



AN OVERVIEW AND IMPACT OF THE FIELD ATTACHMENT ON PROSPECTED CAREERS OF THE UNIVERSITIES GRADUATES IN ZANZIBAR

THE CASE OF THE INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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1.0 Abstract

The paper aimed at understanding an overview and impact of the field attachment on graduate prospected careers in Zanzibar. The Institute of Public Administration (IPA) was used as a case study. The information was collected from firsthand, IPA as an academic institution and on the other hand, the House of Representatives, Zanzibar Bureau of Standard, and Madema Police Stations. Almost 26 students from IPA delivered information in the given questionnaires. The findings revealed that the Institute of Public Administration has unsatisfactory mechanisms on the field attachment. The policy does not guide IPA management and students on the proper ways of conducting the field attachment so that it will deliver students with skills and experience to use during their prospected careers. The study found that the field attachment policy does not define a clear purpose, or focus and the policy is not evaluative. The institutional management has not built a proper mechanism for following up with the students and their supervisors to assess their role during field attachment. There is no proper coordination framework that links students' fields of study and the host organizations that can allow information sharing considering field practice in terms of progress, assessment, and outcome. The students get little support from their academic institutions and the host organizations, as a result, they are not doing well in their field attachment. Lastly, it has been understood that the current situation of the field attachment in Zanzibar can not influence graduates' performance in their respective careers.

Key Words:

Field attachment, graduate's career,

2.1 Introduction and Background

While the role of higher education is to prepare students with knowledge and skills to handle their prospective careers, field attachment contributes significantly to achieving this goal. The mission of the field attachment is to impart practical skills and experience to students to make them professional in their respective careers (Njura, Kaberia, & Taaliu, 2020). It, in addition, modifies attitudes through integrated behaviors from mobs of the hosts' staff so that graduates can work with cultural diversities and different environments (Khumalo & Dewah, 2018). Students may be equipped with the confidence and abilities to attempt, think, and create new ideas to show in the real world their degrees' outcomes. Through skills and experiences, students can adapt to the working situation, and technologies to build their competencies and capacities during work (Baynit & Ngussa, 2021). Although the period of field attachment varied, depending on the level of education and particular curriculum, its sole purpose is to equip students with a broad vision of productivity in their prospective careers.

Besides, the four universities that are available in Zanzibar, other academic institutions provide various academic programs. From all these institutions, field attachment is essential for diploma and undergraduate students to take six to sixteen weeks respectively to learn by doing or observation. The role of universities and academic institutions is to pursue students in professional skills to endow them with address in social and economic challenges after engaging in formal work (Zguir, Dubis, & Koç, 2021). The universities in collaboration with other formal institutions coach students to translate theories into practice and students become adaptive to accommodate the working environment to meet the vision of the assigned careers. Field attachment in all academic institutions is essential, however, the challenge is how it is given its particular essentiality by both academic and host institutions.

In recent years, researchers and other literature discover the undesirable performance of the public servants in Zanzibar, whose majority are diploma and first-degree graduates (Hassan, 2018; Salim, 2020). The observable performance gap has increased concerns of researchers to explore the root causes of the existing situations. Their conclusions were mainly based on undesired working resources, low technologies, and poor accountability, although, the educational background has not been researched (Hemed, 2020). It is important to note that, employability is driven mainly by the level of education and in some cases, an experience which are determinants of working capacity (Okoye & Edokpolor, 2021). Universities as preparatory centers for working capacity have to use several approaches to make students willing to adapt to formal occupations in the future. Hence, in Zanzibar, field attachments in both universities and other academic institutions have been engaged to play this role. Academic institutions use to engage their students in formal organizations to learn and copy behavior, norms, and cultures from the professional staff and take their role mode as a base for working at their expected careers. Although, the law of induction is officially used to prepare graduates to be good public servants, however, experience from field attachment becomes a fundamental beginning of their careers (Nakelet, Prossy, Bernard, & Peter, 2018).

2.2 Problem Statement

Academic institutions play a significant role to shape students into productive resources (Saeed, Yousafzai, Yani-De-Soriano, & Muffatto, 2018). Students are expected to graduate with knowledge and skill and then be engaged to address the existing social and economic challenges. One of the common approaches to impart skills and experience to students is through field attachment. Field attachment is an essential step in which students are attached to organizations relevant to the field studies to get an equivalent best practice according to their specialization. The purpose of the field attachment is to equip students with enough skills and experience to work for their prospected careers. In recent days, many organizations, however, argue that graduates cannot deliver the expected services mainly because of low skills and experience, although, there certificates show to attend to the field attachment. This reason seemed obvious because many government and private organizations in Zanzibar have switched their recruitment criteria from grade point average (GPA) to experience only. After all, graduates lack the required skills for performance. It is from this point of view, this paper intends to explore an overview and impact of the field attachment to the prospected careers of the students.

