UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES OF INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL

PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION (IEPA) STUDENTS OF

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CHRISTOPHER MENSAH ADOSI

2018

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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

BY

CHRISTOPHER MENSAH ADOSI

Thesis submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration
of the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for award of Master of Philosophy degree in
Administration in Higher Education

JUNE 2018

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ………………………… Date: …………………

Name: Christopher Mensah Adosi

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature: …………………. Date: ………………….

Name: Dr. Hope Pius Nudzor

Co-Supervisor's Signature: ………………………... Date: ………………….

Name: Dr. Edward Akomaning

ABSTRACT

The study explored the internship experiences of the IEPA students, UCC. This was proposed against the backdrop of a dearth of empirical evidence concerning how the internship experiences of IEPA students have prepared them for their professional endeavours. The study was underpinned by the convergent parallel mixed methods design. The study adopted the census approach to research where all individuals in the target study population were studied. In all, data was collected from 50 IEPA students using a self-administered questionnaire which was complemented by 12 interviews with their internship site supervisors. The data from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies. The interview responses were transcribed and analysed thematically. Among other things, the findings suggest that, majority of IEPA students agreed that their internship experiences have helped to enhance their expertise in performing general administrative duties (e.g. filing, writing minutes, memos and letters), human relations skills, communication skills and teamwork skills. Also, majority of the IEPA students indicated that, they did not see a link between their academic preparation (coursework) and most of the administrative tasks they performed. Against this backdrop, it was concluded that perhaps the IEPA's curricula was not in line with the needs and aspirations of its clientele. In light of these, it was recommended, among other things, that the IEPA should review its curriculum to include courses that will provide students with the needed knowledge in 21st century educational administration practises.

KEY WORDS

Administrative Experience

Educational Administrator

Intern

Internship

Site Supervisor

Work Identity

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

To my family Lucy, Joan and Jeshurun Mensah

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCTU	Cape Coast Technical University
COE	Colleges of Education
CSUC	Christian Service University College
DEO	District Education Office
GES	Ghana Education Service
GNAT	Ghana National Association of Teachers
IEPA	Institute for Educational Planning and Administration
M.Ed.	Master of Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoH	Ministry of Health
M.Phil.	Master of Philosophy
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
TTU	Takoradi Technical University
TU	Technical Universities
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UPS	University of Professional Studies
VVU	Valley View University

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Evidence from student internship literature (for example Geer, Anast-May & Gurley, 2014) suggests that many academic internships do not offer the required experiences that successfully prepare students for the world of work. However, the extent to which this assertion, among others, about academic internship apply in the case of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) students is not known. Hence, this study explored the internship experiences of IEPA students with the view to understand how their intenship experiences have prepared them for their professional endeavours.

Background to the Study

Any country's capacity to compete in today's global knowledge economy depends on whether its educational institutions can meet the rapidly growing demand for high-level skilled human resource (Schleicher, 2006). That is to say, the role of educational institutions in producing the needed personnel to resource industries is very crucial to national development. In line with this reasoning, the President of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo in a speech made at the 50th anniversary of the Association of African Universities in Accra asserted that universities are key partners in national development since they play a central role in human resource development (Myjoyonline, 2017). Undoubtedly, all sectors of any country's economy, like that of Ghana, depends on higher educational institutions (i.e. Universities) for the training and development of their human resource. This makes higher educational institutions in today's 21st century more relevant to the socio-economic development of every nation. Lepak and Snell (1999) forcefully argue that, the

life blood of every organisation is its human resources hence institutions charged with the responsibility of training and developing this human resource have no option than to strive towards producing the right personnel for the job market. This obvious task, places more responsibility on educational institutions specifically its managers (administrators) than ever before.

Ultimately, educational administrators are generally expected to work towards increasing students' success by creating effective teaching, learning and social environment; increasing students' and teachers' motivation; and improving relationships between various key stakeholders in education (Dos & Savas, 2015). In view of the crucial nature of the roles and responsibilities of educational administrators, the focus on their skills, abilities and the quality of academic programmes that prepares them, has been more intense recently (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Thus, the call on training institutions to churn out competent educational administrators is brought to the front burner of education in recent times.

According to Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT), as cited by Tawiah (2017), the essence of successful instruction and good schools comes from the thoughts and actions of professional teachers who are led by an effective educational leader (administrator). According to Tawiah, educational administrators are the drivers of the teaching and learning process in schools, hence their training must be very comprehensive. He advised that, institutions mandated to train educational administrators, like the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA), must not only focus on imparting theoretical knowledge but must also equip students with the required practical administration experience. Along the same line of thinking, Abraham Lincoln

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is noted for saying "if I had six hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend the first four hours sharpening the axe" (Pinola, 2011, para. 1) just to make sure efficiency is achieved. This analogy by Lincoln resonates with the resolve by Ghana, through the Ministry of Education, to prioritise the training of educational administrators, an enterprise in which IEPA is a key stakeholder.

Historically, in the 1970s, the educational system in Ghana had become extraordinarily complex and required educationist with expertise in administration and planning to enable the sector play its full role in national development (University of Cape Coast, 2016, p. 1). Consequently, the Government of Ghana and UNESCO/UNDP in August 1975, then established IEPA in the University of Cape Coast (Owusu & Dzinyela, 1994) to be responsible for training educational administrators and planners at all levels of education in Ghana. The IEPA has a mandate to provide broad-base professional training in educational management and administration, and to equip students with requisite skills for meeting the leadership challenges facing educational institutions in Ghana and elsewhere (University of Cape Coast, 2016). This mandate is in line with the main goal of higher education which is to prepare and equip students for future and modern working environment and career (Efua, William, Tackie-Ofosu, & Koranteng, 2016). Specifically, the IEPA is mandated to provide innovative and quality education aimed at improving leadership, managerial and planning capabilities of personnel in the educational sector in Ghana, by raising their levels of competence and involvement in their areas of operations (IEPA, 2017).

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IEPA in pursuit of its mandate, runs postgraduate programmes such as PhD in Qualitative Research, M.Phil. in Administration in Higher Education, M.Phil. in Educational Planning and M.Phil. in Educational Administration.

Among the various courses designed by IEPA to train its M.Phil. students to become effective and efficient educational administrators and planners, is its internship programme. According to Taylor (1988, p. 393) an internship is defined as a "structured and career-relevant work experiences obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic programme". Internship is seen by Hurst and Good (2010) as a form of apprenticeship which, to them, has been in existence for thousands of years. Internship is defined as a phase of professional preparation in which a student who is nearing the completion of his formal study works in the field for a considerable block of time under the supervision of a practitioner and a university professor for the purpose of developing the students' competence (Bukaliya, Region, & Marondera, 2012). Internship can also be referred to as field attachment.

According to Tackett, Wolf and Law (2001, as cited in Bukaliya, Region, & Marondera, 2012), internships have taken on an increasingly central role in education over the past decade. Tackett et al. (2001) claim that internship present students with many benefits, ranging from gaining practical experience and obtaining career-related direction to networking with other students from various institutions during the period of internship. They further claim that for those who have undertaken internships, there is an increased likelihood of them securing employment. According to Jamison and Clayton (2016), designing and providing internship opportunities where interns engage in active administrative and leadership roles in new settings and environments will contribute to and

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enhance the self-efficacy of students. Similarly, it is believed that interns also bring diverse talents to host organisations which lead to innovations (Lam & Ching, 2007).

In practice, the IEPA students after completing their first-year course work are mandated to arrange with institutions, preferably in the educational sector, for their internship. After a student has arranged with a preferred institution, an introductory letter is then obtained from their internship coordinator which is then sent to the host organisation. The duration for the IEPA internship programme currently is six weeks. After the completion of the internship, each student is required to submit a report to the IEPA internship coordinator for assessment purposes. Alarmingly, according to a study by Lam and Ching (2007), a significant number of interns, in their report to their internship coordinators, falsify and fabricate information about their internship experiences with the intention of getting good grades. This awful behaviour by some students is noted by Lam and Ching to have blurred some internship coordinators' insight into the impact of their internship programme. For Geer, Anast-May and Gurley (2014), many academic internships do not offer the experiences that successfully prepare students for the world of work. Nevertheless, the extent to which these claims about the internship experiences of students are true in the case of IEPA students, still remains anecdotal. It is against this background that this study was conducted to explore the internship experiences of IEPA students specifically through the lens of both the students and their site supervisors. An insight into their internship experiences, is needful in helping the IEPA to, among other things, appreciate and/or identify any lapses in the internship programme that may necessitate a possible restructuring

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of the programme so as to ensure and assure the needed experiences for future interns.

Statement of the Problem

Year in year out, IEPA students undergo internship with the expectation that they will "obtain the required practical educational administration experience" in order to be successful in their professional endeavours (University of Cape Coast, 2016, p. 25). However, in a nationwide tracer study conducted by Nudzor et al. (2018), in relation to the contributions of IEPA and her graduates to the socioeconomic development of Ghana, the findings, among other things, signalled the ineffectiveness of some graduates of IEPA in their respective schedules and places of work. Similarly, aside the training they had from IEPA, some of the graduate employees claimed to have had additional training in the form of on-the-job training and/or support to enable them function effectively in their respective schedules and places of work. These insights/revelations lead one to hazard a conjecture that perhaps IEPA may not have been preparing its graduates adequately for the demands of the job market. In line with these findings and conclusion, Nudzor et al. (2018) recommend that IEPA needs to review its training regime to ensure that students, through internship and other practical hands-on arrangements, demonstrate mastery of skills before they complete their programmes of study.

Clearly, this insight from the tracer study by Nudzor et al. (2018) suggests a gap perhaps between what IEPA's internship programme was designed to do for its students and what students gain after completing their internship. This therefore calls for a 'self-introspection' of some sort to examine how IEPA

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students are engaged during their internship period and whether what they are engaged in adequately prepares them for their professional endeavours.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the internship experiences of the IEPA students, with the view to understand and report in a telling way how the internship programme prepares them for the 21st century job market.

Research Questions

In order to explore the internship experiences of IEPA students, the following research questions were formulated to drive the study:

1. What are the internship goals of IEPA students?

2. How do IEPA students establish work identity during their internship?

3. What tasks are performed by IEPA students during their internship?

4. What learning strategies do IEPA students use during internship to develop their expertise as potential educational administrators and planners?

5. In what ways have the internship experiences of IEPA students prepared them for their professional endeavours?

Significance of the Study

The need to understand the internship experiences of IEPA students should be a primary concern for the IEPA itself, the students themselves, potential employers, and the Ministry of Education (MoE) at large so as to ensure data driven decisions. It is my firm believe that the findings of this research, most certainly, will accrued enormous benefits to the IEPA and its students, employers and ultimately the MoE in the following ways.

To the IEPA, the findings of this study is expected to provide a groundswell of evidence to enable it to restructure its internship programme to make it more focused and relevant to the 21st century needs and aspirations of its clientele.

To the prospective internship students, the study will expose them to the experiences others have gone through and the lessons from it can guide them as they embark on the same exercise.

To employers, the findings will grant them the opportunity to know the kind of experiences institutions/organisations expose interns to and the very skills and capabilities these potential employees are bringing to the job market. This insight is very important to training institutions and employers because it will serve as a basis for them to adjust their roles in producing the best human resource for industries in Ghana.

To policy makers (i.e. MoE), the findings will expose them to both positive and negative experiences of interns thereby giving them a clear insight as to what legislation should be enacted to regulate internships in institutions of higher learning in Ghana.

The researcher intends to communicate the findings of this study to prospective internship students, employers and policy makers through presentations at seminars, viva and publications in reputable peer reviewed journals. Also, I will develop a policy-brief for policy makers, like heads of educational institutions and the regulators (National Council for Tertiary Education) as a way of disseminating the findings and recommendations of this study to them.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to exploring the internship experiences of the IEPA M.Phil. regular students who have successfully completed their mandatory six-week continuous internship in Ghana. The decision to focus on only one geographical context (i.e. Ghana) is to enable me study internship experiences under similar working conditions (i.e. public policies, structures of the economy, economic indicators like inflation rate, and unemployment rate) in order to ensure external validity.

The study also relied on the insight of site supervisors who have supervised at least two or more of the IEPA students engaged in the study. This was to give me the opportunity to engage participants whose insight will reflect the experiences of more respondents (IEPA students).

Limitations

Even though all respondents and participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, two of the participants interviewed did not agree to an audio recording of the interview for their personal reasons. This affected the fluidity of the interview since I was in addition to asking the question, recording all their responses manually. Consequently, the duration for those interviews became longer than anticipated, so those two participants resorted to providing unelaborated responses at some point during the interview just to save time. This perhaps could have strained the amount of information they shared thereby weighing down the level of insight participants brought to bear on the study. Again, attempt was made to let them (the two participants) check the accuracy of their responses (member checking) before the analysis but it was not

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successful at the time of the final data analysis. This was because one of them was on leave whiles the other had travel out of the country.

Definition of Terms

Operational definition for some key terms has been given to guide users of this study.

Internship as used in this study refers to an academic, structured, professional preparation programme in which students who are nearing the completion of their formal study work in specific organisations for a considerable block of time under the supervision of a practitioner (site supervisor) and a faculty supervisor for the purpose of developing the students' competence (Brooks, Cornelius, Greenfield, & Joseph, 1995).

Regular students – this refers to IEPA students who enrolled in M.Phil. in Educational Planning, Educational Administration and Administration in Higher Education programmes for full time (24 months).

Site supervisor is the individual designated to provide direct supervision to the intern whilst the intern is at the internship host site.

Host organisation/institution is an entity that offers an organised hands-on experience for an intern. The term *host organisation* and *host institution* were used in this study interchangeably.

Educational Administrator is someone who is responsible for the running of an educational institution. They include Principals, Directors of Education and their Deputies, Registrars of higher educational institutions and all those who directly work under them.

Learning strategy as used in this study is an intern's approach to accomplishing a task. Thus, a way of organising and using a particular skill in order to accomplish tasks more effectively and efficiently (Deshler et al., 2001).

Orientation refers to the process in which an intern is introduced to co-workers and is given information that will aid him/her to establish work identity.

Work identity generally refers to an individual's self-concept which is derived from their knowledge of their membership of a workforce together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership (Strangleman, 2012). In this study, work identity refers to the recognition co-workers accord an intern as being a member of their workforce together with the value they attached to that membership.

Co-worker refers to any worker in the host organisation except the intern.

Organisation of the Study

The entire study is made up of five main chapters. Chapter one deals with the introduction of the study that centred on the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations, definition of terms and organisation of the study. Chapter two presents review of related literature. This concentrates on conceptual frameworks, theoretical and empirical studies. Chapter three focuses on the research methods employed. It provides a detailed description of the research design, study area, population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and data processing and analysis. Chapter four presents the results and discussion of the study. Finally, Chapter five provides the summary, conclusions, recommendations and suggestion for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to review of literature relevant to the study. According to Frempong (2011), literature review is not merely a process of reading or identifying the literature, but a highly interactive process of finding out how previous researchers looked at a problem. Webster and Watson (2002) assert that, an effective review of literature creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge. In line with this thinking, related literature on internship was reviewed and organised under the following headings:

- Definition of Internship

- Brief History of Internship

- Differences between Internship and Apprenticeship

- Internship in the Ghanaian Context

- The Primary Stakeholders of Internship

- Administrative Internship Goals

- Duration of an Internship Programme

- Internship as an Effective Career Learning Experience

- Impact of Internship on Student's Career Development

- Theoretical Framework

- Conceptual Framework

- Chapter Summary

Definition of Internship

A search through literature reveals a variety of terminologies used to essentially refer to internship. For example, it is termed industrial attachment (Effah, 2003a), experimental learning (Davies, 1962; Joshi, Davis, Kathuria, & Weidner, 2005), placement or practicum (Busby & Gibson, 2010), work experience learning (Guile & Griffiths, 2001) and supervised work experience (McMahon & Quinn, 1995; West & Jameson, 1990) amongst others. According to Crnković-Pozaić (2006), the definition of internship is reliant on the cohort of students (interns) participating, its duration, whether paid or unpaid, academic or non-academic, its ultimate objectives as well as the context within which it is organised. In this context, it is instructive to note that the IEPA's internship programme is an academic structured unpaid administrative field work that is used to equip students with the required practical educational administration experiences.

Academic internship according to Munyoro, Nyandoro, and Musekiwa (2016) is an academic credit-bearing, career-related work experience of limited duration in which students take on responsible role(s) in an approved work environment. Likewise, True (2002), also refers to academic internship as a form of experimental education that integrates knowledge and theory learned in the classroom with practical application and skill development in a professional setting in which a student takes on responsible role(s) outside of the traditional university environment for a limited duration while gaining academic grade. In line with the definition by True, it is worth pointing out that, IEPA's internship programme is a 3-credit hour course with a duration of six weeks. Additionally, the arrangement of the internship placement is overseen by a faculty member at

the IEPA so as to ensure that students go to organisations that have the capacity to provide the students with the needed practical experience.

Studies (e.g. Bukaliya et al., 2012; Sybouts, 1968) have shown that some students after completing their mandated academic internship opt to continue working as an intern to gain more experience. Jamison and Clayton (2016) describe such additional period of internship as non-academic internship because, it is found and completed independently (non-credit) by students. Mostly, non-academic internship comes with pay (Kiser, 2015). Thus, an intern completing a paid internship receives compensation in the form of a stipend (usually a lump sum paid out over the course of the internship). On the issue of paid internship, Geer et al. (2014) noted that alternative forms of compensation such as reimbursement for travel, housing and/or other living expenses were used mostly by employers.

Taken together, internship as used in this study, refers to an academic, structured, professional preparation programme in which students who are nearing the completion of their formal study works in specific organisations for a considerable block of time under the supervision of a practitioner (site supervisor) and a faculty supervisor for the purpose of developing the students' competence.

Brief History of Internship

Internship can be traced back to 600 BC in the history of the Greeks, Romans, Chinese, and Vedic communities (Sides & Mrvica, 2007). Experts agree that in the largest sense, internships emerged from the professional apprenticeships that originated with the trade guilds of Europe in the 11th and 12th centuries (Spradlin, 2009; Smith, 2017; Chen, 2015). Thus, master

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craftsmen and tradesmen took in young learners (apprentice) to learn a specific trade under the guidance of a master tradesman. Apprentices, mostly served their master for ten years, after which they can graduate to journeyman and start earning better wages (Spradlin, 2009).

The guild system eventually gave way to industrialization and the rise of formal professional education. Between the 1890s and 1920s, fields like medicine began to adapt the practical experience of apprenticeship into training even as that training became more scientific and lecture-based (Spradlin, 2009). Subsequently, the term internship emerged in the late 1960s when training institutions began to develop programmes to help their students gain practical experiences in their field of work. According to Spradlin (2009), in the late 1970s and 1980s, more and more training institutions began to establish internship programmes after hearing about them from other institutions. Internships became more appealing and productive for students after training institutions (i.e. universities) started giving course credit for them. Currently, internship has been integrated with classroom teaching, in most universities, in order to increase students' professional competences (Hurst & Good, 2010).

Differences between Internship and Apprenticeship

It is likely to wrongly assume that internship is the same as an apprenticeship due to its similarities (Jason, 2016). For this reason, it is important to highlight the differences between the two terms. According to Carol (2017), an internship is a short-term period of temporary work experience, typically lasting for a few weeks or months. Carol (2017) further argue that, unlike apprenticeship, internship allow students to first gain on-the-job experience of working in a particular role, organisation or industry before they decide on whether to follow

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a career in those particular roles, organisation or industry. Additionally, internship has a structured intentional learning agenda which drive the internship experience (True, 2002).

Apprenticeship, on the other hand, is noted to be a formal employment programme that trains a person to do a specific job (Carol, 2017). What sets apprenticeship apart from internship is that, an apprenticeship is an actual training programme inside of a job (Jason, 2016). Thus, unlike internship, apprenticeship employs people who already know which career path they wish to follow. Also, the duration for apprenticeship is mostly longer than internship, and at the end of an apprenticeship, the apprentice will have a formal qualification and the skills needed to work in their chosen field (Carol, 2017).

Internship in the Ghanaian Context

The debate on improving higher education in Ghana still lingers on. Thus, the focus used to be on access, but recently, has assumed a new dimension, thus the ill preparation of graduates or products for the job market (Nduro, Anderson, Peprah, & Twenefour, 2015). Unambiguously, Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002) noted that most graduates churned out in Ghana lack the required practical skills in their field of study thereby reducing their chances of being employed. As a response to this disturbing situation, student industrial attachment/internship has become an integral part of academic preparation programmes (typically in Technical Universities and polytechnics) that seek to improve students' career prospects and employability (Akomaning, 2012; Effah, 2003b). In most cases, students themselves are given the go ahead to choose organisations that are engaged in activities related to their field of study for their internship (Munyoro et al., 2016).

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Usually, the duration for the internship programmes differ among institutions of practice and depends on the objectives of the programme. Mostly, in Ghana, the duration for an internship may vary from between 6 weeks to 6 months (Effah, 2003a; Munyoro et al., 2016 ; Nduro et al., 2015). It is worth noting that internship in Ghana is predominantly unpaid (Esia-Donkoh, Amihere, & Addison, 2015). In most cases, the intern is required to submit a report to the academic department on completion. The report includes job description, weekly reports regarding progress during the internship, which involves detailed descriptions of tasks and assignments performed, accomplishments, challenges, how academic preparation provided appropriate background for the student to perform tasks, and suggestions or recommendations for future student (Munyoro et al., 2016). It is invigorating to know that, the extent of preparedness by Ghanaian industries towards student industrial training is noted to be high (Boateng & Ofori-Sarpong, 2002).

