
Total	54

As regards the number of times that the respondents were visited during attachment, 66.7 percent indicated that they were visited once while 31.7% were never visited. In addition, of the 63 respondents, 82.5 % expressed the view that such visits were not sufficient. In comparison with the number of visits that were conducted by Lecturers from other tertiary institutions, 69.8% of the respondents indicated that those students were visited more than twice which highlights the fact that the UZ is not doing enough in assessing students on attachment.

Lecturers' Meetings with Students on Attachment

Respondents were also asked to confirm whether they had meetings with Lecturers during their visits to students and 52.4% indicated that they never had the opportunity to meet their Lecturers. Whilst on attachment, 49.2% of the respondents expressed the view that they faced problems at the various institutions where they were attached. This finding is consistent with the fact that students always face some challenges during attachment as pointed out by Carlson(2002). *Table 11* indicates the number of respondents who had the opportunity to meet their Lecturers during attachment as well as those who faced problems during the same period.

Table 11: Distribution of Respondents Who Met Lecturers During Attachment

Opportunity to meet Lecturers during Attachment	Percent Distribution n(%)
Met Lecturers during attachment	33(52.4)
Yes	30(47.6)
No	
Any problems faced during attachment	31(49.2)
Yes	32(50.8)
No	
Total	63

Furthermore, during attachment, 68.3% of the respondents confirmed that they were in constant touch with the Faculty. As regards communication with their respective departments, 50.8% of

the respondents highlighted the fact that they were communicating with their relevant departments.

Relevance of Attachment

Respondents were asked to state their opinions with regard to the relevance of the SIA Programme and their views are tabulated in *Table 12*.

Table 12: Distribution of Respondents' Rating of Attachment

Relevance of Attachment	Percent Distribution n(%)
Relevant	33(52.4)
Irrelevant	2(3.2)
Needs Improvement	28(44.4)
Total	63

From *Table 12* above, it is quite apparent that the SIA Programme is relevant as alluded to, by 52.4% of the respondents. It is also noteworthy that for the SIA Programme to be effective there is need for improvement as confirmed by 44.4% of the respondents hence there is great scope for UZ to make the programme very beneficial to students and the UZ.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From the preceding information, it is quite apparent that the SIA Programme plays a critical role in instilling new ideas to students while gaining the necessary experience needed in industry when they complete their studies. The SIA Programme serves as a link between theoretical aspects gained(during lecture times) and the practical aspects of the job, within the work environment.

As argued by Olugbenga(2009), there is need to have up to date technology at the UZ especially for students in the Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Studies Department where there are courses which require practicals such as Food and Beverages as well as Rooms Division Management. As noted earlier on, the same view was shared by Lucas(2005) who proposed that there is need to have equipment that is utilized in industry for training to be effective. The UZ should have facilities, for instance, a hotel school where students can learn all practical courses which are actually done at hotel establishments.

Respondents were also asked to provide some recommendations in order to make the SIA Programme more effective and the following were the key recommendations:

- a) There is need for at least two student assessments which should be done by Lecturers as opposed to the current situation whereby students are assessed once or no assessment done at all as confirmed by 31.7% of the respondents
- b) The SIA Programme should contribute to a student's overall degree class, but currently this is not happening
- c) Students should not be awarded a blanket third class for the attachment report. Grading should be based on the actual performance of a student during the attachment period
- d) The Faculty should introduce practicals for courses such as Food and Beverages for Tourism and Hospitality Management students
- e) The Faculty should establish good links with companies in order to secure attachment for all students and create a database of all companies.
- f) The Faculty should use the established database in assisting all students in securing attachment as opposed to the current situation where only 36.5% of the respondents were assisted by the Faculty.

In order for the UZ curricula to be relevant, it needs to take into consideration the views of one of its key stakeholders, that is students. As such, students were asked to state some key courses which are relevant to all programmes offered by the Faculty of Commerce and the following

were the dominant ones: People Care Management, Business Ethics and Conduct for Accountants, Branding, Networking, Public Relations, Purchasing and Supply Chain Management. In addition, other relevant courses include Business Ethics and Corporate Governance, Financial Modelling, E-Marketing, Sales Management, Event Management and Strategic Management for Accountancy students.

Areas for further research

Further research needs to examine the input of the other two key stakeholders in developing curricula, that is, the views of the trainers and industry. As observed by Monarth(2008), the trainer plays a key role of shaping trainees and determining their quality. Also, as noted by Dickinson(2011), industry must play a key role in the development of curricula, hence the need to have a strategic link between industry and institutions of learning, and in this instance the UZ is no exception.

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