3.0 Methodology

The study was conducted at the Institution of Public Administration as a case study of all academic institutions in Zanzibar. The study used qualitative approaches with 26 students with Bachelor's Degrees in International relations and Record Management. Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect overviews and the impact of the field attachment on prospected careers of the graduates. Data were thematically analyzed and SPSS programs were used to analyze descriptive data and present them in tables, graphs, and charts.

4.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1. Students Characteristics

Area	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Profession	International Relation	16	62
	Record Management	10	28
Total		26	100
Gender	Male	11	42
	Female	15	58
Total		26	100
Field Duration	8 weeks	10	28
	16 weeks	16	62
Total		26	100

Sources: Research, 2022

The above table show characteristics of the students who were in the field attachment. The majority 62% was a second year's Bachelor's Degree in International Relations, while 18%, were a second year's Diploma in Record and Archive Management. Males were 42% while females were 58%. Duration of their field attachment varied as per the guide lines of the respected modules as 16 weeks for the students of international relations and 8 weeks for record and archive management.

4.1 An Overview of Field Attachment in the Institute of Public Administration

We collected information about the student's perceptions of the field attachment in the institute. All students 100% were unlikely to satisfy with the field attachment policy of the institute. They provided two main reasons. On the firsthand, the field attachment policy is not suggestive. Any policy should guide action, and suggest priorities (Mukherjee, Coban, & Bali, 2021). The institute's policy for field attachment does not advise students about the proper organization to concede with their field of study which is one of the many challenges faced by students (Daviter, 2019). The majority of students are attached to organizations that are not relevant to their field of study. Out of 16 students with a bachelor's degree in International relations, 10 students were attached to domestic police stations. This organization is not related to the profession of international relations; hence, students hardly gain relevant skills that prepare them for their upcoming careers. See the quotation below:

“Our Institution does not provide us with help and advice during the application of the field attachment. Because we are applying ourselves, many organizations are refused; our institution does not provide any support. Instead, we are getting the organization, not of our choice”

Said one student among the nine

On the second hand, the policy is not preparatory. Any policy should emphasize preparation or plan before the takeoff of any proposed action (Howlett, 2018). Although, IPA calls for field orientation, however, the majority of students 19, which is equal to 73% complained about the orientation and do not have any help. The institute does not have a tentative guideline that suggests trained content to be provided to each category of the students as per students' fields of study during orientation. In addition, the field attachment policy is not evaluative which means that it does not determine the cost-benefit analysis of the field practice, as it was formally suggested (Howlett, 2018). Furthermore, the policy does not consider the appropriate supervisor during the allocation of the supervision. This means that the allocated supervisor does not have an impact to evaluate students. More than 15 students who were equal to 58%

complained of to lack of appropriate supervisors in their field of study. This circumstance has an impact because international relations students, for example, need supervisors from their field to suggest an appropriate methodology to get skills and best practices. See the quotation below:

"My supervisor did not guide me as appropriate about my academic issues, because he is not from my field of study. I don't know what he came to do right here..."

One of the fifteen students was complaining.

4.2 An Overview of Field Attachment in the Host Institutions

Our intention in this part was to understand how the host institutions consider the requests from the students who wish to go into the field. Three human resource officers were selected to share information with us and all of them stated to have the interest to receive students for field attachment. Although, they have four major concerns. The first concern; many students have a problem understanding their objectives for the field attachment. This is a challenge for the human resources officer to suggest an appropriate staff to mentor students in the field. Wrong supervision may provide inadequate results and the students will end up with fewer skills (Baynit & Ngussa, 2021). The second concern; students are not willing to abide by the code of conduct of the host institutions. They reluctantly abide by the organization's rules and regulations, dressing code, reporting time, and departing time, but also reluctantly interact with the organization's facilities. This is one reason for misunderstanding between organization management and students in the field (Mittelstadt, 2019). According to Bayit and Russia, (2021), this problem begins with the academic institution which fails to provide appropriate knowledge of public services to the students during orientation. The third concern relates to students' apprehension to lack assistance from their academic institutions to get an appropriate organization according to their field of study. This challenge has an impact on students, specifically when they link theories from the class with training materials in the field (Maunder, 2018). Students lack the position to relate knowledge and practice because of fielding with unsuitable organizations. Forth concern; the majority of students are slow copiers to the assigned tasks. Students may lack confidence only because they were not trained to have the confidence and creativity to provide new talents to the host institutions (Gauthier, 2019). Host institutions normally hope to get new things and expertise from students; however, the majority of students were likely to start a new class in the field. See the quotation below:

"Many students are slow learners, lacking the capacity to relate their lessons from their academic institution and what we give them here. Even if when we assign some tasks, they are slowly finishing. This normally happens when students lack guidelines to put their knowledge into practice."