The Primary Stakeholders of Internship

The success or failure of every internship programme depends on the cooperation between three key stakeholders namely the educational institution/faculty supervisor, the student/intern and the host organisation/site supervisor (Greenawalt,1991). That is, the harmony between the needs of the student, the educational institution, and the host organisation is a crucial factor for a successful internship experience (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). The three primary stakeholders of internship are presented in Figure 1. Each of the stakeholders is subsequently discused briefly.

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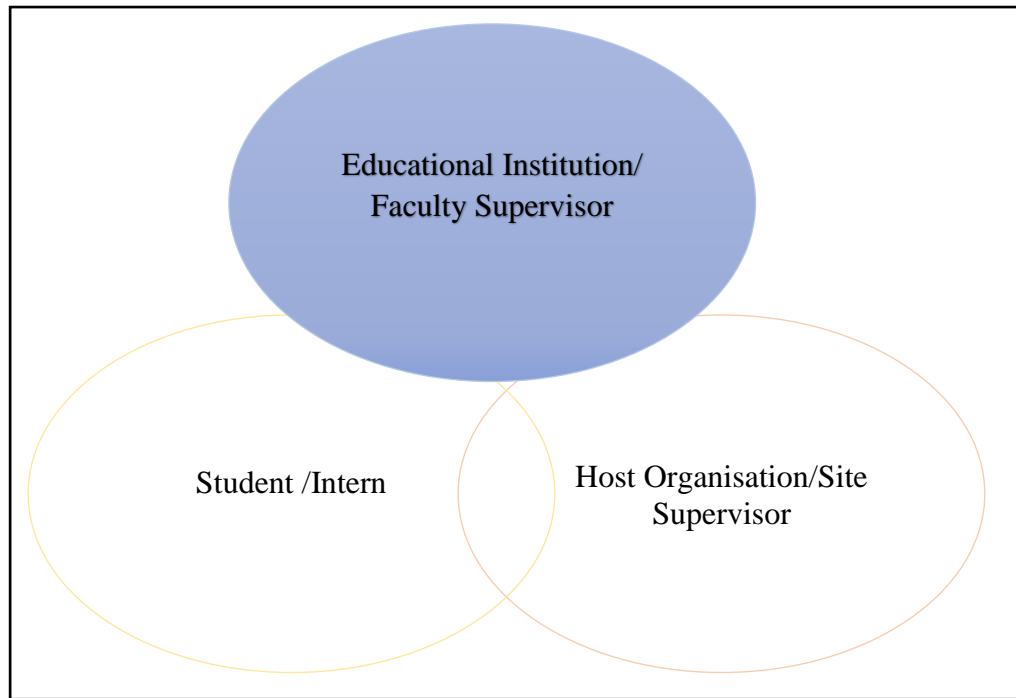
Figure 1: Primary Stakeholders of Internship

Source: Adapted from Greenawalt (1991)

The educational institution/faculty supervisor

Internship has become an essential part of educational programmes that prepare students for the world of work (Esia-Donkoh, Amihere, & Addison, 2015). In light of this, Greenawalt (1991), contends that, educational institutions/faculty supervisors ought to facilitate students' internship placement and must as well be responsible for monitoring the internship experience. Internship-related norms, rules and regulations are established by the educational institution to enhance and protect its values and to articulate the process for achieving the institution's internship related goals (Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). Zopiatis and Constanti claims that, pivotal to the success of any internship experience is the contribution and dedication of the faculty supervisor from the university who is charged with the responsibility to oversee such practices. The role of the faculty supervisor is to clearly define learning

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objectives to help direct the internship experience (Shoenfelt, Kottke, & Stone, 2012). Tripses (2006) have suggested that, not only should the objectives for the internship be well-defined but also should be known and discussed among the intern, site supervisor and faculty supervisor.

Summing up the roles of the faculty supervisor, Maertz, Stoeberl and Marks (2014) mentioned that organising pre-internship orientations, internship seminars/workshops, regularly scheduled meetings/communication between intern and the faculty supervisor, and post-internship meetings are key to a successful internship experience. Zopiatis and Constanti (2012) admonish faculty supervisors to clarify to students the scope, purpose and goals of their internship and strive to foster a genuine hospitality mentality that will nurture realistic work expectations. Faculty supervisors, especially in academic internship are responsible for the overall assessment of students. In some cases, they rely on intern's written reports to assess them (Zehr, 2016).

According to Henry, Razzouk, and Hoverland (1988), because of the importance of monitoring and supervision roles played by faculty supervisors, they must be relieved of some teaching duties to enable them function well. Shoenfelt et al. (2012, p. 104), indicate that "whether regularly scheduled or on as-needed basis, communication between the student and the faculty supervisor is important". This, to them, is to ensure that difficulties do not turn into problems.

Beggs, Ross and Goodwin (2008) have indicated that there are several benefits that accrue to educational institutions as a result of their students going on internship. For example, through feedback from students and industry, the educational institutions are able to update and revise their courses to better

prepare their students. In addition, they noted that through internship, educational institutions are able to build strong relationship with industry.

The host organisation/site supervisor

In the spirit of providing the student/intern with a hands-on learning experience that combines practical application, observation, professional opportunities and mentorship, Zopiatis and Constanti (2012) opine that, an organisation hosting interns should exhibit the ability and express the willingness and commitment to provide interns with a high-quality internship experience. For them, the host organisation should provide the resources (i.e. workspace, computers and software) needed to facilitate the internship experience. Zopiatis and Constanti went on to add that the host organisation must assign a qualified employee demonstrating the appropriate training experience, to act as the intern's supervisor. They further hold the view that, interns must be professionally supervised, and receive ongoing direction, oversight, and feedback from a professional with the necessary expertise in the field. In the same spirit, Maertz et al. (2014) admonished host institutions to select site supervisors who have time and competencies to devote to providing intern with a positive and educational experiences.

Also, a search through the internship literature (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Deschaine, Deschaine, Jankens, & Jankens, 2017; Hurst & Good, 2010; Maertz et al., 2014; Atieno, 2009; Muhamad, Yahya, Shahimi, & Mahzan, 2009) revealed several roles and responsibilities of internship site supervisors. For example, site supervisors are believed to be responsible for managing interns. Thus, from setting goals and expectations at the onset to providing wrap-up feedback at the end of the internship experience.

The literature advices that, site supervisors should organise orientation/briefing sessions for interns so as to help them adjust to their new environment (Maertz et al., 2014). Ballard and Carroll (2005) speaking on the same issue remarked that transitioning from the classroom as a student into the workplace as an intern can be challenging considering the structural differences hence the need for orientation/briefing.

In bringing clarity to the term orientation, Skeats (1996) describes it as any arrangement made to familiarize the new interns with the organisation's safety rules, general conditions of work, and the work of the various sections or departments in which the interns would be working. He further added that, the orientation must expose interns to the structure, policies (both formal & informal), dress code, agency mission, clientele, and confidentiality issues in the organisation. Skeats maintained that, the quality of work experience of interns can be enhanced by prior orientation/briefing. Ultimately, interns should be exposed to the "big picture" of how the organisation and industry operate. According to Robinson, Burns, and Gaw (1996) the goal of the orientation should be to provide interns an understanding of how to deal with administrative matters, how to communicate with different people (i.e. communication protocol), and who to contact for different needs. This in their view will help to promote a healthy relationship between interns and co-workers.

Still on the roles and responsibilities of site supervisors, Rothman (2007) admonishes site supervisors to consciously ensure clear tasks, challenging assignments, ongoing feedback, exposure to different aspects of the work, and respectful treatment. Again, she cautioned that "Grunt" work and menial office tasks like filing, photocopying, preparing mailings, making deliveries, and

running personal errands that do not contribute significantly to students' learning should also be kept to a minimum. Moreover, Upliftevents (2017) claims that, for site supervisors to be able to ensure that interns get the right internship experience, they must endeavour to know their needs or internship goals. This probably can be achieved through collaboration between the student, faculty supervisor and site supervisor. In addition, favourable organisational policy, culture and general climate according to Greenawalt (1991) increases the chances of success of site supervisors.

Interestingly, studies (for example, Munyoro et al., 2016 ; Singh & Dutta, 2010) have outlined benefits derived by host organisations from hosting interns. For instance, Munyoro et al., (2016) sees internship as a cost-effective tool for meeting strategic recruitment, selection, training and retention goals of the host organisation. In the same regard, Singh and Dutta (2010) noted that, internship can serve as an opportunity to employ semi-skilled individuals with the willingness to learn. Adding to the benefits, Thiel and Hartley (1997) indicated that institutions that host interns are seen as a socially responsible employer which to them is an advantage. This therefore makes internship a win-win venture.

The student/intern

The student/intern is considered to be the pivot of every internship programme (Chen, 2015). Zopiatis and Constanti (2012) argued forcefully that, for an internship programme to be relevant, the student (intern) must be fully committed to the internship practice, while simultaneously demonstrating a responsible attitude and a demeanour of professionalism. Likewise, Holyoak (2013) opines that, intern's predisposition to learn during internship is a major

factor to any successful internship. Maertz et al. (2014) in their study identified certain strategies that were employed by successful interns. For example, having an open attitude toward learning, asking for clear work objectives, asking job and career relevant questions, seeking regular feedback on work performance and general progress, showing initiative to ask for more learning opportunities provided by additional responsibilities, keeping a learning journal and acting professionally at all times were prominently adopted by high performing interns. Similarly, Munyoro et al. (2016) observed that, characteristically, students who are on internship, ideally ask for guidance and keep daily journal of the things they do each day. They further observed that, in most cases, at the end of the internship experience, interns engage in discussions with their site supervisor about their (interns) accomplishment, contribution, successes and failures.

In order for interns to be successful, they must be driven by intrinsic factors such as their personal interest, the broadening of their horizons, their ambition for a prosperous career and, especially, their desire to learn and experience new things (Zopiatis & Constanti (2012). They further stated that each student (intern) should be solely responsible for his/her own learning experience. Not forgetting the fact that, interns' personal factors such as: attitude; time management and planning; dependability and punctuality; work accuracy; judgment and problem-solving ability; creativity and initiative; teamwork and interpersonal skills; adaptability; flexibility; willingness to learn; and communication skills (written, oral, listening) determine the extent to which they will have a fruitful internship (Deschaine et al., 2017).

Administrative Internship Goals

Goals in general are defined as specific results that an individual works towards (Locke & Latham, 2002). According to Barney and Griffin (1992), goals by their function provide guidance and direction, facilitate planning, serve as a motivation and help to evaluate and control performance. Instructively, several studies on internship (D'abate, Youndt, & Wenzel, 2009; Holyoak, 2013; Jamison & Clayton, 2016; Lehman, 2013; Smith, 2017) have provided insights into what administrative internship should ideally do for interns for which they should aspire to achieve during internship. For example, according to Holyoak (2013), administrative internship should provide intentionally planned and supervised 'real world' opportunities for rising administrators. Thus, internship should deliver an excellent opportunity for students to discover what their knowledge is worth in the real world.

In essence, students should be able to experience the challenges and opportunities that face educational administrators on a daily basis. Similarly, Smith (2017) was of the view that internship should provide an opportunity for students to work alongside experienced administrators in real educational settings. This, in effect, may improve interns' skills in areas such as their human relation, communication, and decision making (Jamison & Clayton, 2016). Adding to this, D'abate et al. (2009) postulate that, the goal of administrative internship is for interns to gain experience through activities that link standards-relevant knowledge to the regular routines, situations, issues, and dilemmas faced by those in real practice. Henry et al., (1988) advised that, in setting internship goals, the focus should be on mastering technical skills, gaining essential background knowledge of one's career choice, perfecting

interpersonal skills, and building a network of contacts. Instructively, according to Smith (2017), it is not enough for interns to have realistic internship goals but more importantly, they must discuss the goals with their site supervisors. Smith argues that, when interns discuss their internship goals with their site supervisors, it will help the site supervisors to know exactly how to engage them in order for them to achieve their internship goals.

In light of these insights from the literature about internship goals, it can be argued that, as a matter of importance, interns should endeavour to set internship goals and discuss same with their site supervisors. Inferring from the literature, administrative interns like IEPA students, can use their internship experience to gain more knowledge in how to effectively and efficiently organise and run administrative office; improve expertise in recording and preserving office records (i.e. minutes, notices, letters, reports); create a solid network with industry players for future benefits (i.e. employment); improve both their communication skills and human relation skills; and create a solid network with industry players for future benefits (i.e. employment).

Duration of an Internship Programme

A search through the internship literature (Busby & Gibson, 2010; Diambra, Cole-Zakrzewski, & Booher, 2004; Holyoak, 2013; Hurst & Good, 2010; Kiser, 2015; Stansbie, Nash, & Jack, 2013; Akomaning, 2012) reveals that, there is no empirical evidence on a specific duration for the various kinds of internship. Nevertheless, the literature unanimously agrees that, the duration for internships should depend on the objectives and nature of the programme. For instance, academic internship around the world is noted to last for a period of between three months and six months (Mihail, 2006).

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The IEPA internship programme is described in its brochure as "a programme designed to offer students the opportunity to have a one-semester attachment to Higher Educational Institutions so as to obtain the required practical higher educational administration experience" (University of Cape Coast, 2016, p. 25). This description clearly suggests that, the duration for the IEPA's internship programme is intended to last for at least three months (one-semester). However, the duration, in practise for the past years (i.e. 2014 to 2018) have been reduced to six weeks. Whether the duration of the IEPA's internship programme, currently, is considered adequate by interns and their site supervisors in light of their experiences is a subject to be explored in this study.

Internship as an Effective Career Learning Experience

Internships are valuable form of experiential learning, providing students with the opportunity to experience their chosen profession before they enter in full time (Smith, 2017). Likewise, Mihail (2006), indicated that through internship, students are able to develop their skills in spoken and written communication, computer literacy, research skills, specialist knowledge, among others. Mihail further stated that, interns' personal development qualities such as self-confidence, independence, creativity, and desire to go on learning is equally enhanced after a valuable internship experience. In the same regard, Akomaning, Voogt and Pieters (2011) noted that, interns gain opportunities to interact with a wide range of age groups, meet potential role models and get feedback through performance assessment which helps them to define their career ambitions. Also, they emphasised that enterprise abilities such as working in a team, prioritizing tasks, and managing time can be best learned through internships.

According to Deschaine et al. (2017), there are six central elements that show that internship has significant value. The elements are: interns having a significant time on authentic experiences with a skilled mentor; strong relationship between interns and their site supervisors with rich conversations about practice. The remaining elements are: interns being exposed to diverse set of experiences that provide opportunities for them to gain new and varied experiences; site supervisors having time with interns to reflect on their learning and to critically analyse their experiences; faculty having a regular and consistent oversight in the field; and faculty that acts as a bridge between the training programme and the site supervisors. Thus, these six elements can serve as a criterion to determine how effective an internship experience is. In line with this thinking, those six elements outlined by Deschaine et al. (2017) will serve as a framework to determine how valuable the internship experiences of IEPA students are in this study.

Impact of Internship on Student's Career Development

A review of literature on the influence that an internship has on career decisions exposed mix results. The findings in a study conducted by Rothman and Sisman (2016), showed that most interns expressed preference for continuing a career path within the same job function as their internship. This was as a result of the fact that most of these interns had their expectations met during the internship. According to Liu, Xu and Weitz (2011), interns become more enlightened as a result of their internship experiences. For example, the knowledge they gain from their internship experience helps them to target jobs for career consideration (Walmsley, Thomas, & Jameson, 2012; Rothman & Sisman, 2016). Also, graduates with relevant internship experience are more

likely to obtain full-time employment opportunities than those without (Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010; Liu, Xu & Weitz, 2011). These insights from the literature, is relevant to this study, particularly in exploring how the internship experiences of IEPA students have prepared them for their professional endeavours.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study, Kolb's experiential learning theory and Internship stage model (i.e. Inkster and Ross, Sweitzer and King, and Kiser model) form the theoretical framework of the study. Each of them is succinctly discussed as follows.

Kolb's experiential learning theory

Kolb's Experiential learning theory draws on the work of prominent twentieth century scholars (for example, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget, William James, and Carl Rogers) who gave experience a central role in their theories of human learning and development (Kolb, 1984; 1999; 2014; Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 1999; Kolb, & Kolb, 2005). Kolb (1984) defines learning as a process of adaptation through the integration of experiences. Kolb's theory perceived learning as a process rather than a transaction.

Kolb (1999) argued that, learning process involves a cycle of four elements which has since been widely recognised by researchers in the field of internship (for example, Chen, 2015; Guile & Griffiths, 2001; Miettinen, 2000; Zehr, 2016). According to Kolb (1999), the four elements are: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb explains that, learning begins with an experience that students have had. This is followed by an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience.

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Then, students may conceptualize and draw conclusions about what they experienced and observed. This then leads to future actions in which the students experiment with different behaviours. The process then begins anew as students acquire new experiences based on experimentation (Oxendine, Robinson, & Willson, 2004). In essence, students' learning is optimized when they take an active role rather than passive role in the learning process (Peterson et al., 2015; Seaman, Brown, & Quay, 2017; Torres & Augusto, 2017).

According to Brookfield (1991), experiential learning refers to a direct encounter with the phenomenon being studied rather than merely thinking about the encounter. Brookfield emphasized the notion that students have to be given an opportunity to gain and apply knowledge in a real work situation. Houle (1980) as cited in Clark, Threeton and Ewing (2010), also describes experiential learning as education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life in a less formalised way. Based on this description, Houle (1980) argues that, experiential learning is vocationalist or anti-intellectual. Kolb (1999) counters such arguments by contending that, his model illustrates the link between personal development, education, and work. In essence, Kolb perceives experiential learning as a means for helping students make meaning of their classroom experiences, rather than serving as a replacement for traditional teaching methods (Crain, 2016).

For the purposes of this study, Kolb's theory provides an excellent theoretical context for understanding internships which is a form of experiential learning (i.e. learning by doing). Particularly relevant to this study are the four elements (i.e. concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation) which gives an insight into how

students acquire competencies for their chosen careers during experiential learning like internship. That is, the theory provides a framework to understand how students develop their expertise in their chosen career by placing emphasis on students' own experience. Thus, as students engage in meaningful tasks during internship, they gain new knowledge and skills.

Internship stage models

Researchers in the field of internship (for example, Inkster & Ross, 1998; Sweitzer & King, 1999; Kiser, 2015) have proposed different stages of internship experience. The purpose of internship stage models is to guide students, site supervisors and faculty supervisors through the phases of internship experiences (Diambra et al., 2004). For the purpose of this study, three internship stage models, namely: Inkster and Ross' model (1998), Sweitzer and King's model (1999), and Kiser's model (2015) form part of the theoretical framework for this study. Although the models are similar in some ways, each offers unique attributes which serve as a lens through which the internship experiences of IEPA students is viewed. A brief overview of each model is discussed as follows.

Inkster and Ross model

According to Inkster and Ross (1998), there are six-stages of internship. They refer to stage one as *arranging and anticipating an internship*. At this stage, students seek out and secure a placement for their internship. This stage is associated with feelings of excitement, ideal expectations, high motivation and sometimes self-doubt. *Orientation and establishing identity* occur at stage two. To them, this stage is characterised by student's initial arrival, learning new information and establishing a workplace identity. Students may feel

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overwhelmed with new information, or under-whelmed because of routine basic tasks. Inkster and Ross label stage three as *reconciling expectations with reality*. This stage is marked by understanding that interns' own actions often affect co-workers and clients in daily tasks and that internship experience is structured differently than the familiar classroom. Also, there is the feeling that initial expectations do not match realities in the workplace which culminate into frustration. *Productivity and independence* occur at stage four. This is where students are able to contribute as they know the environment better, supervisors recognize students' competence leading to more independence. Also, increased self-confidence, awareness of role and strengths, productively accomplishing tasks are seen in stage four. *Closure* marks stage five. Closure is a time for clarifying ongoing relationships, discontinuing relationships that must end, and celebrating accomplishments. Also, sadness about not being noticed by some co-workers, disappointment of incomplete projects, jealousy at incoming interns are some feelings in stage five. *Re-entry and practical application* happens at stage six. This stage is characterized by students readjusting to return to the classroom. Also, increased focus on benefits of experiences gained and how to apply it to future opportunities marks the final stage of the internship experience.

In the context of this study, this model helps to appreciate the specific things students do at each stage of their internship experience. Specifically, the description of the stages gives a clear insight into the major tasks and activities completed by students in each of the internship stages (i.e., arranging internship, orientation, and closure, reconciling expectation with reality, and productivity and independence).

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Sweitzer and King model

Based on the experiences of Sweitzer and King as internship instructors, they proposed five-stage internship model namely: anticipation, disillusionment, confrontation, competence, and culmination stage (Sweitzer & King, 1999). *Anticipation* stage of an internship according to Sweitzer and King (1999) is marked by mild to moderate morale, positive anticipation, and anxiety due to unknown factors. The second stage is *disillusionment.* At this stage, Sweitzer and King claim that, interns' morale and task accomplishment drop. Thus, the enthusiasm and excitement that interns anticipated and first experienced declines. Also, interns experience disappointment related to unmet expectations and concerns about their performance (Diambra et al., 2004). In the third stage *confrontation*, interns address earlier disappointments and resolve the reasons underlying earlier frustrations. According to Diambra et al. (2004), overcoming these barriers helps to build confidence and independence. This may take place between an intern and his/her clients, co-workers and supervisors. The fourth stage is *Competence*. It is marked by high morale, sense of purpose and accomplishment, high self-esteem and clearer sense of capabilities. The *culmination* stage marks the last stage. At this stage, students' morale is typically based on their ability to provide closure with clients, co-workers and supervisors. Accomplishments decrease and interns experience a wide range of emotions as they deal with ending the internship (Diambra et al., 2004). For the purpose of this study, Sweitzer and king's description of the stages provides an insight into the emotions felt and experienced by students at each stage of their internship.

Kiser's 4 stage model

Kiser (2015), proposed a four-stage model based on her experience as an internship coordinator. According to Kiser, the first stage of internship is *pre-placement stage*. This is where students identify and secure placement for internship. In her view, pre-placement activities, rearranging personal schedules and activities to include the demanding responsibilities are all inherent in pre-placement. The second stage is the *initiation stage*. This is marked by orientation. Thus, interns becoming familiar with co-workers and clients, and becoming acquainted with agency policies and procedures are routinely associated with the second stage. Students observe their new surroundings while supervisors assess students' strengths and weaknesses. The third stage is termed the *working stage*. According to Kiser, it is the time for accomplishing tasks and learning goals. At this stage, students and supervisors are able to identify personal strengths and limitations. In the views of Zehr (2016), students relax, establish a regular work routine, experience a boost in self-confidence and work more autonomously at this stage. Students may become too comfortable completing tasks at this stage (Zehr, 2016). Kiser caution supervisors not to decrease supervision time when they experience increased confidence in the student's ability. The fourth stage is the *termination stage*. It is where students end their internship. The student is to reflect on his/her performance, as well as professional and personal lessons learnt at this stage.

In relation to this study, Kiser's model offers few stages making it easy in terms of conceptualizing the internship experience of students. Also, this makes it easy to see the natural progression of interns which can help track the internship experiences of students in chronological manner.

Conceptual Framework

This study aimed at exploring the internship experiences of IEPA students and its implication for practice. As mentioned earlier in the literature, several authors (Inkster & Ross, 1998; Kiser, 2015; Sweitzer & King, 1999; Richmond & Cummings, 2005; Munyoro et al., 2016), have discussed internship and its stages and how interns learn in organisations (Joshi et al., 2005; Kolb, 2014). In the context of this study, I conceptualize 'internship experience of IEPA students' as a structured career-related work experience which is aimed at developing students' competence in the profession for which they are trained. Essentially, internship experience enhance students' academic, career, and personal development.

In line with the purpose of this study, the internship experiences of IEPA students is conceptualized to involve four inter-related phases. The first phase of students' internship experience is *setting internship goals*. Thus, as students anticipate internship, they envisage certain skills and knowledge that they must acquire after their internship. For example, IEPA students, through their internship experiences can improve their communication skills, human relation skills and decision-making skills as trainee administrators and planner. Again, IEPA students can gain full and realistic view of how to effectively and efficiently organise and run an administrative office through their internship. Specifically, the internship experience can be used to equip IEPA students with expertise in recording and preserving office records (i.e. minutes, notices, letters, reports). These expectations are usually shaped by their individual student's career goals. Ideally, after students have set their internship goals, it

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is expected that they discuss or review the goals with their site supervisors. This, will help their site supervisors to plan how to help students achieve the set goals.

The second phase of students' internship experience is *establishing work identity*. This phase is characterized by activities aimed at helping the intern gain recognition from co-workers as part of the workforce. Activities such as orientation/briefing organised for interns by host organisations is necessary at this phase of the internship experience. Complementary to the orientation/briefing is interns personal strategies. For example, interns can use strategies such as: establishing personal relationship with co-workers, showing initiative to perform extra duties, complying with organisational rules, policies and procedures, and demonstrating professionalism to enhance their work identity. When interns are able to establish work identity, co-workers recognize and engage them frequently in tasks that are in line with their internship goals. This creates an opportunity for interns to learn from the experiences of co-workers.

The third phase of students' internship experience, as conceptualized, is *engagement*. Engagement phase is characterised by host organisations creating opportunities for interns to: gain full and realistic view of the world-of-work, integrate academic preparation with practical application and skill development in the workplace, and acquire hands-on work experience. Engaging interns in everyday work helps them to learn (Zehr, 2016). Based on Kolb's Experiential learning theory, it is assumed that, as IEPA students engage in concrete experiences in their internship assignment, they will observe and reflect on their experiences. Followed by their reflections and observations, they will form abstract concepts and generalizations, which they will then apply to subsequent

experiences. It is enlightening to know that, interns' learning during internship is significantly impacted by their level of engagement (Ballard & Carroll, 2005). Accordingly, attributes such as IEPA students' level of engagement, learning strategies and the context of their internship experience are examined in this study.

The last phase of an internship experience is *closure*. This phase is characterized by interns receiving feedback on their general performance from the host organisation/site supervisor and faculty supervisor. Also, during this phase interns mirror on their accomplishments for the period. Figure 2 gives a pictorial view of the conceptual framework of the study.
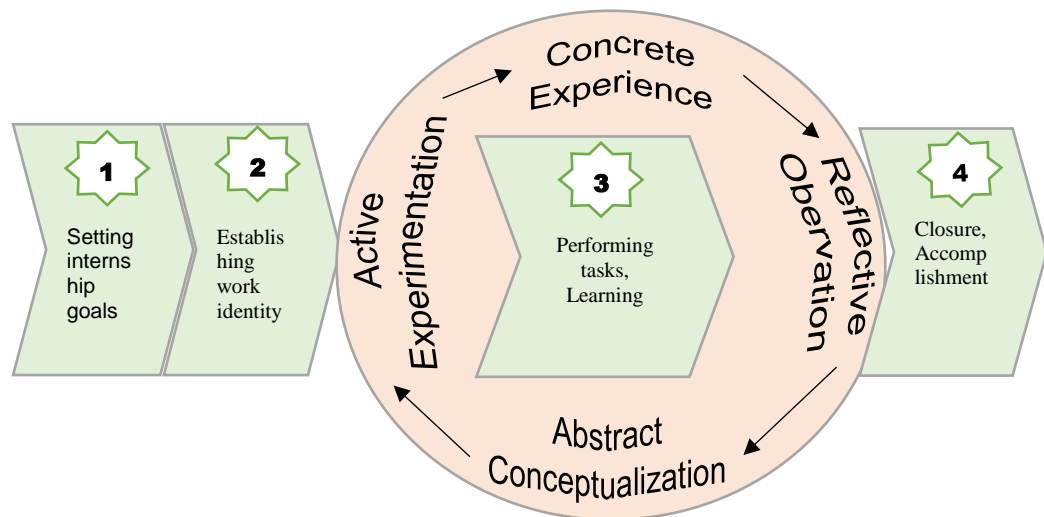
Figure 2: 4-Phase Internship Experience Framework

Source: Adapted from Kolb (1999)

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented literature review on internship. The literature reviewed suggests that, internship allows students the opportunity to apply and strengthen their skills in an organisational setting. The review submits that, internship allows students to use the concepts they learn in the classroom in-

real-life and on-the-job which help them to develop their expertise. The literature review pointed out that, key to the success of every internship is the level of cooperation between the three key players namely the educational institution/faculty supervisor, the student/intern and the host organisation/site supervisor.

The study is grounded on Kolb's Experiential learning theory and Internship stage models by Inkster and Ross, Sweitzer and King, and Kiser. Kolb's theory revealed that, learning begins with an experience that students have had. This is followed by an opportunity for students to reflect on their experience. Then, students may conceptualize and draw conclusions about what they experienced and observed. This then leads to future actions in which the students experiment with different behaviours. The three internship stage models by Inkster and Ross, Sweitzer and King, and Kiser labelled well-defined internship stages. The description of internship stages by Inkster and Ross, focused on key task completed by students (i.e. arranging internship, orientation, and closure) mixed with internship activities (i.e. reconciling expectation with reality, and productivity and independence). Anticipation, disillusionment, confrontation, competence, and culmination as used by Sweitzer and King to describe internship stages reflects the emotions felt and experienced by students during internship. Kiser's description of internship stages focused on result or goal that is accomplished by students during internship.

Based on insights from the literature, the internship experience of IEPA students was conceptualized to mean a structured career-related work experience which is aimed at developing students' competence. The internship experience was conceptualized to involve four phases. The first phase is where

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students set their internship goals. The second phase is charactarised with strategies used by interns to establish work identity. The third phase where interns learn through performing tasks. The fourth phase is where interns bring their field experience to a closure.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This section presents and describes the approaches adopted to ensure that findings of the study are well anchored in the evidence generated. Research method is a systematic plan for doing research (Sapsford & Jupp, 2006). Similarly, Ihuah and Eaton (2013) also consider research method as the overall approach to the design process of conducting research including all phases from the theoretical underpinning to the collection and analysis of data. For the purpose of orderliness in the presentation in this chapter, the research methods are discussed along key themes namely: research design, study area, study population, sampling procedures, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and data processing and analysis.

Research Design

This study employed the convergent parallel mixed methods design. This design involves a set of procedures that researchers use to concurrently collect both quantitative and qualitative data, analyse the two data sets separately, compare and/or synthesize the two sets of separate results, and make an overall interpretation as to the extent to which the separate results confirm and/or complement each other (Clark & Creswell, 2014). The choice of a convergent parallel mixed methods design is made by incorporating both qualitative and quantitative research elements to develop a complete and a valid understanding of the internship experiences of IEPA students. The research design is illustrated in Figure 3.
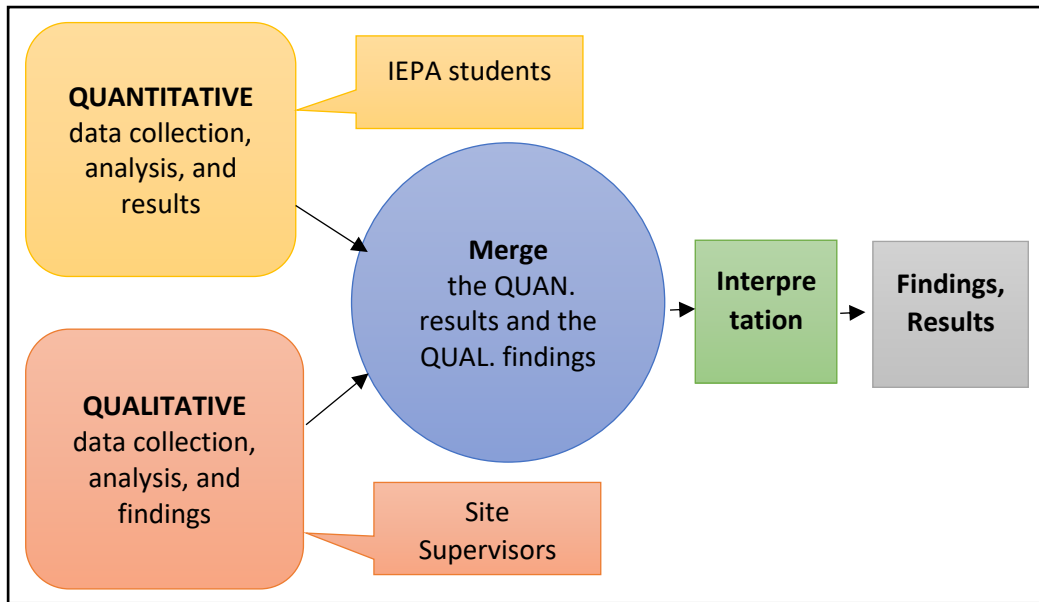
Figure 3: Convergent parallel mixed methods design

Source: Adapted from Clark and Creswell (2014)

The convergent parallel mixed methods design is preferred since it does not only draw on the strength of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to enquiries but also it ensures research triangulation. Triangulation allows the researcher to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data collected into the study where both data is used to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate findings (Brannen, 2004; Creswell, Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

The Convergent parallel mixed methods design adopted for this study resonates with the philosophical assumptions of pragmatism. Pragmatic researchers recognize that there are many different ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research, that no single point of view can ever give the entire picture and that there may be multiple realities. Sandelowski (2000) contend that mixed methods research and the combination of data derived through the use of different methods, among other things, produce research claims that are stronger with the potential of persuading policy makers.

In line with this thinking, qualitative data in the form of insights from semi-structured open-ended interviews with site supervisors of IEPA students was elicited for analysis. This was complemented by the analysis of quantitative data derived from self-administered questionnaires distributed to IEPA students on the purpose of the study. Thus, the convergent parallel mixed methods design was chosen because apart from helping to ensure and assure purposes of research triangulation, its use certainly guaranteed that the findings of the study have gone beyond speculations to be grounded in the evidence gathered (Nudzor et al., 2018).

Study Area

The study explored the internship experiences of IEPA students who had their internship in Ghana. Geographically, Ghana is located in West Africa, and it shares boundaries with Cote d'lvoire to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, and Togo to the east with the Atlantic Ocean (Gulf of Guinea) washing its southern coast. Ghana covers a land area of about 147,360 square kilometres (Dickson & Benneh, 1988). The country, currently, has ten administrative regions, namely, Greater

Source: Ghana Statistical Service (2016)

Accra, Eastern, Central, Western, Volta, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Northern, Upper West, and Upper East.

Ghana has a population of about 29.6 million (World bank, 2018). According to Ghana Statistical Service (2016), unemployment rate is relatively

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higher for persons with education than those with no education. Similarly, unemployment rate is higher for persons with secondary education (19.3%) than those with basic education (11.3%). Persons with tertiary education have the lowest unemployment rate (7.3%). In terms of education, 40.1% of the youth (in the age group of 15 – 35) in Ghana have no education while only 3.8% have acquired a tertiary educational qualification. More males (5.4%) had qualification in tertiary education than females (2.6%).

Regarding the work aspiration for the population 15 years and older, majority (36.7%) of the population who have no educational qualification would want to work as Service or Sales persons (Ghana Statistical Service, 2016). The Ghana Statistical Service reports that, 0.3% of the Ghanaian population wants to be engaged as Clerical support workers. Also, slightly more than half (53.1%) of the population with Secondary (O' level, A' level, SHS, SSS, etc.) qualification would want to work as professionals. In a similar vein, those who hold Post-Secondary (Teacher Training/Agric./ Nursing/Cert., HND etc.) and First Degree or Higher qualifications aspire to work as professionals (61.3% and 62.9% respectively). Interestingly, nearly two-thirds (65.7%) of the economically active population are self-employed workers, apprentices and house helps in the private informal sector. This leaves only 19.6% of the working population as employees with employers. The private sector provides employment for 91.2% of the working population.

Generally, Ghana's economy in terms of employment could be classified as predominantly informal and most of the employees are in vulnerable employment. This is because, most of the currently employed persons 15 years and older are contributing family workers in family businesses and self-

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employed persons (farmers, artisans and craft-workers, traders, small scale food processors). The nature of the economy and the background of the labour force do not conform to the status of the country as a lower middle-income country (Ghana Statistical Services, 2016).

Population

Population according to Creswell (2002) is the total of all the individuals who have some common defining characteristics that are of interest to the researcher. The study population comprised two groups of people. The first group consists of the IEPA regular M.Phil. students who have completed the mandatory Internship Programme (EPA: 854). The second group is made up of internship site supervisors of IEPA students. In all, the total target population for the study was estimated to be 62. For the purpose of this study, the estimated population excluded those who had their internship outside Ghana and those who had their internship before the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic year.

The decision to delineate the study population to only the 2015/16 and 2016/17 cohorts was premised on the fact that during the pretesting of the questionnaire, it was noted that majority of respondents from the 2013/14 and 2014/15 cohorts who were contacted to respond to the questionnaire had forgotten some important details of their internship experience which was central to the answering of the research question. Also, most of them could not decouple their current experiences which they have acquired as a result of their current practice from those they acquired during their internship. This limitation led to the decision to study only the experiences of those IEPA students who completed their internship during 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic year. This decision was based on the expectation that, they (2015/16 and 2016/17 cohorts)

will be in the position to best remember and share details of the experiences they had during their internship so as to appropriately answer the research questions posed. This expectation was premised on the assertion that peoples' abilities to remember things is mostly affected as time passes (Mol, van Boxtel, Willems, & Jolles, 2006; Atieno, 2009) which was confirmed after the pretesting of the questionnaire.

The second group consists of internship site supervisors. A review of documents from IEPA indicates that, places/establishment where IEPA students mostly do their internship among others include: University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU), Ministry of Education (headquarters and its directorates) and the Ghana Health Service. For this reason, the site supervisors included in the study were: Heads of Department, Directors of Education, Health Units, and Senior Officers who have been appointed to supervise IEPA intern(s) in their establishments from the year 2015 to 2017. Information gathered for IEPA suggested that, site supervisors who had supervised at least two IEPA interns from 2015 to 2017 academic years were pegged at 12. Engaging only site supervisors who had supervised two or more IEPA students in the study ensured that the qualitative data generated from the interviews reflected the internship experience of most IEPA students. Thus, each site supervisors view reflected at least the internship experience of two or more IEPA students. Details of the study population are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the Study Population

Population		Estimated Number
Site Supervisors		12
IEPA Students	2015/16 cohort	22
	2016/17 cohort	28
Total Population		62

Source: IEPA (2018)

Sampling Procedure

The study adopted the census approach to research where all the individuals in the target population were contacted for data. In all, 50 IEPA students and the 12 site supervisors were engaged in the study. The decision to use census is in line with the views of Dawson (2002) that, it is appropriate to use census in cases where it is possible to contact every one of the study population because the number is small. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), aside the fact that census is costly and time consuming, the findings are highly dependable and accurate since every member of the population is studied.

Data Collection Instruments

Self-administered semi-structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were the two data collection instruments employed to gather data from both respondents and participants for the study. Specifically, copies of the questionnaire were administered to IEPA students whilst the interview guide was used to elicit information from internship site supervisors.

A questionnaire is a self-report data-collection instrument that each research respondent fills out as part of a research study (Johnson & Christensen, 2008; Sincero, 2012). The questionnaire for this study (see Appendix C) was semi-

strucrured (contained both open-ended and closed ended questions). It was developed with guidance from my supervisors. It is important to state that, the content of the questionnaire was largely informed by literature reviewed. Descriptively, the questionnaire had six sections. Section one of the questionnaire was designed to elicit demographic characteristics of respondents (i.e. gender, programme pursued, year of enrolment, place of internship and last place of employment). Collecting the demographic data was necessary for the determination of whether the respondents are a representative of the target population for generalisation purposes. Section two of the questionnaire was made up of multiple-choice question developed in line with research question one (i.e. what are the internship goals of IEPA students?). Thus, the multiple-choice question, asked respondents to choose (as many as applied to them) from a list of options (i.e. possible internship goals). In order to deal with the limitation that comes with the use of multiple-choice question format, which is, the likelihood that respondents may not find their preferred answer in the list of options provided, a space was provided for respondents to write their preferred answer.

The section three of the questionnaire was tailored towards getting answers from respondents to the research question two (i.e. how do IEPA students establish work identity during their internship?). Three questions were developed for this section. The format of the questions in section three was similar to that of section two. The section four of the questionnaire was made up of five multiple choice questions. Thus, the five questions were developed to elicit answers from respondents to research question three (i.e. what tasks are performed by IEPA students during their internship?). Section five of the

questionnaire focused on research question four (i.e. what learning strategies do IEPA students use during internship to develop their expertise as potential educational administrators and planners?). This section was made up of two multiple choice questions and two Likert-type scale questions. The Likert-type scale questions asked respondents to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a list of statements concerning learning strategies as it applied to them during their internship. The options for each statement was given a score, which was used to analyse the results. Thus, a score of 1 for Strongly Disagree; 2 for Disagree; 3 for Agree and 4 for Strongly Agree. These scores, were used for all the Liker-type scale question in the questionnaire. Finally, the section six of the questionnaire focussed on research question five (i.e. in what ways have the internship experiences of IEPA students prepared them for their professional endeavours?). This section was made up of a Likert-scale question with a list of 11 statements for respondents to choose from. The statements were likely benefits of internship.

With regard to the interview guide (see Appendix D), 15 semi-structured questions were developed for the interview of IEPA students' internship site supervisors. The content of the interview guide was largely based on the literature reviewed. Questions 1, 2 and 3 on the interview guide were designed to elicit information about the demographic characteristics of participants. Question 4 to 15 were designed in line with all the 5-research questions. Thus, based on the purpose of the study, the interview questions were developed to solicit, generally, the account of site supervisors regarding the internship experiences of IEPA students. The decision to use a semi-structured question for the interviews was to guide the interview such that, the same areas are

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covered with each interviewee in order to ensure and assure dependability. Thus, dependability refers to the stability or consistency of the inquiry processes used over time (Creswell, 2009). Again, the advantage of using a semi-structured interview guide is that, the order of the questions can be modified if the interviewer believes it is appropriate, and questions can be added, deleted, explained, probed, and even modified in order to solicit more adequate answers from each participant (Cargan, 2007). This technique together with good interviewing skills foster good response rate (Cargan, 2007; Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2009).