The statement of the HR from the Zanzibar Bureau of Standard - ZBS

Coming back to the responses from the students, the majority 20 equal to 77% complained of lacking cooperation from staff in some host institutions specifically at the ministerial level. However, cooperation is much more attractive in the local government and private sectors. See the quotation below:

"We are either given too many tasks to do or we are given nothing at all, and in some time we may spend the whole week without anything to do"

The statement from one student among twenty at ZBS

The above quotation reveals the impact on the development of student skills development because working overload reduces motivation to learn (Mittal & Bhakar, 2018). Besides that quotation, other challenges that students face during field attachment include, mistrust in the host institutions. Out of 26 students, 25 which is equal to 96% were not involved in the organization tasks. This was obvious because one student from the House of Representatives complained. See the quotation below:

"We have been placed at the reception to welcome guests. Our limit is after having their seat"

The statement of one student among four

The above quotation indicates that students are not allowed to go further into the office. At this point, students can hardly learn to improve their skills, because they have been bounded to a specific point of interaction (Gershenson,

Hart, Hyman, Lindsay, & Papageorge, 2018). alternatively, the students may easily adapt to the working environment if they have enough interaction with the staff, working materials, and resources. See the statement below:

“A sole reason for this condition is confidentiality in the government offices”
“HRO complained”

Confidentiality in government offices is one of the big challenges which affect community involvement in Zanzibar (Ahmed & Wang, 2018). Confidentiality is everywhere and every time in Zanzibar organizations. Many students complained to be restricted to use the organization's materials or interacting with office materials.

4.3 Impact of field attachment to Prospected Careers of the Graduates

The target of higher education in Tanzania is to deliver graduates who are capable to contribute to social and economic development. After graduation, students are included in the list of experts, as universities graduate to play role in addressing social and economic challenges. Field attachment is one of the root causes of skills parturition because students get the best practice from the organizations (Wongnaa & Boachie, 2018). Many scholars, in addition, wrote their opinions on the importance of the field attachment to graduates' careers and the consequences if it does not take effect. The most important argument is that; an effective field attachment must make students who then become competent servants and road map to achieving national sustainable development goals.

Universities are bridges that ferry individuals from students to experts, hence, field attachment is the best catalyst. Academically, it is believed that field attachment empowers the students with the confidence to face global challenges, hence, taking it into less consideration may result in fearful experts with less production and not being able to be creative to move national development ahead (Maseka, 2020). In addition, field attachment with field trips, and study tours, prepare students with an understanding of the cultural variations and their implications to the aspects of social, political, and economic environments in certain geographical areas, but also able to analyze these variations in terms of the development of these aspects. University graduates will have a high contribution to the modification of socioeconomic development to compete with national and global interaction. Students from field experience will have deeper information about cultures, the social change and adopt measures to compete with these changes. All these benefits require field attachment which is collaborative and focused to achieve a specific goal in the life of students.

5.0 Conclusion

Based on the findings from students, human resources officers, and literature we finally conclude that the field attachment in most academic institutions is not clear, yet, the host organizations lack steering to drive students to achieve their goals. On the firsthand, field attachment in many institutions mostly lacks purpose. The Institute does not put into account the effectiveness of the field attachment in the developing skills and experiences of the fielders. For almost three to four years, there is no evaluation task has been conducted to conclude the performance of the field attachment to the achievement of the purpose. On the second hand, the institute still is not aware of using field attachment as a road map toward producing competitive graduates. The institute does not have an effective coordination framework that can link from the grass-root the students' field of study and relevant organizations. There is no proper follow-up to ensure proper internal and external supervision of the fielders. In addition, the institute does not have a communication framework that links the institute and the host organizations about field attachment and allows sharing of information about fielders their associated practice, and their progress.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings from primary and secondary sources, it has been found that field attachment is faced with mismanagement challenges in many institutions. However, this paper addressed the field attachment issues in the Institute of Public Administration. It is therefore recommended that extensive research must be taken for all all-academic institutions in Zanzibar to investigate policy issues, mechanisms, and the institution's awareness. Other recommendations are below:

The field attachment's policy of the Institute of the Public Administration should be reviewed to redefine the clear purpose, and sets of evaluation procedures to make it productive. The effectiveness of field attachment begins after the institute has a good policy and a good mechanism for implementation. This will help the institute to have a guideline to plan, coordinate, identify resources, and follow up on the field issues and implementation in the organizations.

The institute should set proper planning to ensure all students are imparted with field attachment knowledge and approaches and be encouraged to use them effectively for the whole period so that students may get benefits. Having much consideration on the field attachment, students may have the opportunity to learn and adapt to the working environment, culture, and skill to implement working principles as required. If this property happens, students will pass out with the skills and experience that will be implemented in their respective careers.

Efforts should be also taken to build host institutions' awareness of the field attachment. The result of these efforts will form a better relationship between the academic institution, host institutions, and the students as a result, students will have the benefit of learning through freedom of interaction with staff and materials.

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