According to Cohen et al. (2007, p. 341), wording of a data collection instrument (such as questionnaire and interview guide) is "of paramount importance and that pretesting is crucial to their success". Pretesting a research instrument serves the function of helping to detect possible flaws in the measurement instrument and whether concepts have been adequately operationalized (Cohen et al., 2007; Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001; Watson, Atkinson, & Rose, 2007). Cohen et al. (2007) posited that, pretesting enables researchers to test the validity and reliability of their research instrument. Validity in research refers to how well an instrument measures what it is purported to measure whilst reliability is the degree to which an instrument produces stable and consistent results (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). In the view of Dawson (2002, p. 95), once you have constructed your instrument, you must "test it out to see if it is obtaining the results you require".

In light of the importance of pretesting research instruments, as indicated in the literature, both the questionnaire and interview guide developed for the main study were pretested. In pretesting the research instruments, efforts were made

to ensure that the setting, choice of participants/respondents and interview methods were as close as those intended in the main study. Firstly, the questionnaire was pretested in the Central Region by distributing self-administered questionnaire to 15 IEPA students from the 2012/13 and 2014/15 cohorts who had gone through similar internship experience in Ghana. Before the pretesting, the questionnaire was submitted to the research supervisors where clarity of questionnaire items, instructions and layout were checked and approved.

After pretesting the questionnaire (to determine the reliability of the instrument) the data gathered were analysed and the Cronbach's alpha established for each of the Likert scale items. The reliability co-efficient for items 16,17 and 19 were .763, .824 and .859 respectively (see Appendix E). Such reliability values, according to De Vellis and Dancer (1991), is a fair indication of a good internal consistency, hence the conclusion that the instrument was reliable to be used for the main study. It is important to acknowledge that, pretesting the questionnaire provided me with a feedback which made me to reword questions number 5, 9 and 12 for the main questionnaire. Thus, some respondents had difficulty in understanding them immediately after reading. Also, the pretesting helped to improve the presentation and appearance of some questionnaire items after most respondents complained about its arrangement (i.e. questions 10, 12 & 17).

On the other hand, the interview guide was pretested in UCC. Three internship site supervisors of IEPA students were interviewed. With proper introduction and explanation of the nature and reasons for the research; and going through all the protocols on the interview guide with the participant

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regarding confidentiality, anonymity and consent, a good rapport was established with the participant in order to facilitate better responses. The pretesting of the interview guide helped the study in the following ways:

1. I was able to determine the time taken to complete one interview. It took an average of 35 minutes for each interview. This helped in terms of communicating and assuring participants of the main study how long the interview was going to last. This information helped them to plan for the interview. It also helped me to prepare my recording devices to last for the duration.

2. Through the pretesting, I was able to modify questions that appear to be ambiguous. Also, redundant questions were identified and removed.

3. The pretesting also gave me the opportunity to practise my interviewing techniques which has helped to enhance my confidence and skills for the main study.

Data Collection Procedures

First, an ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCC-IRB) through an application process. The clearance was sought with the purpose of making sure all ethical considerations were met so as not to cause any harm to both respondents and participants. After the ethical clearance, an introductory letter was collected from IEPA to help introduce myself to the respondents and participants.

The administration of the questionnaire started with IEPA students (from both 2015/16 and 2016/17 cohort) who were identified in UCC. Arrangement were made with some respondents through telephone calls after which a meeting was scheduled to administer the questionnaire. In all, 36 were contacted and

each of them responded to the self-administered questionnaire. Some of the respondents indicated their willingness to answer the questionnaire electronically through e-mail and google form. Specifically, two of them responded to the questionnaire through the e-mail and 12 of them responded via google form.

For the interviews, I booked an appointment with each of the participants during a personal visit to them at their offices. During the visit, the purpose of the study was explained to them. The actual interviews were conducted at the offices of each of the site supervisors. Before each interview, participants were taken through a consent form (see Appendix B) which assured them of confidentiality and anonymity. With permission from each participant in each case, we ensured that phones were on silence for the period. With the consent of majority (10 out of 12) of the participants, a voice recorder was used to record the interviews. Unfortunately for me, two participants did not consent to the use of voice recorder in recording the proceedings of the interview because of their personal reasons so their interview were recorded manually.

It is important to point out that, I strictly followed the questions on the interview guide in order to achieve consistency in the results. Also, I made conscious effort not to bring my personal views to overcrowd the interviewees' thought during the whole interview session. To achieve this, techniques such as: not asking leading questions, giving the interviewee a chance to sum up and clarify the points they have made and respondent validation were employed.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis is the intellectual process a researcher goes through, in making sense of what the researcher has observed, interviewed, read, interpreted, and

reflected upon (Pallant, 2007). In accordance with the convergent parallel mixed methods design used in this study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Both data sets were analysed separately.

According to Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014), qualitative data analysis consists of three concurrent flows of activities namely data condensation, data display and conclusion drawing/verification. They explained that, data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focussing, simplifying, abstracting and or transforming the data that appear in the full corpus of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, documents and other empirical materials. Data condensation occurs continuously throughout the life of any qualitatively oriented project. Data display is where information is organised, compressed for purpose of drawing conclusions. The last activity Miles et al. (2014) talked about in qualitative data analysis is drawing and verifying conclusions as the analysis proceeds which was echoed by Braun and Clarke (2006); Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) and Cohen et al. (2007).

I was guided by the processes prescribed by Miles et al. (2014) for the qualitative data analysis. Thus, the interview responses (voice recordings) were transcribed verbatim. It was then cleaned by correcting grammatical mistakes. The data was then extracted and grouped under the various interview questions as it relates to the main research questions. The data was thoroughly read and emerging themes/key heading were listed. The themes/key headings were grouped under the main research questions and the frequencies in which items (relating to the themes) were mentioned was indicated. Appreciated quotes were identified and inserted in the work. Comments and interpretations were then made. Following these steps, logical and comprehensive outcomes were

obtained since clear and real views of site supervisors about the internship experiences were known.

In relation to the questionnaire analysis, the copies of the filled-out questionnaire that were retrieved were first given serial numbers. Each question and its' corresponding options on the copies of the filled-out questionnaire were then assigned codes in the form of numbers. This was then followed by inputting the codes on each questionnaire in a software called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The inputting was done following the serial numbers on the questionnaire. After the inputting, an auditing was done by checking the codes entered in the SPSS against each questionnaire to ensure they are the same. After that, the statistical tools in the software were used to make meaning out of the data. Table 2 shows each research question and the statistical tool used in analysing it.

Table 2: Research Questions and Statistical Tools used in Analysing them

Research Questions	Statistical Tools Used
1 What are IEPA students' expectations of internship?	Descriptive statistics in the form of frequency table
2 How do IEPA students establish work identity during their internship?	Descriptive statistics in the form of bar charts, frequency table and pie chart
3 What tasks are performed by IEPA students during their internship?	Descriptive statistics in the form of frequency table, pie charts and crosstabulation
4 What learning strategies do IEPA students use during internship to develop their expertise as potential educational administrators and planners?	Means, standard deviations, frequency table, and bar charts
5 In what ways have the internship experiences of IEPA students prepared them for their professional endeavours?	Means and standard deviations

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Regarding the interpretation of the Likert scale items, the decision rule was that, a mean score of 1.00 – 1.75 reperesent strongly agreed, 1.76 – 2.50 reperesent agreed, 2.51 – 3.25 represent disagreed and 3.26 – 4.00 represent strongly disagreed.

Chapter Summary

The convergent parallel mixed methods design was adopted. The design was preferred since it did not only draw on the strength of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to enquiries but it also ensured research triangulation. In all, data was collected from 50 IEPA students and I2 internship site supervisors. The quantitative data derived from self-administered questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables, bar charts,

pie charts, means, standard deviations and crosstabulations to allow for statistical inferences. The qualitative data in the form of insights from semi-structured interview with site supervisors of the IEPA students were analysed thematically.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of the findings of the study. To set the findings in context, information about the demographic characteristics of respondents/participants engaged in the study are presented and discussed first. This is then followed by a chronological presentation and discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative findings that emerged from the research questions posed.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents/Participants

This section is dedicated to the presentation and discussion of the demographic data of both the IEPA students and their site supervisors engaged in the study. In all, 62 respondents/participants were engaged. The number comprised 50 IEPA students and 12 site supervisors.

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the gender distribution of the IEPA students who responded to the self-administered questionnaire and site supervisors who responded to the semi-structured interviews respectively.
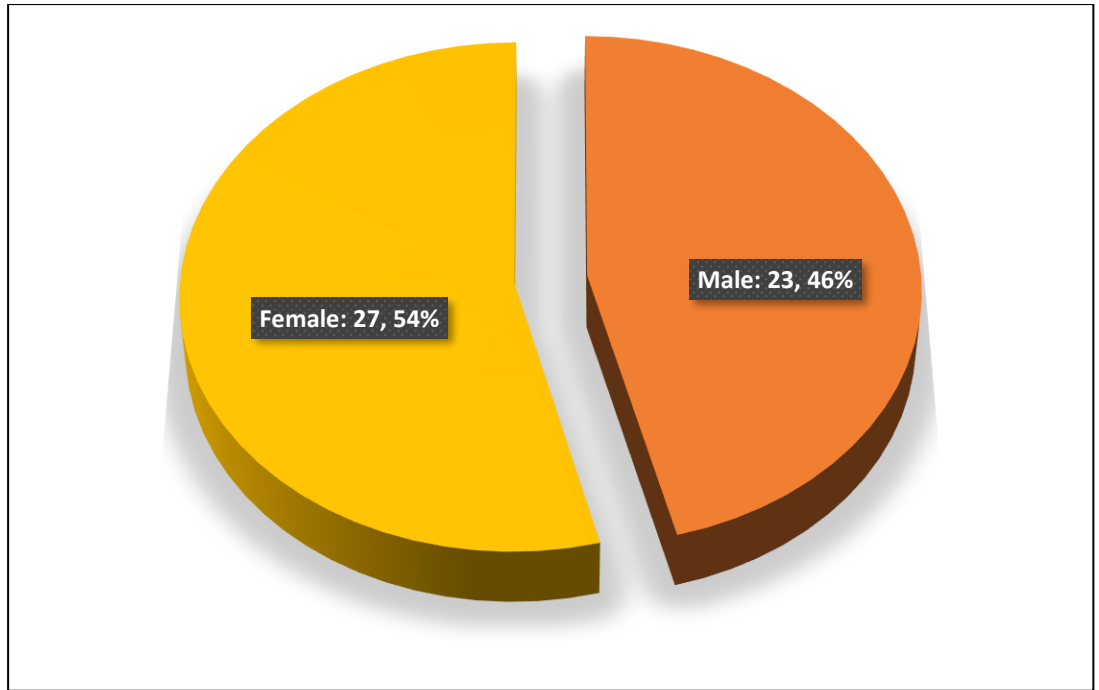
Figure 4: Gender of IEPA Students

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)
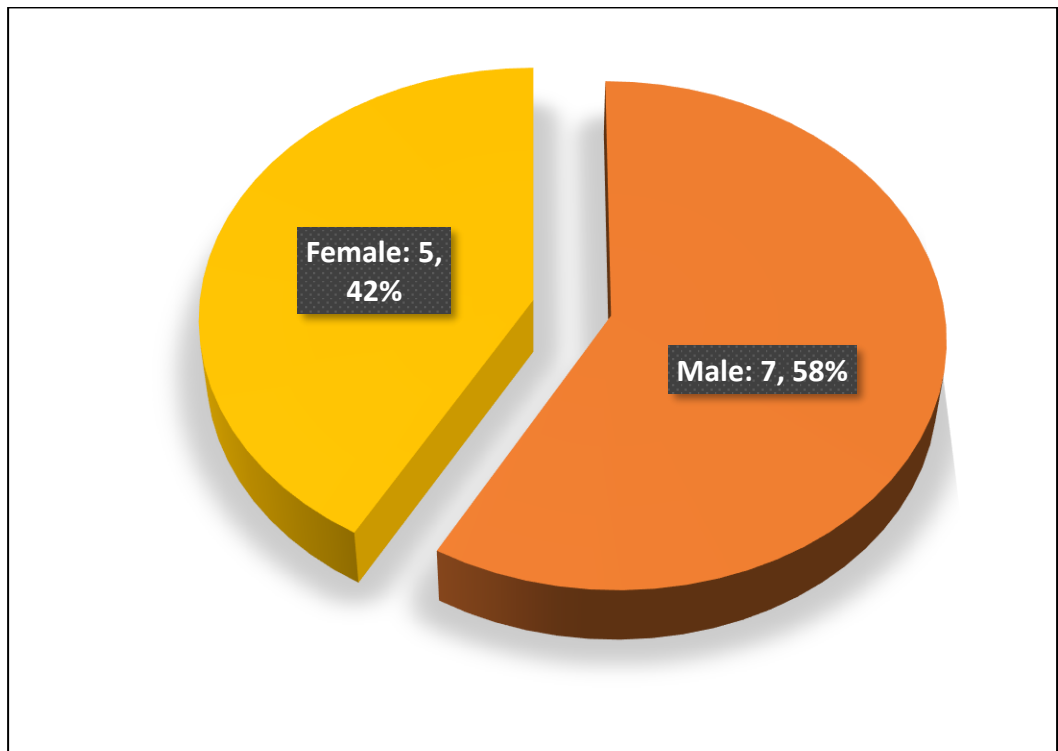
Figure 5: Gender of Site Supervisors Interviewed

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

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It is clear from Figure 4 that the participation of females in this study was very encouraging. This points to the fact that the IEPA is training enough female educational administrators. From Figure 5, it can be seen that, the majority (58%, n=7) of the internship site supervisors were males.

Figure 6 illustrates the distribution of programmes pursued by IEPA students engaged in the study.
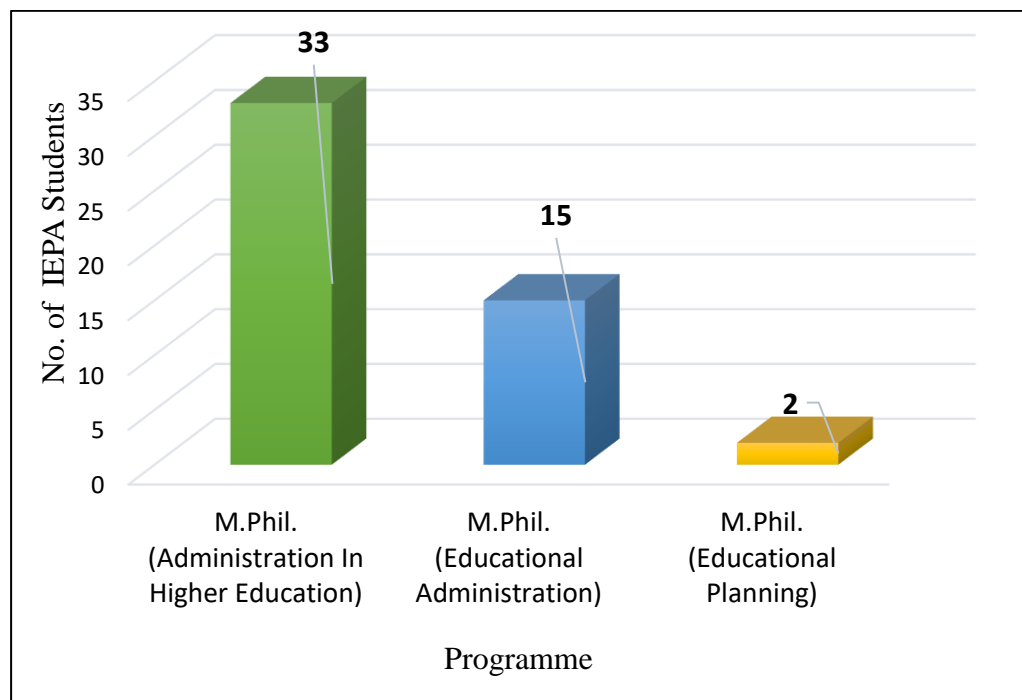
Figure 6: Programme Pursued by the IEPA Students

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Figure 6 indicates that, IEPA is training more students to become educational administrators as compared to educational planners. This data, perhaps, suggest that, IEPA's M.Phil. in Educational Planning programme is not patronised by students as the M.Phil. in Administration in Higher Education and M.Phil. in Educational Administration. This, perhaps, suggests that IEPA is not sufficiently focussing on its planning madate. This could lead to shortage of professional educational planners in Ghana's educational sector especially

when currently IEPA is the only institute in Ghana accedited to train educational planners (i.e. offer educational planning programme).

Data about respondents' year of enrolment in IEPA were collected. The results are presented in Figure 7.
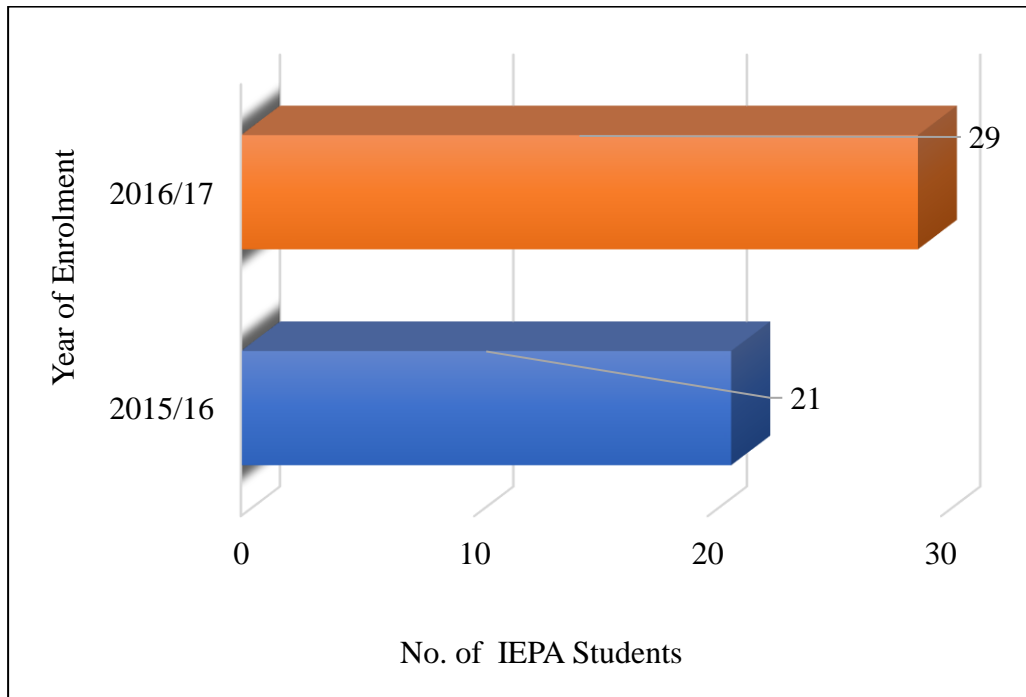
Figure 7: Year of Enrolment of IEPA Students

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Figure 7 shows that, 58% (n=29) of the IEPA students engaged in the study were from the 2016/17 cohort whereas 42% (n=21) of the students were from the 2015/16 cohort. The data in Figure 7 suggests that, the right respondents were engaged in the study. This assertion is based on the fact that, year of enrolment data about the target population (see Table 1) tally with the data in Figure 7.

As part of the demographic characteristics, respondents were asked to indicate where they had their internship. Figure 8 illustrates the various institutions where the IEPA students had their internship.
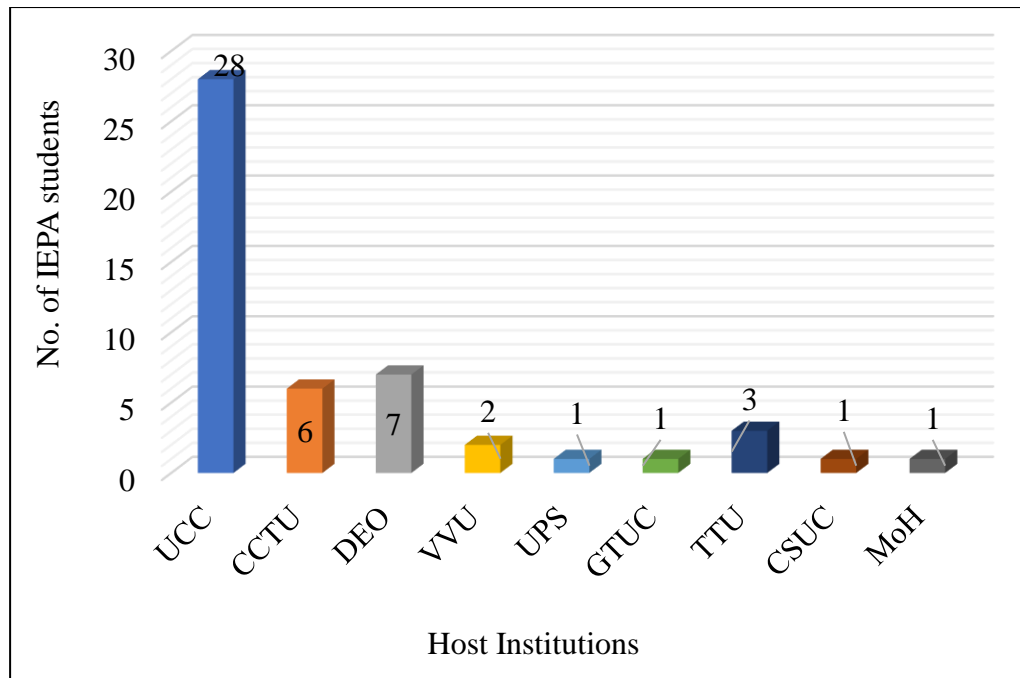
Figure 8: Institutions that Hosted IEPA Students for their Internship

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Figure 8 shows that, 56% (n=28) of respondents, representing the majority, had their internship at University of Cape Coast (UCC). Further analysis of the data revealed specific sections/departments/colleges within UCC where respondents had their internship. These, among others, include School of Business, Training and Development Section, Academic Affairs, School of Graduate Studies, Centre for International Education and College of Distance Education. The choice of UCC for internship by majority of respondents is not surprising owing to the fact that 66% (n=33) of respondents were pursuing Administration in Higher Education (see Figure 6) so ordinarily would prefer a higher educational institution like UCC.

Other institutions where IEPA students had their internship, as indicated in Figure 8, include: Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU); District Education Offices (DEO) across the country; Valley View University (VVU); University of Professional Studies (UPS); Ghana Technology University Collage (GTUC);

Takoradi Technical University (TTU); Christian Service University College (CSUC); and Ministry of Health (MoH).

Finally, on the demographic data, for the purposes of appreciating the insights of the site supervisors and situating it in the proper context, items 1 and 2 on the interview guide were developed to elicit information from site supervisors about their roles/responsibilities and how long they have been in their position. The data gathered indicated that, almost all the site supervisors were in administrative positions hence were responsible for the day-to-day running of their offices. The following, for example, are some of the extracts from the interviews of two site supervisors telling the specific roles they play:

> *As an Assistant Registrar, I prepare letters, report, minutes and organise committee meetings, supervising registration of letters and files, dispatching and receiving incoming calls and other correspondences. It is also my responsibility to make sure we do not run out of working materials. I supervise all the other staff in this office (Site Supervisor 1).*

> *I am a Junior Assistant Registrar, I do serve as a secretary to some committees. I organise meetings, prepare notices and agenda, prepare minutes, draft letters and other correspondence. I also supervise the junior staff. I also write reports and undertake any other duties assigned to me by the Registrar (Site Supervisor 2).*

Likewise, all the other site supervisors recounted similar roles/responsibilities in their responses. With regard to how long they have been at their current position, the data revealed that, four (4) of them have been at their position between 1-3years; six (6) of them have been occupying their position between 4-6years whilst two (2) of them have been at their position from 7years and above. This suggests that most of the site supervisors engaged in the study have

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worked for some significant number of years hence may have gathered enough experience. This, in my view, places them in a better position to appropriately respond to the interview questions.

Findings and Discussion of the Research Questions Posed

This section focuses on the presentation of the findings to the five research questions posed together with their discussions. For purposes of clarity and succinctness, each research question is stated before its corresponding issues emerging from the data set.

1. What are the internship goals of IEPA students?

To answer this research question, I asked the respondents what their internship goals were. Findings to this research question is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Internship Goals of IEPA Students

My internship goal was to:	Frequency	Percent
Gain full and realistic view of how to effectively and efficiently organise and run an administrative office	40	80
Advance my human relation skills with industry players (i.e. Employers, employees and clients)	35	70
Be equipped with expertise in recording and preserving office records (i.e. Minutes, notices, letters, reports)	27	54
Improve both my written and oral communication skills (e.g. Pitching)	22	44
create a solid network with industry players for future benefits (i.e. employment)	8	16

N=50   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

The three topmost internship goals of IEPA students, as shown in Table 3, are for them to: gain full and realistic view of how to effectively and efficiently

organise and run an administrative office; advance their human relation skills with industry players (i.e. employers, employees and clients); and be equipped with expertise in recording and preserving office records (i.e. minutes, notices, letters, reports) respectively. Fascinatingly, these internship goals of IEPA students, resonate with their professional calling since they are trained to be mainly Educational Administrators and Planners (Owusu & Dzinyela, 1994). Thus, administrative interns, like IEPA students, need to know the structures of a typical administrative office and how each of the structures work together in achieving the broader organisational goal (Maertz et al., 2014). Therefore, the fact that majority of IEPA students go into internship with such expectations which to a large extent is in line with the advice by Henry et al. (1988) is refreshing. Their advice was that, in setting internship goals, the focus should be on mastering technical skills, gaining essential background knowledge of one's career choice, perfecting interpersonal skills, and building a network of contacts.

However, the literature revealed that, it is not enough for interns to have realistic internship goals but also, they must discuss or review their goals with their site supervisors since they are regarded as being primarily responsible for the management of the whole internship experience (Smith, 2017). According to Smith, the advantage of interns discussing their internship goals with their site supervisors is that, it helps the site supervisors to know exactly what kind of task to assign them in order to achieve their internship goals. Against this background, a question was posed to site supervisors to find out if the IEPA students discuss or review their internship goals with them before they begin their internship as recommended in the literature.

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Incongruously, the response of almost all the site supervisors interviewed were that, the IEPA students do not actually discuss or review their internship goals with them. This disclosure is, for example, captured explicitly in the words of two site supervisors:

> No, they don't actually discuss their internship goals with me. The only thing that I rely on is their introductory letter… from the letter, because we know they are M.Phil. students, we are able to tell some of the things they are expected to know… being on internship, we know that they (IEPA students) must get some practical exposure to some of the things or most the things we do here … so that is what we have in mind but they themselves do not tell us what they want us to help them accomplish (Site Supervisor 1).

> From the experience I had with those I have supervised, I can say they don't really tell me about their internship goals… I rather tell them what I expect from them so that when it comes to their assessment, they will know exactly the areas I will be looking at …. When it comes to their personal goals, I don't get to know or see it… but I believe what they might be expecting to achieve at the end of the day may not be different from what we provide for them here … (Site Supervisor 2).

Another site supervisor described the practice of interns not discussing their internship goals with him/her as a limitation. He/she responded to the question by saying:

> Not to the best of my knowledge. I don't recall any of such discussion or review with them … Notwithstanding this limitation, which I think in future we have to work on it … we presume they come here to learn the practical of what they have been taught in class … (Site Supervisor 3).

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On the whole, it appears from the discussion that, the internship goals of IEEPA students are generally consistent with the best key administrative internship goals admonished in the internship literature (for example D'abate et al., 2009; Jamison & Clayton, 2016). It can therefore be concluded that, generally the IEPA students go to internship with clear sense of direction and purpose in terms of what is important to their professional career.

2. How do IEPA students establish work identity during their internship?

An important aspect of every internship experience according to the literature (Inkster & Ross, 1998; Strangleman, 2012) is the phase at which interns establish work identity. Work identity, as defined purposefully in chapter one of this study, is the recognition co-workers accord to an intern as being a member of their workforce together with the value they attached to that membership. For interns to be able to establish work identity, the literature admonishes that, as soon as interns arrive at their internship site, the host organisation as a matter of necessity should take them through some form of orientation/briefing to enable them adjust to the work environment.

In line with this advice, respondents were asked whether they received orientation/briefing prior to starting their internship. Findings to this question is presented in Figure 9.
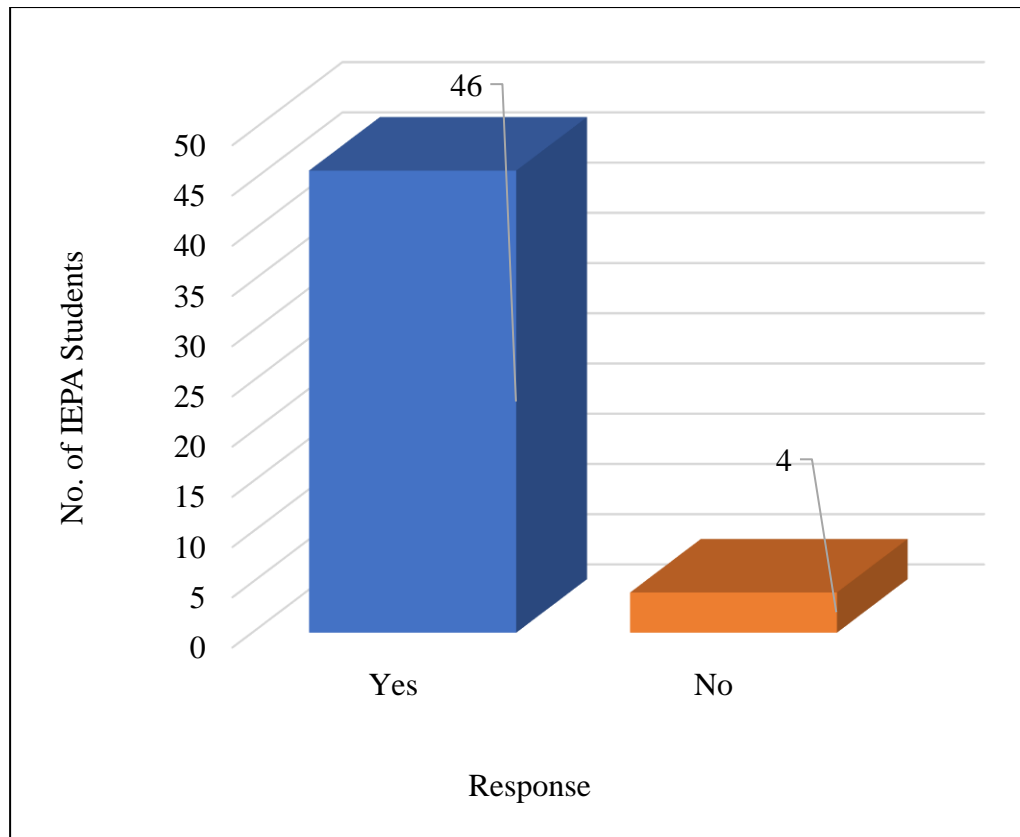
Figure 9: IEPA Students' Responses to Whether they Received Orientation/ Briefing from Host Organisations

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Interestingly, aside the 8% (n=4) of respondents who indicated that they did not receive orientation/briefing, the overwhelming majority (92%, n=46) of the IEPA students received orientation/briefing from their host organisation prior to starting their internship. This practice clearly resonates with best practices admonished in the literature. Thus, orientation when done well, helps interns to become familiar with co-workers. Also, interns become exposed to the organisational policies and procedures, which help them to establish work identity (Strangleman, 2012).

In respect of the semi-structured interviews conducted with site supervisors, regarding whether they (i.e. host organisations) organise orientation/briefing for the IEPA students before they start their internship, there was a lot of

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convergence. Thus, majority of site supervisors in their respective interviews, corroborated the responses of the IEPA students directly. This is seen in the fact that, eleven (11) out of the twelve (12) site supervisors indicated that they organised orientation/briefing for the IEPA students before they started working. This is evidenced, for example, in the words of two site supervisors:

Yes, I do ... We tell them what our roles are and what we do. I even take the opportunity to tell them the structure of the organisation and who we are responsible to so that when they are working, they will know that this is the channel of communication. So, we explain all these things to them. I even give them the organogram, the statute and the conditions of service of the school for them to look at… I personally expose them to so many aspects of the organisation just to make them comfortable in their operations (Site Supervisor 1).

Even aside the general orientation they get from the personnel section, we take them through the work that we do in the office and we show them around. They are introduced to all the departmental heads and the people that we work with… they are introduced to everybody, including our rules and regulations. (Site Supervisor 2).

The study further found out from respondents who indicated that they received orientation/briefing, whether in their view the orientation was informative enough in terms of it helping them to establish strong work identity. Figure 10 illustrates the findings.
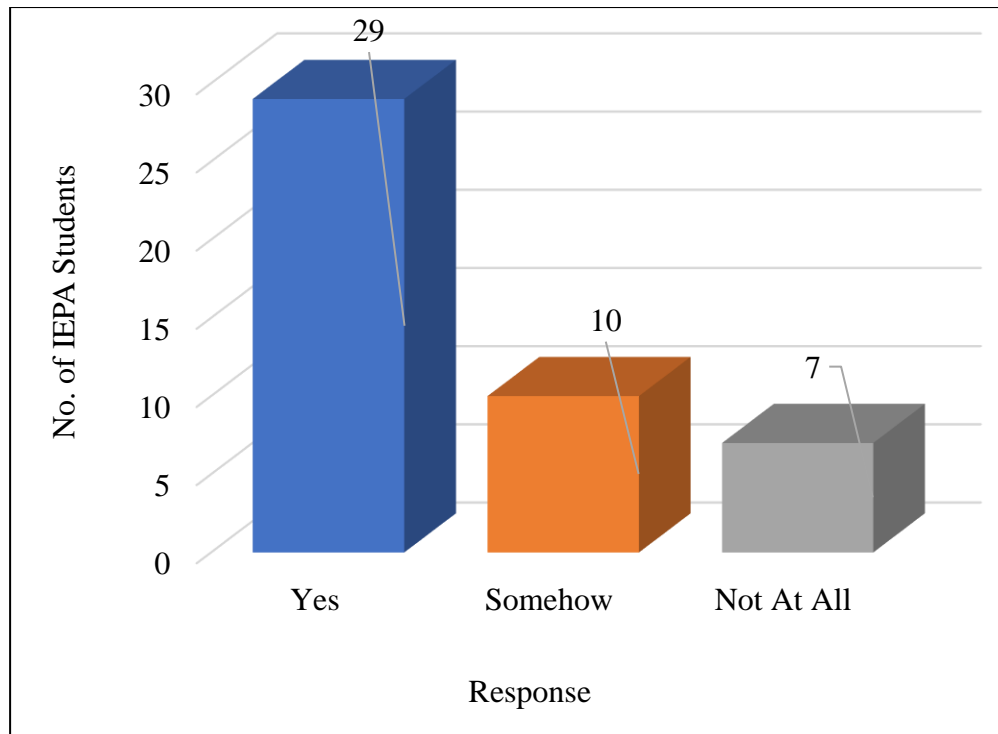
Figure 10: IEPA Students' Responses to Whether their Orientation/Briefing was Informative Enough

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

It can be observed from Figure 10 that, despite the fact that most host organisations give orientation/briefing to IEPA students during their internship, 22% (n=10) of the IEPA students felt that, somehow, the orientation/briefing they received was not informative enough in terms of helping them to establish strong work identity. On a more serious note, additional 15% (n=7) of them also felt that the orientation/briefing they received was not at all informative. In all, 37% (n=10+7) of the IEPA students felt that they were not given enough orientation/briefing to aid them to establish strong work identity. This situation, according to Strangleman (2012) can affect interns overall confidence level which in the long run can lead to unproductive internship experience.

The analysis of the interview responses from site supervisors on whether orientation/briefing was given to the interns, provided some form of explanation as to why some IEPA students felt that their orientation/briefing was not

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informative enough to help them to establish strong work identity. Two site supervisors, for example, said:

> *The practice here is that, when they come to do their attachment, they are received by the Human Resource Department. That is where they are all given orientation before they are assigned to this office. So, when they come here, we assume they have been given the necessary orientation for them to start their work (Site Supervisor 3).*

> *We do not organise the orientation ourselves here in this office. It is done at the Personnel Section… we only introduce them to the other staff in the department. You know, some of them even know them already so there is no need for any serious orientation… (Site Supervisor 8).*

These statements from the site supervisors suggest that, aside the general orientation/briefing organised for all interns at the institutional level, the specific Department/Unit where interns are assigned to in, those cases, do not give further orientation/briefing. Thus, the general orientation/briefing perhaps may not have been very informative. This perhaps explains why some interns considered the orientation/briefing they received as not being informative enough to help them to establish strong work identity.

Apart from orientation/briefing that the literature strongly recommends as a tool for helping interns to establish work identity, there were other equally proven potent strategies interns could use to establish work identity (Zehr, 2016). In light of this, additional item on the questionnaire was used to find out from respondents what personal strategies helped them to establish work identity (gain acceptance). Findings to this item are presented in Table 4.

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Table 4: Strategies that Helped IEPA Students to Establish Work Identity During their Internship

Strategies	Frequency	Percent
Showing initiative to perform extra duties	41	82
Complying with the organisational rules, policies, norms and procedures (e.g. punctuality)	32	64
Demonstrating professionalism/competence	27	54
Establishing personal relationship with co-workers	15	30
Making co-workers feel they have great expertise to learn from	14	28

N=50   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Table 4 shows that, the three topmost strategies that helped majority of the IEPA students to establish work identity were: showing initiative to perform extra duties; complying with the organisational rules, policies and procedures (e.g. punctuality); and demonstrating professionalism and or competence. This confirms the assertion in the literature that, mostly when an intern takes on additional responsibilities in the office, they become recognized by co-workers and supervisors which enhances their work identity (Maertz et al., 2014). That is, when interns are given the necessary recognition eventually it culminates into a healthy relationship between them and other workers. Out of this heathy relationship, interns get more acquainted with the other workers and in the process are able to learn more from them.

Finally, for the purpose of determining the extent to which the IEPA students were able to establish work identity during their internship, respondents were also asked to specify the extent to which they believed they were recognised as team members in their unit/section by co-workers. The responses to this questionnaire item are shown in Figure 11.

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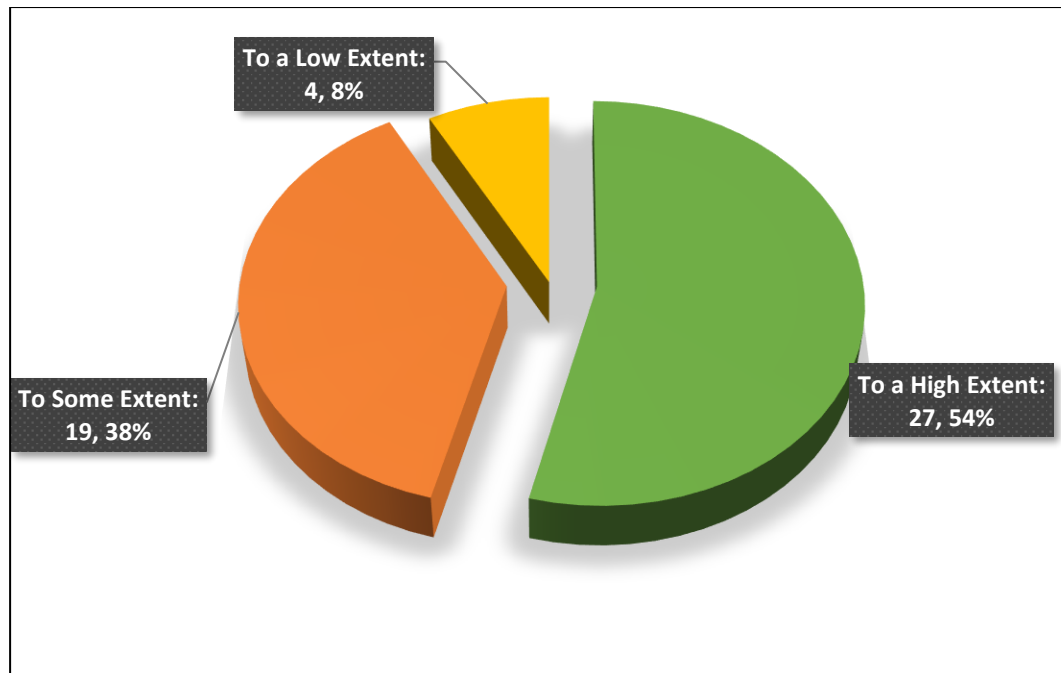
Figure 11: Extent to Which IEPA Students Believed they Were Recognized as Team Members by Co-workers During their Internship

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

From Figure 11 it appears that, 46% (n=19+4) of the IEPA students believed that they were not really recognised by their co-workers as team members in their unit/section. This means that those students were unable to successfully establish strong work identities.

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews conducted with site supervisors provide insights into the finding illustrated in Figure 11. For example, the following excerpts from the responses of two site supervisors, on the issue of whether IEPA students demonstrate high predisposition/tendency for learning, in a sense, explains why some IEPA students were not adequately recognised by their co-workers as team members. They said:

> One of your people came here, and it was like we here have not been to school before. He/she thought that the M.Phil. was everything. The truth is, we were the ones he/she came to learn from and he /she did not realize that from the beginning. It was

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> *all about criticising what we have here… we left him/her to his/her fate (Site Supervisor 4).*

> *I do not even know some of those who came here to do their internship. If I meet them today, I may not know them. They come to work today and the next day you will not see them… Some of them were just here on paper, their presence was not felt. Always giving you excuses… (Site Supervisor 10).*

Notwithstanding these claims by some of the site supervisors, a slight majority (54%, n=27) of the IEPA students were recognised to a high extent as team members relative to the operations in their unit/section. As a result, they had the opportunity to perform tasks together with their co-workers. This is evidenced in the words of most of some site supervisors interviewed. For example, three site supervisors said:

> *I remember I even made one of them my personal assistant. He/she was very good when it comes to using the computer. Aside that, he/she was very hardworking… He/she worked closely with the secretary on most of the documents to the Accreditation Office… (Site Supervisor 6).*

> *The culture in this office is that, we operate as a family and I can confidently say that when they come, they are able to fit in easily. We worked as a team… We were each other's keeper (Site Supervisor 12).*

> *When I did my internship… I did not get the opportunity to socialise with those I worked with like the way your people do when they come here…when it comes to the sharing of money… we all take the same amount because we do the work together (Site Supervisor 9).*

Altogether, it is clear from the responses to the research question 2 that, a slight majority of IEPA students were able to establish strong work identity.

This was achieved partly through the orientation/briefing majority of them received from their host organisations (see Figure 9). Also, personal strategies adopted by IEPA students in their quest to establishing work identity were: showing initiative to perform extra duties; complying with the organisational rules, policies and procedures; and demonstrating professionalism/competence (see Table 4). Through the use of these strategies, most of the IEPA students were recognized by their co-workers to a high extent (see Figure 11).

3.   What tasks are performed by IEPA students during their internship?

This research question sought to explore generally the tasks the IEPA students engaged in during their internship as trainee administrators and planners. Insights from both the self-administered questionnaire and semi-structured interviews are employed to answer this question. In the case of the self-administered questionnaire, respondents were first asked to indicate tasks they performed during their internship. They did so either by selecting from a list of suggested tasks based on the literature review or stating the tasks themselves. Findings to this item on the questionnaire are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Tasks Performed by IEPA Students During their Internship

Tasks	Frequency	Percent
Receiving, dispatching and managing letters	40	80
Attending to guests and clients	33	66
Preparing memos/letters/minutes	28	56
Planning and organising meetings/programmes	20	40
Providing expect advice/ special initiatives	15	30
Representing the organisation/institution at events	8	16
Doing research and analysis	4	8

N=50   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

From Table 5, the three topmost tasks performed by IEPA students during their internship are, first, receiving, dispatching and managing letters. This is

followed by the task of attending to the needs of guests and clients who call on their office, and then preparing memos/letters/minutes. These findings were largely collaborated by almost all the site supervisors in their responses relative to the tasks they engage IEPA students in. For example, two site supervisors captured this succinctly in their own words, thus:

> *… they are given opportunity to draft letters, write minutes, prepare reports and do virtually everything we do in this office. I sometimes let them draft agenda for me to look at and improve on it… I can say they do secretarial work in general. Virtually we involve them… anything we do here we do it together as a team. We see them as people who came here to learn…we allow them to engage in the things we do. Sometimes when it comes to orientation of students, we involve them in the planning and organisation… (Site Supervisor 1).*

> *Since we perform administrative roles, they are exposed to all the activities we do especially, meetings, how to receive visitors… they are exposed to receiving calls on behalf of the Registrar, writing reports and any other things (Site Supervisor 2).*

In all, these tasks performed by interns obviously have the propensity to, among other things, increase their confidence, communication and human relation skills.

However, the frequency at which interns are engaged in performing those tasks specified, was considered critical to the development of their expertise. According to the literature (Peterson et al., 2015; Seaman, Brown, & Quay, 2017; Torres & Augusto, 2017), students' learning is optimized when they take active roles rather than passive ones in the learning process. This can be summed up in the popular phrase 'practice makes a man perfect'. Based on this consciousness, a questionnaire item was developed purposely to elicit from

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participants generally on how frequent they were engaged in those tasks they indicated in Table 5. The results of this questionnaire item are illustrated in Figure 12.
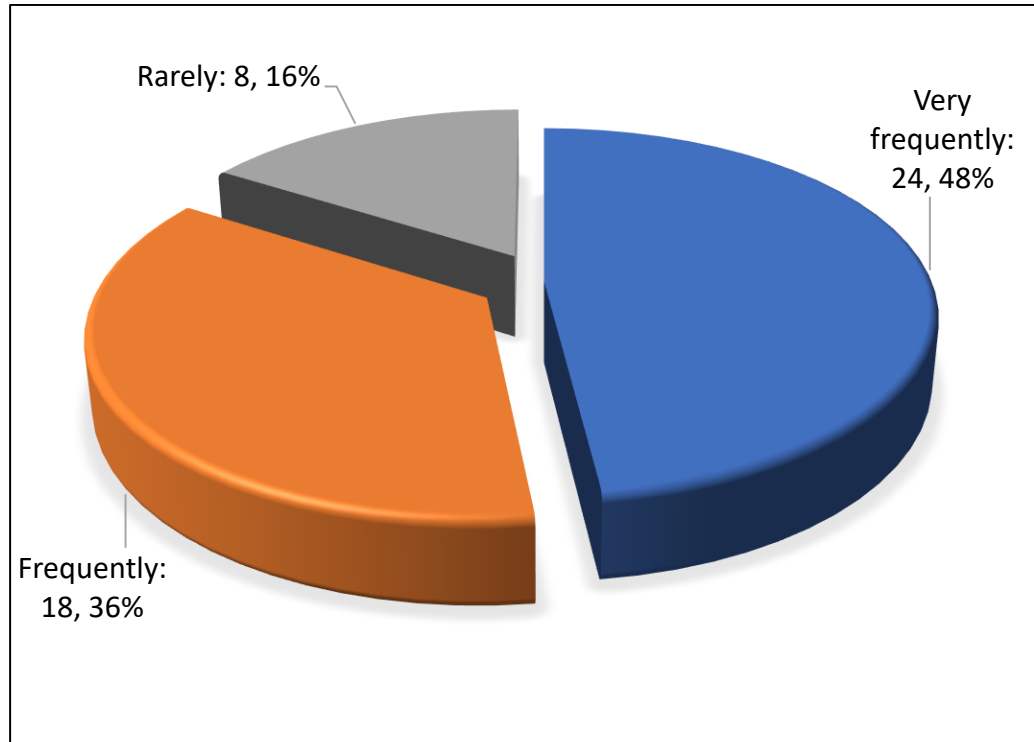
Figure 12: Frequency at Which IEPA Students Were Engaged During their Internship

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Figure 12 shows that majority (84%, n=24+18) of the IEPA students were frequently engaged in the tasks they performed during their internship. This clearly suggests that, most of the IEPA students were given maximum opportunity by their host organisations to develop their expertise. These findings were largely corroborated by majority of the site supervisors. For example, in the two ensuing excerpts, the site supervisors proudly shared how they frequently engaged IEPA students:

> *I have been an intern before, so I know they needed the experience… There is no activity in this office that I do not involve them… Sometimes, I have to lobby for them to be part of*

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some meetings just for them to have the experience… Because their time is short, I try to help them make the best out of the little time… (Site Supervisor 7).

This is a busy office on any normal day … so even interns are not spared the pressure. Sometimes I feel the workload is too much for some of them but at the end, I think it helped them (Site Supervisor 11).

In another interview session, one site supervisor in corroborating the earlier responses revealed that s/he assiduously ensured that the IEPA students were engaged at all times. S/he captured it this way:

For me, even when there is no official duty in the office, I assigned them to go and help those at the stores. I always wanted them to learn new things … (Site Supervisors 3).

In respect of these findings, it can be concluded that, the internship site supervisors were committed to helping IEPA students develop their expertise as trainee educational administrators and planners.

Another questionnaire item was developed to explore the extent to which the tasks performed by the IEPA students were in line with their internship goals. Figure 13 illustrates the findings to this item.
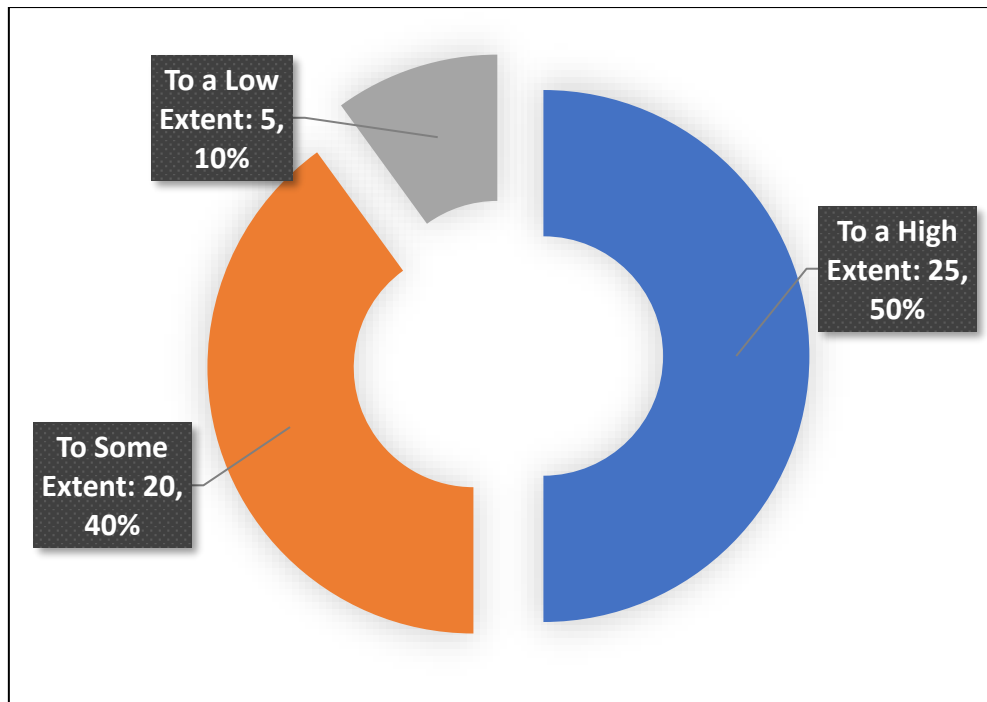
Figure 13: Extent to Which Tasks Performed by IEPA Students were In Line With their Internship Goals

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

From Figure 13, 50% (n=25) of respondents indicated that the tasks they performed during their internship were to a high extent in line with their internship goals. This, suggest that, half of the IEPA students were afforded the right opportunities to achieve their internship goals. Conversely, 10% (n=5) of the respondents believed that to a low extent. A significant number (40%, n=20) of the IEPA students indicated that the tasks they performed were to some extent in line with their internship goals.

In order to gain additional insight from the data presented in Figure 13, further analysis was carried out. Specifically, crosstabulation and correlation analysis were done. Crosstabulation which is also known as contingency table or cross tabs, is a method of quantitative analysis where variables are grouped to understand the correlation between the different variables (Kumar & Phrommathed, 2005; Norušis, 2011). That is, cross tabs find patterns, and trends

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within raw data. According to Norušis (2011), correlation analysis measures relationships between variables. Thus, the analysis was done (using SPSS software) to assess the relationship between interns' work identity (see data in Figure 11) and appropriateness of the tasks assigned them (see data in Figure 13).

The results are presented in Table 6 followed by Table 7.

Table 6: Crosstabulation between Interns' Work Identity and the Appropriateness of the Tasks Assigned them

		To what extent generally were the tasks you performed in line with your internship goals?			**Total**
		To a High Extent	To Some Extent	To a Low Extent	
To what extent did you feel recognized as a team member by co-workers?	To a High Extent	17	9	1	**27**
	To Some Extent	8	9	2	**19**
	To a Low Extent	0	2	2	**4**
Total		**25**	**20**	**5**	**50**

N=50   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

On the face value, from Table 6, it can be observed that majority of respondents who indicated that they were recognised to a high extent, also largely indicated that the tasks they performed were to a high extent in line with their internship goals. That is to suggest that, once interns become recognised by co-workers (able to establish work identity), they were made to engage in tasks that sought to help them achieve their internship goals.

Table 7: Relationship between Interns' Work Identity and the Appropriateness of the Tasks Assigned them

		To what extent did you feel recognised as a team member by co-workers?	To what extent generally were the tasks you performed in line with your internship goals?
To what extent did you feel recognised as a team member by co-workers?	Pearson Correlation (r)	1	**.415****
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	50	50
To what extent generally were the tasks you performed in line with your internship goals?	Pearson Correlation (r)	**.415****	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	50	50
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

N=50   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

In Table 7, the results ($r = 0.415$, $n = 50$, $p = 0.003$) when interpreted statistically, means that:

- there is a positive relationship between interns' work identity and the appropriateness of the tasks assigned them;

- the direction of the relationship is positive. Thus, the 'more' the IEPA students were able to establish strong work identity, the 'more' they were engaged in tasks that were in line with their internship goals; and

- the magnitude or strength, of the association is approximately moderate ($3 < r < .5$).

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Based on these findings, it can be said that, an intern's chances of being engaged in relevant tasks during internship is linked to the extent to which his/her is able to establish 'strong' work identity.

As a final questionnaire item to the research question 3 which sought to explore tasks performed by IEPA students during their internship, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the tasks they performed were in alignment with their programmes of study (coursework). The purpose was to find out, among other things, how their programmes of study mirror industrial practice. It was also intended to reveal how the coursework have prepared IEPA students for their practical experiences. Findings that emerged from the statistical analysis of the responses to this item are presented in Figure 14.
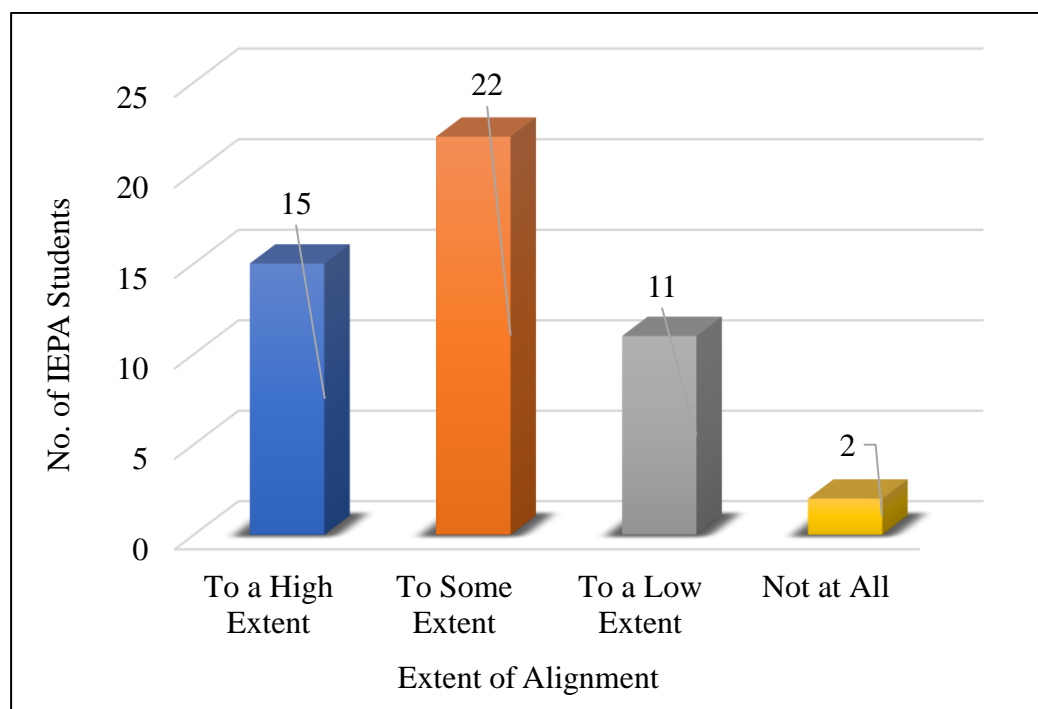
Figure 14: Extent to Which Tasks Performed Were in Alignment with Coursework

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

From the findings illustrated in Figure 14, it is clear that 30% (n=15) of the IEPA students during their internship performed tasks that were highly aligned

with their coursework. This means that, for those students, their academic preparations they had from the IEPA were to a high extent useful in their practical application and skill development. Figure 14 further shows that, majority (44%, n=22) of the IEPA students performed tasks that were to some extent aligned with their coursework. However, 22% (n=11) of the respondents indicated that the tasks they performed were to a low extent aligned to their coursework whilst 4% (n=2) of them responded that there was no alignment at all. These findings can be interpreted in general to mean that, the educational preparation majority (70%, n=22+11+2) of the IEPA students received from IEPA, did not adequately meet their needs during their internship. This could mean that, perhaps, IEPA's curriculum was not in tune with the needs of its clientele.

To really make sense out of this finding, further analysis was carried out to identify the specific host institutions where interns' coursework had low or no alignment with the tasks they performed. To do this a crosstabulation was done. The results are presented in Table 8.

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Table 8: Crosstabulation of Extent to Which Tasks Performed were in Alignment with Coursework and Host Organisations

			To what extent was the tasks you performed during your internship aligned to what you learnt in your coursework?				Total
			To a High Extent	To Some Extent	To a Low Extent	Not at All	
Host Organisations/Institutions	UCC	Count	6	12	8	2	28
		%	21.4%	42.9%	28.6%	7.1%	100.0%
	CCTU	Count	3	2	1	0	6
		%	50.0%	33.3%	16.7%	0.0%	100.0%
	DEO	Count	4	2	1	0	7
		%	57.1%	28.6%	14.3%	0.0%	100.0%
	VVU	Count	1	1	0	0	2
		%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	UPS	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	GTUC	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	TTU	Count	0	3	0	0	3
		%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	CSUC	Count	0	1	0	0	1
		%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	MoH	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	Total	Count	15	22	11	2	50
		%	30.0%	44.0%	22.0%	4.0%	100.0%

N=50   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

A careful reading across Table 8 shows that, out of the number of the IEPA students who had their internship in UCC, 42.9% (n=12) of them indicated that the various tasks they performed were to some extent aligned to what they learnt in their course work. This finding could be interpreted to mean that, perhaps, the theoretical knowledge they acquired in the classroom did not fully meet the demands of the world of work. Again, in the same institution (UCC), 28.6%

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(n=8) of the students who had their internship there also indicated that the task they performed were to 'a low extent' aligned with their coursework whereas 7.1% (n=2) of them also indicated that there was 'not at all' any alignment. It can then be said that, majority (78.6%) of the IEPA students who had their internship in UCC did not, for lack of a better expression, find their coursework all that helpful in the performance of their administrative tasks (i.e. preparing and managing office correspondences). A critical study of the data presented in Table 9 shows that, a significant percentage of other IEPA students who had their internship in the other tertiary institutions (for example CCTU, VVU, UPS, GTUC, TTU & CSUC) also did not find their coursework all that helpful in performing their tasks. These findings suggest some form of gap between the training IEPA students received through their coursework and what the job market demands from them interns (especially tertiary intuitions).

4. **What learning strategies do IEPA students use during internship to develop their expertise as potential educational administrators and planners?**

In line with the broad purpose of exploring the internship experiences of IEPA students, this research question purported to find out specifically the learning strategies IEPA students use during internship to develop their expertise as educational administrators and planners. As clearly captured under the definition of terms in chapter one, learning strategy as used in this study, simply refers to an intern's approach to accomplishing a task (Deshler et al., 2001).

Through a Likert scale questionnaire item, the respondents were requested to indicate the degree to which they agree or disagree with a list of statements regarding learning strategies generally used by interns (derived from the

literature), as it applied to them during their internship. The findings to this question are reported in Table 9.

Table 9: Learning Strategies used by IEPA Students during Internship to Develop their Expertise as Educational Administrators and Planners

I developed my expertise mostly through:	Mean	SD	Decision
Tactically asking relevant career/job related questions from experienced workers	1.62	.602	Strongly Agreed
Observing diligently how co-workers execute their tasks	2.00	.808	Agreed
Seeking regular feedback from my site supervisor/co-workers about my work output	1.72	.671	Strongly Agreed
Keeping a learning journal	2.66	.872	Disagreed

N=50   Note: SD=Standard Deviation.   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Reading across Table 9, it is clear that majority of the IEPA students agreed to use all the learning strategies identified in the literature except that of keeping a learning journal. Specifically, a look at Table 9 shows that, the main learning strategy used by the majority of the IEPA students during their internship was the act of tactically asking relevant career/job related questions from experienced workers. This was followed by seeking regular feedback from their site supervisor/co-workers and then observing diligently how co-workers execute their tasks. So, inferring from these findings, it can be said that, possibly there was a clear open channel of communication between most of the IEPA students, and their site supervisors/co-workers throughout the internship. This is because, hypothetically, in a working environment where there is little chance of engaging in an open (upward) communication, the possibility of asking job related questions and seeking feedback from supervisors will be erratic.

The findings, as seen in Table 9, are largely in accord with that of Maertz et al. (2014) as captured in the literature review. According to Maertz et al.,

learning strategies such as asking job and career relevant questions from supervisors and co-workers, seeking regular feedback on work performance and general progress, showing initiative to ask for more additional responsibilities, and keeping a learning journal at all times were prominently adopted by high performing interns. Thus, these strategies help interns to have a significant time on authentic experiences with skilled co-workers. Also, these strategies enable interns to build a strong relationship with both their site supervisors and co-workers with rich conversation about practice which aid their learning.

With regard to the interview, site supervisors were asked what learning opportunities they made available for IEPA students during their internship. Analysis of the interview responses generally showed that, in most cases, the IEPA students had the opportunity to engage in observations, conversations, and demonstrations during their internship. These learning opportunities were purposefully created by majority of site supervisors. This is evidenced, for example, in the extracts of three site supervisors presented as follows:

> *...the opportunities for learning are many because everybody here is willing to help them ... if it is about learning opportunities, yes there are a lot of opportunities here. For instance, we allow them to attend our meetings, and that is an opportunity for them to learn. Sometimes when I am working on a document, I give it to them to try their hands on it ... all these things are opportunities I create for them to learn so I can say in this office we understand what your students need and we help them. I remember one of the first things that we do when they come is to take them through the files... not the confidential ones ... for them to learn how filing is done. We spend a lot of time teaching them (Site Supervisor 2).*

> *They have access to everything in this office ... we relate with them so well that if you come and see them chatting together you will think they are permanent staff ... we do things together... I recall we organised a programme and fortunately one of them was here and was very instrumental in the activities, which was a learning opportunity ... Some of them like asking questions and I can say through that I'm able to clear some of their doubts ... which to me is very important (Site Supervisor 1).*

> *Everything we do here is a learning opportunity for them ... when they draft letters for me to look at, it is an opportunity for them to learn. As they dispatch letters to other offices, it helps them to interact with others which contribute to their interpersonal skills. So, you see, every day, they have an opportunity to learn something new (Site Supervisor 3).*

Altogether, the responses of the site supervisors, explains largely, the choice of learning strategies by some of the IEPA students during their internship as seen in Table 9. For example, when there is an opportunity for interns to engage in conversations with site supervisors/co-workers, certainly they would be able to ask any kind of questions especially those related to their career/job.

Another questionnaire item, in line with the research question 4 explicitly requested respondents to specify what they did habitually when they were confronted with task(s) that they had no idea how to execute. This was to give an additional insight into the learning strategies they adopted. The result of this item is presented in Table 10.

Table 10: IEPA Students Responses to What they do during Internship when they were Confronted with Task(s) that they had no Idea how to Execute

Strategies	Frequency	Percent
I asked co-workers or site supervisor to teach me	48	96
I sought information from documents available to me at the workplace	19	38
I engaged in trial and error	11	22
I sought information from available resource online (e.g. Google)	5	10

N=50   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Table 10 shows that, majority of IEPA students' first resort to asking their site supervisor or co-workers for assistance when confronted with difficulties in performing tasks assigned them. This strategy is highly recommended in the literature (Maertz et al., 2014; Smith, 2017). The argument for this strategy, among other things, is that, in the long run it helps interns to develop a personal relationship with the workers because of the communication aspect of it. This finding in particular, is consistent with the earlier finding that, the main learning strategy used by the majority of the IEPA students during internship to develop their expertise as educational administrators and planners was the act of tactically asking relevant career/job related questions from experienced workers (see Table 9).

Unfortunately, in today's 21st century where multimedia information of all kinds is available on the internet, reading from Table 11, it appears that, seeking for information from the internet to facilitate learning, was the least (10%, n=5) used strategy by majority of the IEPA students. Thus, 90% (n=50-5) of the IEPA students did not consider looking for information from the internet to support their learning during their internship. This could be because, perhaps, they

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lacked the needed capabilities (i.e. skills and knowledge) and facilities (i.e. computer and internet connection) to effectively explore this strategy. The insignificant use of this strategy by the majority of the IEPA students during their internship implies that, they rely heavily on their site supervisors/co-workers for acquiring new knowledge.

In relation to the interviews, site supervisors were asked what they did in situations where the IEPA students they supervised did not know how to perform task assigned them. Almost all the site supervisors corroborated the responses given by the IEPA students. That is, almost all the site supervisors, in their respective interview responses suggested that, when interns do not know how to perform tasks assigned them, they either teach them personally or provide them with a sample to guide them. This is evidenced in the words of two site supervisors:

> *Oh, for me, before we assign them tasks, I make sure I give the person orientation as to what to do. If they do it and there is a fault or something, we try to show them a sample from our file, for them to compare and do the right thing ... I read through everything they do before I allow them to print the final copy ... We are ever ready to help them (Site Supervisor 4).*

> *Generally, when they do not know how to perform a task, we explain to them how to do it. Sometimes, I direct them to the other staff who I know can do it so they can learn from them ... When it has to do with writing of letters or any other document, because we do proper filing, there are samples that we show to them and when they study it for some time, they are able to follow the style and prepare similar one (Site Supervisor 1).*

These excerpts, shows clearly that, site supervisors play a crucial role in the internship experiences of the IEPA students. Thus, they practically take their time to teach the IEPA students things they do not know.

In line with research question 4, a second questionnaire item was arranged to provide an insight into the conditions under which the IEPA students practised those learning strategies (seen in Table 9) during their internship. The responses to this question are reported in Table 11.

Table 11: Conditions under which the IEPA Students Practised their Learning Strategies

Condition	Mean	SD	Decision
Maximum opportunity for learning was available to me	2.02	.820	Agreed
My faculty supervisor made clear to me his/her expectations of me	2.18	.962	Agreed
My faculty supervisor demonstrated high willingness to support my learning	1.98	.915	Agreed
My site supervisor made clear to me his/her expectations of me as soon as I got there	2.20	.881	Agreed
My site supervisor demonstrated high willingness to support my learning	1.76	.744	Agreed
I demonstrated high predisposition for learning	1.66	.519	Strongly Agreed
Co-workers shared their experiences with me	1.84	.548	Agreed
There were adequate administrative facilities (i.e. workspace, computer, stationeries) to support my learning	2.82	.887	Disagreed
The duration for the internship programme was adequate	3.12	.748	Disagreed

N=50   Note: SD=Standard Deviation.   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

From Table 11, most of the IEPA students agreed to the statement that maximum opportunity for learning was available to them during their internship. These findings suggest that, largely host organisations were prepared to assist IEPA students develop their expertise. This response about host organisations confirms the assertion by Boateng and Ofori-Sarpong (2002) that, the extent of preparedness by Ghanaian industries toward student industrial training is mostly noted to be high. This good news, could be as a result of factors such as strong collaboration, partnership and effective networking among the internship stakeholders (student, faculty and the host organisation) as noted in the literature (Greenawalt, 1991; Henry et al., 1988).

Remarkably, the respondents also agreed that, not only did both their faculty supervisor and site supervisor made clear to them their expectations, but also, they both demonstrated high willingness to support their learning. This condition, according to the literature, provides a safe haven for a successful internship experience (Holyoak, 2013; Singh & Dutta, 2010; Zopiatis & Constanti, 2012). The finding that co-workers shared their experiences with IEPA students during their internship validate an earlier finding (see Figure 11) which suggested that majority (54%) of IEPA students were able to establish work identity so were recognised to a high extent by their co-workers. Obviously, once interns are recognised by co-workers, they may gain opportunities to interact with them and in the process share experiences with one another (Akomaning et al., 2011).

Another interesting finding as seen in Table 12 is that, most of the IEPA students themselves agreed to the view that, they demonstrated high predisposition for learning during their internship. In other words, they

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demonstrated a lot of seriousness towards gaining the needed knowledge and skills during their internship. However, on the same issue, the accounts of the site supervisors contradicted each other. Thus, some believed that, those they supervised did not demonstrate high predisposition for learning whereas some others thought otherwise. For example, one site supervisor had this to say:

> *I can say some of them do, but for some, they don't show that zeal to learn at all ... sometimes it's like you are forcing them to learn something. I observed that those who did not show much interest were because they were combining work at their offices with the internship. They will come today and tell you they have to go to class so it's like they did not have the time. But for those who did not have any work apart from the internship they were serious. For those people, the way they ask questions alone will tell you that they want to learn something. Even their attendance tells it all. They will come to work and would not even want to close. That is how serious they were (Site Supervisor 1).*

In another interview session, one other site supervisor in his/her response to the same question appeared to have corroborated copiously the stance taken by the IEPA students that they demonstrate high predisposition for learning during their internship. S/he captured it succinctly by saying:

> *Yes, they show the disposition to learn... See, they keep records of everything they do and sometimes they show it to me. That alone tells me that they are serious and ever ready to learn... (Site Supervisor 11).*

Meanwhile, some other site supervisors categorically stated that, those they supervised did not show any zeal towards acquiring any meaningful skills/knowledge. Some of them recounted how some personal indiscipline on the part of some interns tainted the whole experience. One of the site supervisors reported it this way:

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For me I can say I don't really see them as such. I did not see that eagerness and zeal to know more in them. Sometimes I have to call them to come and sit by me and observe what I am doing before they get busy. At times, some of them may be busy on their mobile phones throughout the day… I think you should try and set some standards for them so that it will push them to be more serious when they come here. For instance, if you tell them that, during your internship you should know how to do ABCD before you can pass, I think they will try as much as possible to work towards achieving it. That is the drive they need (Site Supervisor 5).

From the narrations presented so far, it is clear that, the assertion by Deschaine et al. (2017) as captured in the literature that, interns' personal factors such as: attitude; time management and planning; dependability and punctuality; work accuracy; quality and quantity; judgment and problem-solving ability; creativity and initiative; teamwork and interpersonal skills; adaptability; flexibility; willingness to learn; and communication skills determine the extent to which they will have a fruitful internship to a large extent is valid and consistent with the findinds of this study.

From Table 11, most of the IEPA students respondents disagreed that there were adequate administrative facilities (i.e. workspace, computer, stationeries) to support their learning. This obviously has negative implications on the quality of their internship experience. For instance, assuming there is no workspace (desk and chair) for an intern to comfortably work, the possibility of it distorting the level of productivity of the intern will ordinarily be high. This in the long run may even affect the attendance of the intern (Kiser, 2015). Also, majority of the IEPA students disagreed with the notion that the six-week duration of the IEPA's internship programme was adequate. This response from students

suggest that, perhaps, they were unable to achieve their internship goals as results of 'short' duration.

Site supervisors, during their interview, were also asked whether the duration of the internship programme was adequate in light of their experience. The responses of the majority (67%, n=8 out of 12) of the site supervisors corroborated the views of the majority of the IEPA students. Thus, the majority of the site supervisors were of the view that the six-week duration was too short. They argued that, because of the fact that most of the interns were rotated (i.e. assigned to several offices with the period), it becomes impossible for them to be engaged in all the essential tasks they have outlined for the interns before they were moved to other offices. This is captured clearly in the words of two site supervisors, thus:

> *To be frank, the time is too short ... In this office for example, they come here for not more than two weeks. Tell me, do you expect them to get any meaningful experience? ... the same with the other offices, they go there and before you know they are leaving... if they want to gain more experience, I think they should extend the duration to either five months or six months (Site Supervisor 8).*
>
> *The six weeks is inadequate from where I sit. You know as M.Phil. students, they need to be engaged more than those doing their first degree because they are soon-to-be registrars. This work needs a lot of experience and that can only happen if they stay much longer to practise more (Site Supervisor 6).*

On the flip side of the coin, few (4) other site supervisors were of the view that, the six-weeks duration of the internship was adequate but were quick to add that, the seriousness of interns during the period is what matters. This is how one of them puts it:

Much can be achieved within the six weeks ... it is ok for me. So far, those I have supervised, I can say we were able to meet our target. The issue is not about the duration, it has to do with how serious the individual is ... (Site Supervisor 2).

On the whole, regarding the duration of the IEPA internship programme, it appears that, majority respondents and participants engaged in the study were of the view that, the duration should be reviewed (extended).

Finally, respondents were finally asked to indicate who they considered to be primarily responsible for their learning during the internship. Findings to this item are presented in Figure 15.
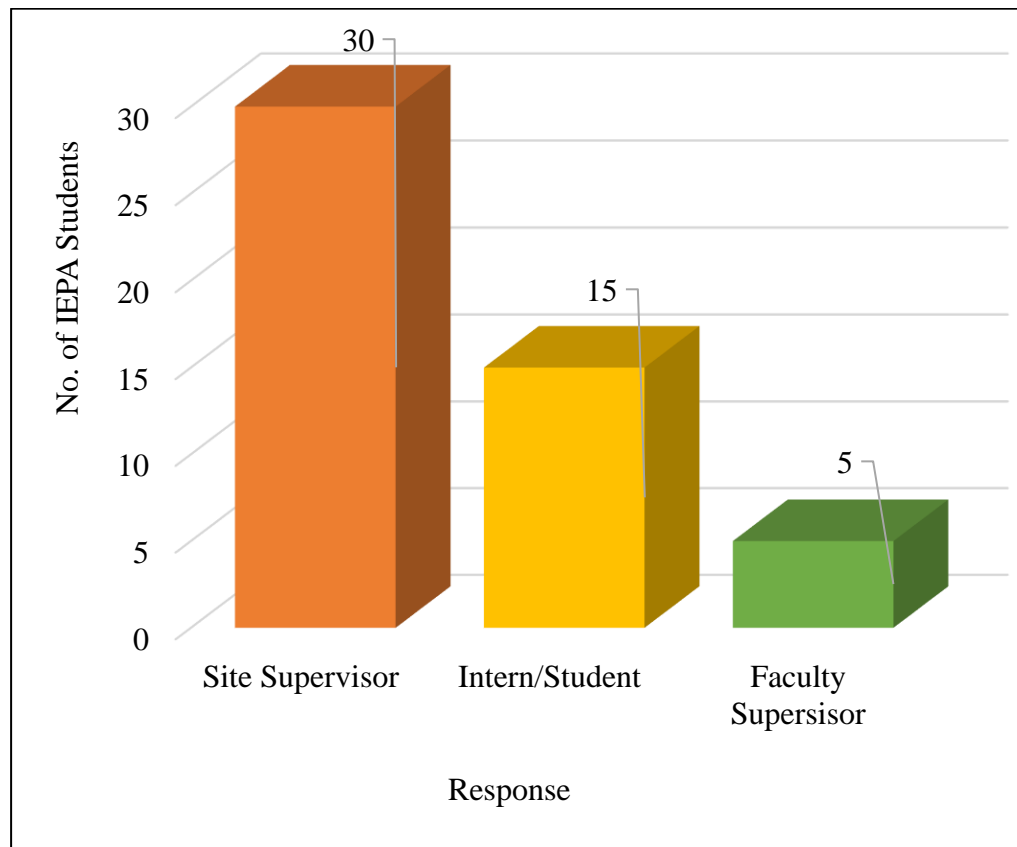

Figure 15: IEPA Students Responses to Who they Consider to be Primarily Responsible for their Learning During their Internship

Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Figure 15 shows that majority (60%, n=30) of the IEPA students believe that their site supervisors were responsible for their learning. This finding is

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consitent with the argument in the internship literature (for example Davis et al., 2005; Deschaine et al., 2017; Hurst & Good, 2010; Maertz et al., 2014; Muhamad et al., 2009) that, site supervisors should be responsible largely for the management of the entire internship experience. Thus, from setting goals and expectations at the onset, up to providing wrap-up feedback at the end of the internship experience. Indeed, site supervisors, by virtue of their special privilege position, must preferably ensure clear tasks, challenging assignments, ongoing feedback and exposure to different aspects of the work in order to encourage relevant learning (Rothman, 2007). This also means that, site supervisors must be equipped with the needed skills for them to function effectively.

Interestingly, the interview responses of some site supervisors suggested that they were largely responsible for what IEPA students learnt during their internship. For example, two site supervisors in their interview responses had this to say:

> Some of them (IEPA students) wait until you tell them to do … At times instead of them getting involved willingly in the things we do, they will not. As if they know everything… if not because I was committed to making sure that at least they acquire some basic skills before they leave, their presence here would have been less productive… (Site Supervisor 9).

> The last person who came here, I brought him close to me so I could expose him to certain things they are not privy to when they are in the general office. I even travelled with him, and he joined the meeting I attended. That was something I thought could help him instead of packing papers in the office …he was thinking I was stressing him but the reality is that I was rather helping him… With their second degree they can become

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Assistant Registrars so they need more practice but they appear

not to be ready themselves… (Site Supervisor 7).

These findings suggest that, perhaps, most IEPA students look up to their site supervisors largely for directions in terms of what, how and when to engage in activities that will help them develop their expertise.

5. In what ways have the internship experiences of IEPA students prepared them for their professional endeavours?

In order to explore how the internship experiences of IEPA students have prepared them for their professional endeavours, a Likert scale questionnaire item was developed (based on the literature) and used. The findings to this item are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: IEPA Students Responses to how their Internship Experiences have Prepared them for their Professional Endeavours

My internship experiences have helped me to:	Mean	SD	Decision
Improve my human relations skills	1.60	.606	Strongly Agreed
Improve my communication skills (i.e. written and oral)	1.84	.744	Agreed
Develop a strong work ethics (e.g. punctuality)	2.04	.546	Agreed
Improve my leadership skills	2.74	.720	Disagreed
develop teamwork skills	1.98	.622	Agreed
Improve my decision-making skills	2.65	.642	Disagreed
gain full and realistic view of the world-of-work (e.g. how administrative office is managed)	1.74	.664	Strongly Agreed
Create a strong link with professionals in my field of interest (networking)	2.02	.714	Agreed
Identify my profession-related knowledge gap(s) that need to be filled (e.g. professional development courses I needed)	1.58	.575	Strongly Agreed
Develop my expertise in performing general administrative duties (e.g. filing, writing minutes, memos and letters)	1.96	.727	Agreed
explore other career options	1.70	.678	Strongly Agreed

N=50   Note: SD=Standard Deviation.   Source: Field data, Adosi (2018)

Table 12 shows that, the IEPA students, generally, agreed to most of the statement regarding how their internship experiences have prepared them for their professional endeavours. For example, they strongly agreed that, they were able to improve both their human relation skills and communication skills. This is not surprising because of the findings that, most of them during their

internship were engaged in tasks such as: receiving, dispatching and managing letters; attending to guests and clients; preparing memos/letters/minutes; and planning and organising meetings/programmes (see Table 5). Similarly, most of the IEPA students, through their internship were able to: develop strong work ethics (e.g. punctuality); develop teamwork skills; gain full and realistic view of the world-of-work (e.g. how administrative office is managed); create a strong link with professionals in their field of interest; identify their profession-related knowledge gap(s) that needed to be filled (e.g. professional development courses they needed); develop their expertise in performing general administrative duties (e.g. filing, writing minutes, memos and letters); and explore other career options.

Unfortunately, however, the data in Table 12 also shows that, most of the IEPA students disagreed to the statement that they were equipped with decision-making skills and leadership skills through their internship experience. Based on this, it can be said that, most of them, possibly, were not adequately engaged in activities that could have helped them develop those skills. Therefore, those specific two findings suggest some form of gap in the knowledge, skills and expertise of the IEPA students (i.e. decision-making and leadership abilities).

On the same research question, insights from the qualitative data analysis relative to how the internship experiences of the IEPA students have prepared them for their professional endeavours show that, almost all of the site supervisors in their interview responses largely corroborated the views of the IEPA students (as seen in Table 12). The ensuing excerpts present the voices of two site supervisors talking about how the internship experience have prepared the IEPA students for the world of work:

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> *Yes, I can say from what they have been exposed to, in terms of the hands-on-work, if only they would put it into practice then I can say they are prepared to hold any administrative position ... the rest will be on the job learning which we all have not stop doing (Site Supervisor 1).*

> *Oh yes, they are very much resourced. At least they have gotten the basis ... I did not get this opportunity yet I was able to perform. So, for them, they are ok ... if they are not able to perform on their own, then I will be shock ... (Site Supervisor 2).*

Yet in another interview, one site supervisor was measured in his/her response. S/he noted that, even though the IEPA students may not have gotten much experience, they were better off. This is what s/he said:

> *... somehow what they have learnt here is ok to get them going. The issue is that we rush them through the things we teach them because of the time. They may not have gotten much experience here but all the same they can perform better than they came ... (Site Supervisor 9).*

Generally speaking, the views of the site supervisors did not differ from those of IEPA students themselves regarding how or the ways by which the internship experiences of IEPA students have prepared them for their professional endeavours.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study, key findings, conclusions and recommendations for policy making and professional practice. The suggestion for further research has also been presented in this chapter

Summary

The purpose of the study was to explore the internship experiences of the IEPA students. This was proposed against the backdrop of a dearth of empirical evidence concerning how the internship experiences of the IEPA students have prepared them for their professional endeavours. In all, understanding this and many other related issues relative to the internship experiences of the IEPA students is needful in helping the IEPA to, among other things, appreciate and or identify any lapses in the internship programme that may necessitate a possible review of the programme so as to ensure and assure the needed experiences for future interns. In pursuit of this research goal, the following five research questions were formulated to drive the study:

1. What are the internship goals of IEPA students?

2. How do IEPA students establish work identity during their internship?

3. What tasks are performed by IEPA students during their internship?

4. What learning strategies do IEPA students use during internship to develop their expertise as potential educational administrators and planners?

5. In what ways have the internship experiences of IEPA students prepared them for their professional endeavours?

Considering the nature of the phenomenon under investigation and the key actors (i.e. interns and their site supervisors) involved, the convergent parallel mixed methods design was adopted. The design was preferred since it did not only draw on the strength of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to enquiries but also ensured research triangulation. The study population comprised 56 IEPA students who completed their internship in Ghana during 2015/16 and 201617 academic year, and 12 internship site supervisors who have supervised at least two IEPA students within the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic year. The study adopted the census approach to research where all individuals in the study population were contacted for data for the study. In all, data was collected from 50 IEPA students and I2 internship site supervisors. The quantitative data derived from self-administered questionnaire was analysed using descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables, bar chart, pie charts, cross tabulation, mean and standard deviations to allow for statistical inferences.

This was complemented by the analysis of the qualitative data in the form of insights from semi-structured open-ended interviews with site supervisors of the IEPA students. The semi-structured interviews, were first coded and transcribed manually thereafter. The transcribed data was then cleaned by correcting errors in grammar without distorting the meanings. The data was subsequently categorised according to the five research questions posed and then extrapolated to avoid category overlap. The main findings that emerged from the analysis of all the data are summarised as key findings.

Key Findings

The key findings that have emerged from the analysis of data generated are organised directly along the line of the research questions posed.

1. **What are the internship goals of IEPA students?**

    The findings in relation to research question one show that:

    a. the three topmost internship goals of IEPA students are for them to: gain full and realistic view of how to effectively and efficiently organise and run an administrative office; advance their human relation skills with industry players (i.e. employers, employees and clients); and be equipped with expertise in recording and preserving office records (i.e. minutes, notices, letters, reports) respectively.

    b. the IEPA students do not, in most cases, discuss or review their internship goals with their site supervisors.

2. **How do IEPA students establish work identity during their internship?**

    Regarding research question 2, the analysis of data suggests that:

    a. majority (92%, n=42) of the IEPA students received some form of orientation/briefing from their host organisation prior to starting the internship. However, 37% (n=10+7) of the IEPA students felt that the orientation/briefing they received was not informative enough in terms of it helping them to establish strong work identity.

    b. the three topmost strategies that helped majority of the IEPA students to establish work identity were: taking initiative to perform extra duties; complying with the organisational rules, policies and procedures (e.g. punctuality); and demonstrating professionalism and or competence.

c. a slight majority (54%, n=27) of the IEPA students were to a high extent recognized by their co-workers.

3. **What tasks are performed by IEPA students during their internship?**
   The findings to research question three indicate that:

a. the four topmost tasks performed by most IEPA students during their internship are:

   ✓ receiving, dispatching and managing letters;

   ✓ attending to the needs of guests and clients who call on their office;

   ✓ preparing memos/letters/minutes; and

   ✓ planning and organising meetings/programmes respectively.

b. most of the IEPA students (84%, n=24+18) were frequently engaged in the tasks performed during their internship.

c. half of the IEPA students (50%, n=25) were engaged in tasks that were highly in line with their internship goals.

d. the 'more' the IEPA students were recognised by their co-workers, the 'more' they were engaged in tasks that were in line with their internship goals. Thus, the correlation analysis revealed that there was a positive linear relationship between interns' recognition and appropriateness of the type of tasks assigned to them.

e. majority (70%, n=22+11+2) of the IEPA students during their internship did not, see a link between their academic preparation (coursework) and the tasks they performed as educational administrators and planners.

4. **What learning strategies do IEPA students use during internship to develop their expertise as potential educational administrators and planners?**

The findings that emerged from the analyses relative to research question four indicate that:

a. majority of the IEPA students during their internship used learning strategies such as:

   ✓ tactically asking relevant career/job related questions from experience workers;

   ✓ observing diligently how co-workers execute their tasks; and

   ✓ seeking regular feedback from their site supervisor about their work output.

b. Overwhelming majority (90%, n=45) of the IEPA students did not consider looking for information from the internet to support their learning during their internship.

c. Most of the IEPA students were of the view that, based on their experience, the six-week duration of the internship programme was inadequate. This opinion was largely corroborated by the majority (67%, n=8 out of 12) of the internship site supervisors interviewed.

d. majority (60%, n=30) of the IEPA students believed that their site supervisors were responsible for their learning.

5. **In what ways have the internship experiences of IEPA students prepared them for their professional endeavours?**

Findings to research question five show that:

a. the majority of the IEPA students, through their internship experiences, have:

   ✓ improved their human relations skills;

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- ✓ improved their communication skills (i.e. written and oral);

- ✓ developed a strong work ethics (e.g. punctuality);

- ✓ developed their teamwork skills;

- ✓ gained full and realistic view of the world-of-work (e.g. how administrative office is managed);

- ✓ created a strong link with professional in their field of interest (networking)

- ✓ identified their profession-related knowledge gap(s) that needed to be filled (e.g. professional development courses they needed);

- ✓ developed their expertise in performing general administrative duties (e.g. filing, writing minutes, memos and letters); and

- ✓ explored other career options.

b. the majority of the IEPA students disagreed that their internship experiences helped them to enhance their leadership and decision-making skills.

Conclusions

In the light of the key findings of this research presented so far, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. the findings indicating that the three topmost internship goals of the IEPA students are for them to: gain full and realistic view of how to effectively and efficiently organise and run an administrative office; advance their human relation skills with industry players; and be equipped with expertise in recording and preserving office records are generally consistent, in many respects, with the best key administrative internship goals admonished in the internship literature. It can be

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concluded, also, that generally the IEPA students go to internship with clear sense of direction and purpose in terms of what is important to their professional career.

2. In light of the finding that generally the IEPA students did not discuss or review their internship goals with their site supervisors, it can be concluded that the internship experiences (daily engagement) of the IEPA students, perhaps, were not essentially driven by their internship goals.

3. In relation to the finding that showed that a significant number of the IEPA students felt the orientation/briefing they received from their host organisation was not all that informative, it can be concluded that, the strategies used by site supervisors in delivering the orientation/briefing were, perhaps, not effective and/or well-organised.

4. The finding that showed that a slight majority (54%, n=27) of the IEPA students were recognized as team members of their work unit/section by their co-workers to a high extent is invigorating. However, the flip side of this finding suggests that a significant number (46%, n=23) of the IEPA students were to some extent/not at all recognised. This means that they were not able to establish strong work identity. By extension, it can therefore be concluded that, generally, the IEPA perhaps is not doing enough to equip its students with effective strategies to establish strong work identity.

5. In relation to the findings that most IEPA students during their internship perform tasks such as: receiving, dispatching and managing letters; attending to the needs of guests and clients who call on their

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office; preparing memos/letters/minutes; and planning and organising meetings/programmes, it can be concluded that generally the site supervisors engaged the IEPA students in ways that resonate with their professional demands.

6. In respect of the finding which suggested that majority of the IEPA students (84%, n=24+18) were frequently engaged in the tasks that they performed, it can be concluded that, the internship site supervisors were committed to helping IEPA students develop their expertise in educational administration.

7. In view of the findings that there was a positive linear relationship between interns' recognition and appropriateness of the type of tasks assigned to them, it can be concluded that, generally, an intern's chances of being engaged in relevant tasks during internship is linked with the extent to which he/she is able to establish 'strong' work identity.

8. In the light of the finding which suggested that the majority of the IEPA students during their internship did not, to some extent, see a link between their academic preparation (coursework) and most of the tasks they performed as educational administrators and planners, it can be concluded that perhaps the IEPA's curriculum was not in tune with the needs of its clientele.

9. In line with the finding that showed that majority of the IEPA students and their site supervisors think that, based on their experience, the duration (six weeks) for the internship was inadequate, it can be concluded that the IEPA students, perhaps, were unable to achieve all their internship goals due to the short duration of their internship.

10. In the light of the finding that overwhelming majority (90%, n=45) of the IEPA students during their internship did not consider looking for information from the internet to support their learning, it can be concluded that, the IEPA students, perhaps, were not technologically inclined.

11. The findings indicating that the majority of the IEPA students, as a result of their internship experiences have, among other things, enhanced their human relation skills; communication; teamwork skills is a remarkable achievement for all the internship stakeholders. However, the admission by the majority of the IEPA students that their experiences did not helped them enhance their leadership and decision-making skills, leads to the conclusion that, most of the IEPA students were not adequately engaged by their site supervisors in activities that could have helped them to also develop their leadership and decision-making skills.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are put forth to promote the practicability of the research findings:

1. It is conclusive that IEPA students' internship goals are generally consistent, in many respects, with what is recommended for educational administrators and planners in the internship literature. However, based on the evidence that generally the IEPA students do not discuss or bring to the attention of their site supervisors their internship goals hence their experiences (daily engagement) are not essentially driven by their

internship goals, it is recommended that, the IEPA through its internship Coordinator should:

a. mandate students to submit their internship goals in written form;

b. together with the student review those internship goals to reflect largely their professional needs;

c. create a common communication platform (e.g. an Email thread, WhatsApp group chat) to include the student and the site supervisor, which will serve as a medium to review and discuss the internship goals together, with the aim of developing strategies to achieve the goals. This platform can also serve as a medium for monitoring, reporting and reviewing progress made. Feedback on the observations made throughout the internship can also be shared on this platform.

It is envisaged that this recommendation when implemented will give a clear sense of direction in terms of what specific activities site supervisors should engage interns in, so that interns can benefit more from the internship experience.

2. In relation to the finding that a significant number of the IEPA students felt the orientation/briefing they received from their host organisation was not all that informative which led to the conclusion that the strategies used by site supervisors in delivering the orientation/briefing were perhaps not effective and/or well-organised, it is recommended that, host organisations through site supervisors should, in addition to oral delivery of information during orientation/briefing session for

interns, prepare an orientation/brief (a leaflet) for interns. The orientation brief should contain relevant information such as the structure of the organisation, policies (both formal & informal), mission and vision statement, clientele, confidentiality issues, and job description of key staff (so that interns will know who to contact for different needs). This will serve as a reference to interns at all times.

3. Against the backdrop that, generally, the IEPA students were unable to successfully establish strong work identity, it is recommended that the IEPA should develop short courses for interns that is aimed at exposing them to effective human relation skills/techniques which will enable them to establish strong work identity. Also, host organisations through site supervisors should sensitise co-workers to accept interns (even in light of their inexperience) so as to promote a healthy relationship with the training institution (i.e. IEPA).

4. Based on the fact that majority of the IEPA students claimed they did not, to some extent, see a link between their academic preparation (coursework) and most of the tasks they performed, it is recommended that, IEPA should review its curriculum to include courses that will provide students with the needed knowledge in how to effectively and efficiently execute general administrative tasks in today's 21st century world.

5. In relation to the conclusion that the IEPA students were not adequately engaged by their site supervisors in activities that could have helped them to also develop their leadership and decision-making skills, it is recommended that, the IEPA in collaboration with site supervisors

should plan the internship experience in such a way that interns will be engaged in activities that will also help to enhance their leadership and decision-making skills. For instance, interns should be engaged in tasks that would require them to, among other things, gather and select information, find possible options and solutions, analyse possible options to find the best solution, and evaluate plans.

6. Regarding the insights from both IEPA students and site supervisors that the duration of the internship programme is short to make any remarkable gains, it is recommended that the IEPA revert to its formal duration (one semester) as prescribed in its brochure (University of Cape Coast, 2016).

Suggestion for Further Research

This research has given an insight into the internship experiences of IEPA students and have indicated the right steps stakeholders need to take going into the future to ensure and assure relevant internship experiences. Further studies is needed to evaluate IEPA's internship programme with the aim of bringing it up to speed with best standards across the globe.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Letter of Introduction from IEPA-UCC

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & OUTREACH
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

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16th April, 2018

Our Ref: EP/90.3/Vol.2

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……………………………………
……………………………………

Dear Sir/Madam

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter **Mr. Christopher Mensah Adosi** is an M.Phil student of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) of the University of Cape Coast. He requires some data/information from you/your outfit for the purpose of writing his thesis titled, **"Internship Experiences of Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) students of University of Cape Coast: Implication for Practice."** as a requirement for M.Phil Degree programme.

Kindly give the necessary assistance that **Mr. Adosi** requires to enable him gather the information he needs.

While anticipating your co-operation, we thank you for any help that you may be able to give him.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

Joseph N.A. Martin (Mr.)
PRINCIPAL ADMIN. ASSISTANT
For: **DIRECTOR**

APPENDIX B: Consent Forms for Participants of the Research

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
ADMINISTRATION
CONSENT FORM

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study to understand the internship experiences of Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) students of University of Cape Coast and its implication for practice. This research project is conducted by Christopher Mensah **Adosi**, a Master of Philosophy in Administration in Higher Education student of IEPA, UCC.

Explaining the research and its rationale

- This research instrument is designed to elicit information about the internship experiences of IEPA students.

- In particular, the researcher would like to gain understanding of what the internship goals of the IEPA students are, what they learn during internship, how they learn and how the internship experiences have prepared them for their professional endeavours.

- The researcher hopes this information will help IEPA to identify any gaps and/or lapses in the internship programme that may require revision or urgent attention.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

This study shall be anonymous – I will not be collecting or retaining any information about your identity. The records of this study shall be kept strictly confidential – the research records will be kept in a locked file, and all electronic information will be coded and secured using a password protected file stored in the clouds. I will not include any information in any report I may publish that would make it possible for you to be identified.

Your Rights as a research respondent/participant

The decision to participate in this study is entirely yours. You may refuse to take part in the study at any time. You have the right not to answer any single question, as well as to withdraw completely from the study at any point during the process. You also have the right to request that I should not use any of your responses in the research. You have the right to ask questions about the study

and to have those questions answered by me before, during and after the research. If you have further questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact me through this e-mail: christopher.adosi@stu.ucc.edu.gh or via mobile phone on 0246502881.

Consent

I have read and understood the information provided on this consent form, I certify that I am 18 years or older, and I indicate my willingness to voluntarily take part in this study.

Participant/Respondent: …………………………………………………

Date: ………………………… Signature: …………………………………

Researcher: Mr. Christopher Mensah Adosi

Date: ………………………… Signature: …………………………………

APPENDIX C: Self-Administered Questionnaire for the IEPA Students

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
ADMINISTRATION
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR IEPA STUDENTS

The study upon which this questionnaire is based aims primarily at exploring internship experiences of Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) students of University of Cape Coast, so as to inform practice. You are kindly requested to provide your candid response to the items.

SECTION ONE: YOUR DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
Please tick the appropriate boxes for items 1 - 3
1. Gender: Male [ ]   Female [ ]

2. PROGRAMME PURSUED
    M.Phil. (Administration in Higher Education)   [ ]
    M.Phil. (Educational Administration)   [ ]
    M.Phil. (Educational Planning)   [ ]
3. YEAR OF ENROLMENT

    2015/2016 [ ]   2016/2017 [ ]

4. PLACE OF INTERNSHIP *(Please state)*

    …………………………………………………………………………

5. LAST PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT *(Please state if any)*

    …………………………………………………………………...............

SECTION TWO: YOUR INTERNSHIP GOALS
6. Which of the following were your **major** internship goals? *(Please tick as many boxes as apply to you)*

My internship goal was to:	√
create a solid network with industry players for future benefits (i.e. employment)	
gain full and realistic view of how to effectively and efficiently organise and run an administrative office	
improve both my written and oral communication skills (e.g. pitching)	
advance my human relation skills with industry players (i.e. employers, employees and clients)	

| be equipped with expertise in recording and preserving office records (i.e. minutes, notices, letters, reports) | |

Any other *(please indicate)*

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION THREE: HOW YOU ESTABLISH WORK IDENTITY

7. Was your orientation/briefing (if any) informative enough to help you establish work identity?

   Yes [ ]   Maybe [ ]   No [ ]   No orientation/briefing [**]**

8. Which of these actions helped you **most** in establishing work identity thereby enhancing your learning opportunities throughout your internship? *(Please tick as many boxes as apply to you)*

Strategies	√
Making co-workers feel they have great expertise to learn from	
Establishing personal relationship with co-workers	
Showing initiative to perform extra duties	
Complying with the organisational rules, policies and procedures (e.g. punctuality)	
Demonstrating professionalism/competence	

Any other? (Please specify)

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9. To what extent did you feel recognised as a team member by co-workers in your unit(s)?

   To a High Extent **[ ]** To Some Extent **[ ]** To a Low Extent **[ ]** Not at All **[ ]**

SECTION FOUR: TASKS YOU PERFORMED DURING INTERNSHIP

10. Which of the following specific tasks did you perform **most** during your internship? *(Please tick as many boxes as apply to you)*

Tasks	√
Providing expert advice/ special initiatives	
Preparing memos/letters/minutes	
Doing research and analysis	
Attending to guests and clients	
Receiving, dispatching and managing letters	
Planning and organising meetings/programmes	
Representing the organisation/institution at events	

Any other? *(Please specify)*

…………………………………………………………….………………

……….……………………………………………………………………

11. How frequent were you engaged in the tasks indicated in **question 10?**
    Very frequently [ ]   Frequently [ ]   Rarely [ ] Very Rarely [ ]

12. In performing the tasks you selected in **question 10**, were you allowed to choose your own method to execute them?

    Yes [ ]   Sometimes [ ]   No [ ]

13. To what extent generally were the tasks you performed in line with your internship goals?

    To a High Extent [ ] To Some Extent [ ] To a Low Extent [ ] Not at All [ ]

14. To what extent was the tasks you performed during your internship aligned with your coursework?

    To a High Extent [ ] To Some Extent [ ] To a Low Extent [ ] Not at All [ ]

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SECTION FIVE: LEARNING STRATEGIES USED DURING INTERNSHIP

15. Who did you consider primarily responsible for your learning, during your internship?

    Site supervisor [ ]   Intern/student   [ ]   Faculty coordinator [ ]

16. Mostly when you do not know how to perform a task, what did you do?

    (Please tick as many as apply)

Strategies	√
I asked co-workers or site supervisor to teach me	
I sought information from available resource online (e.g. Google)	
I engaged in trial and error	
I sought information from documents available to me at the workplace	

Any other? (Please specify)

…………………………………………………………….………………

………………………………………………………………………………….

17. Please **tick (√)** the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your learning strategies during the internship. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree

I developed my expertise mostly through:	SA	A	D	SD
tactically asking relevant career/job related questions from experienced workers				
seeking regular feedback from my site supervisor/co-workers about my work output				
keeping a learning journal				
observing diligently how co-workers execute their tasks				

18. Please **tick (√)** the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the conditions under which you practised your learning strategies. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree

Condition	SA	A	D	SD
Maximum opportunity for learning was available to me				
My faculty supervisor made clear to me his/her expectations of me				
My faculty supervisor demonstrated high willingness to support my learning				
My site supervisor made clear to me his/her expectations of me as soon as I got there				
My site supervisor demonstrated high willingness to support my learning				
I demonstrated high predisposition for learning				
Co-workers shared their experiences with me				
There were adequate administrative facilities (i.e. workspace, computer, stationeries) to support my learning				
The duration for the internship programme was adequate				

SECTION SIX: HOW YOUR INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE HAVE PREPARED YOU FOR YOUR PROFESSIONAL ENDEAVOUR

19. Please **tick (√)** the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding how the internship experiences have prepared you for your professional endeavours. SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree

My internship experiences have helped me to:	SA	A	D	SD
improve my human relations skills				
improve my communication skills (i.e. written and oral)				
develop a strong work ethics (e.g. punctuality)				
Improve my leadership skills				
develope teamwork skills				
improve my decision-making skills				
gain full and realistic view of the world-of-work (e.g. how administrative office is managed)				
create a strong link with professionals in my field of interest (networking)				

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identify my profession-related knowledge gap(s) that needed to be filled (e.g. professional development courses I needed)				
develop my expertise in performing general administrative duties (e.g. filing, writing minutes, memos and letters)				
explore other career options				

20. With regard to opportunities to acquire the required practical educational administration experiences, would you recommend the same place you had your internship to future IEPA interns?

Yes [ ]   Maybe [ ]   No [ ]

21. Based on your internship experiences, what recommendations do you have for IEPA so as to improve her internship programme? (please state)

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Thank you for participating in this study.

APPENDIX D: Interview Guide for Internship Site Supervisors

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND
ADMINISTRATION
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INTERNSHIP SITE SUPERVISORS OF
IEPA STUDENTS

Research Topic

Internship experiences of Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) students of University of Cape Coast: Implication for practice

Explaining the Research and its Rationale

- The items in this interview guide are designed to provide understanding generally of the internship experiences of IEPA students from site supervisor's perspectives.

- In particular, the researcher would like to gain understanding of what IEPA students' goals of internship are, what they learn during internship, how they learn it and how the internship experiences have prepared them for their professional endeavours.

- The researcher hopes this information will help IEPA to identify any gaps and/or lapses in the internship programme that may require revision or urgent attention.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

- You do not have to talk about sensitive topics/issues if you are not comfortable. You can ask me to stop this interview at any point and I will not be offended.

- I can assure you that all information that I collect during this interview will be **confidential** and will not be shared with anyone.

- In case anything you say is quoted in the research report, your name or organisation will not be identified – you will remain completely **anonymous**.

- This interview will be recorded and transcribed. However, all of the information you provide will be kept in a secure place and only the researcher will be able to have access to them.

Consent

- I have a consent form that states everything that I have explained and it will ensure your confidentiality.

- Although I require you to sign your signature, this form will be kept in a secure place and not be used to identify you.

- Please do let me know if you have any questions and concerns regarding this interview or your rights as a research participant.

Ground rules

- Before we begin, I would like to assure you that this interview is not a test so there are no wrong answers and you will not be judged.

- The whole interview should last for about 20 minutes and I would like to record it, if that is okay with you.

- Please feel free to speak about your opinion, concerns and issues, even if you think they are negative.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you please tell me how long you have been at your current position?

2. Please, what are your roles and responsibilities?

3. How many IEPA internship students have you supervised?

4. Do IEPA internship students discuss/review their internship goals with you? *(Probing: if yes, what are some of them? if no, what do you think are the reasons?)*

5. Do you organise orientation/briefing for them? *(Probing: why?)*

6. What specific task do they perform during the internship?

7. Do you think they were prepared for the tasks? *(Probing: why do you say so?)*

8. In performing the tasks assigned to them, are they allowed to choose their own method to execute it? *(Probing: why?)*

9. When they do not know how to perform the tasks you assigned them, what do you do?

10. What learning opportunities do you make available for the IEPA students during the internship? *(i.e. Observation, trial and error, demonstrations, conversations, on-the-job training)*

11. Do IEPA students demonstrate high predisposition/tendency for learning? *(Probing: why do you say so?)*

12. Do you think their internship experience have prepared them for their professional endeavour? *(probing: specific skills and knowledge acquired)*

13. With the experience you have had with the IEPA students, do you think the six-weeks duration of the internship is adequate? *(Probing: why do you say so?)*

14. With your experience as a site supervisor, what advice do you have for future IEPA students regarding internship?

15. Is there anything about the internship experiences of the IEPA students I have not asked you that you think might be helpful or relevant?

Thank you for participating in this study.

APPENDIX E: Reliability Test Results

Item 16: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.763	.777	4

Item 17: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.824	.816	8

Item 19: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.859	.864	11