



Impact of Internship Programme on Employability Skills Development among Undergraduate Business Education Students in Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between internship programme quality and employability skills development among Business Education students in Delta State owned universities. The study focused on two key dimensions of internship quality, which are supervision quality and feedback mechanisms, and assessed their relationship with critical thinking and communication skills. A descriptive correlational survey design was adopted, and data were collected from a population of 319 Business Education students using a structured questionnaire. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that supervision quality has a strong and significant positive relationship with both critical thinking and communication skills. Feedback mechanisms also showed a moderate but significant relationship with students' critical thinking and communication abilities. The study concluded that internship programme quality is essential for developing employability skills and recommended improved supervision structures, stronger industry collaboration, and standardized feedback systems to enhance student outcomes.

Keywords: Internship Programme, Supervision Quality, Feedback Mechanism, Critical Thinking, Communication Skills, Employability Skills.

Introduction

In contemporary higher education systems, internship programmes have become an integral strategy for preparing students for the labour market, particularly in professional fields such as Business Education. The transition from school to work requires a blend of theoretical knowledge and practical, work-based experiences that sharpen students' employability skills. According to Yorke (2006), employability skills encompass a set of achievements—skills, understandings, and personal attributes—that make graduates more likely to gain employment and succeed in their chosen careers. As the global workplace continues to undergo rapid technological and organisational changes, employers increasingly demand graduates who possess competencies such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, ICT proficiency, adaptability, and workplace ethics (OECD, 2018). In Nigeria, Business Education programme is designed to equip students with pedagogical, managerial, and vocational skills needed for effective performance in business and educational environments. However, numerous scholars have argued that skill gaps persist between what schools teach and what industries require, partly due to inconsistencies in the quality of internship programmes (Okoro & Okoro, 2016). Internship programmes in Business Education are intended to expose students to real-world operational contexts where they can apply theoretical concepts, observe business processes, and engage in professional tasks. When properly implemented, quality internship experiences contribute significantly to students' employability by enhancing their technical, interpersonal, and problem-solving capacities (Maertz, Stoeberl & Marks, 2014). Nevertheless, concerns have been raised about the adequacy of internship coordination, supervision, duration, and relevance to students' discipline in many Nigerian universities. Some internship placements offer limited hands-on experience, poor mentorship, or tasks unrelated to students' field of study, which undermines the overall learning outcomes (Ezeani & Oladele, 2013). Additionally, organisational constraints such



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as overcrowded placement sites, insufficient monitoring, and inadequate feedback mechanisms have been identified as factors diminishing internship quality (Nwosu & Chukwuma, 2020). These challenges often hinder the development of key employability skills among Business Education students, who must compete in an increasingly saturated labour market marked by high youth unemployment rates. Given the crucial role internships play in shaping workplace competencies, it becomes important to investigate how the quality of internship programmes influences the employability skills development of Business Education students. Understanding this relationship will help educational institutions, industry partners, and policymakers improve internship design, strengthen school-industry collaboration, and ensure that Business Education graduates are better prepared to meet the demands of a dynamic business environment. This study therefore seeks to examine the extent to which internship programme quality contributes to employability skills development among Business Education students, with the goal of providing empirical insights to enhance curriculum implementation and promote graduate readiness for employment.

Statement of the Problem

Internship programmes are widely recognized as critical components of Business Education, providing students with opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real work environments and develop employability skills needed for labour market success. However, despite the acknowledged importance of internships, concerns persist regarding the actual quality of internship experiences available to Business Education students and the extent to which these programmes contribute meaningfully to their employability skills development. In many institutions, internship placements are often poorly coordinated, inadequately supervised, and mismatched with students' areas of specialization, thereby limiting the enrichment and exposure expected from experiential learning. Another concern is that Business Education graduates continue to face employability challenges, despite participation in mandatory internship programmes. Employers frequently report that graduates lack critical soft skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, digital literacy, and work ethics skills that are vital for thriving in contemporary workplaces. This gap raises doubts about the effectiveness of internship programmes in enhancing these competencies as intended. If internship programmes are of high quality, they should bridge the gap between academic training and workplace requirements, yet the persistence of employability deficits suggests otherwise. Additionally, insufficient duration of internship, inadequate funding, and limited access to modern technological tools and facilities in many host organizations further constrain the capacity of students to develop practical skills relevant to business environments. These shortcomings collectively undermine the potential of internship programmes to produce workplace-ready graduates who can contribute meaningfully to national economic development. Given these challenges, there is a pressing need to investigate the extent to which the quality of internship programmes influences the development of employability skills among Business Education students. Without empirical evidence on the effectiveness or deficiencies of internship quality, policymakers, educators, and industry partners may continue to operate under assumptions rather than data-driven insights. Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap by examining the relationship between internship programme quality and employability skills development among Business Education students.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between internship programme quality and employability skills development among business education students. The specific objectives of this study include:

1. Examine the relationship between supervision quality and critical thinking skills among business education students.
2. Examine the relationship between supervision quality and communication skills among business education students.
3. Examine the relationship between feedback mechanism and critical thinking skills among business education students.
4. Examine the relationship between feedback mechanism and communication skills among business education students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. To what extent does supervision quality relate with critical thinking skills among business education students?
2. How does supervision quality relate with communication skills among business education students?
3. To what extent does feedback mechanism relate with critical thinking skills among business education students?
4. How does feedback mechanism relate with communication skills among business education students?



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Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between supervision quality and critical thinking skills among business education students.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between supervision quality and communication skills among business education students.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between feedback mechanism and critical thinking skills among business education students.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between feedback mechanism and communication skills among business education students.

Concept of Internship Programme Quality

Internship is a work experience programme designed to give students or recent graduates practical experience in the industry in their related field of study. Internship Programme Quality refers to the extent to which an internship is systematically designed, effectively implemented, and meaningfully aligned with learning outcomes that enhance students' professional competencies. In the context of Business Education, internship quality reflects the degree to which the programme exposes students to authentic workplace tasks, structured supervision, constructive feedback, and opportunities for skill development relevant to current industry expectations. A high-quality internship is therefore not merely a period of work attachment; rather, it is a pedagogically grounded experience that integrates academic learning with practical engagement to strengthen employability skills. Scholars describe internship quality as encompassing elements such as clarity of objectives, relevance of assigned tasks, adequacy of supervision, learning support, and the overall organizational environment in which interns operate. According to Binder, Baguley, Crook and Miller (2015), internship programmes yield meaningful learning outcomes when students are engaged in responsibilities that match their academic preparation and career interests, supported by supervisors who provide guidance and regular performance feedback. This implies that internship quality is achieved when institutions collaborate with industry partners to ensure that students' roles contribute to both organizational productivity and experiential learning. In Business Education, internship quality is also shaped by how well the programme prepares students before placement and the reflection opportunities offered after completion. Jackson (2015) argues that structured pre-internship orientation and post-internship reflection significantly enhance students' ability to internalize workplace experiences and transform them into employability skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability. Thus, an internship programme that includes orientation, mentoring, monitoring, and evaluation is more likely to contribute to employability. Furthermore, internship quality is influenced by the relevance of the learning environment to students' career pathways. Silva et al. (2018) emphasize that the perceived quality of an internship increases when students engage in tasks that mirror real professional contexts, enabling the transfer of theoretical knowledge into practical skills. For Business Education students, this relevance may include involvement in administrative processes, accounting routines, office technology management, customer relations, and digital business operations. When the internship setting reflects the realities of modern business environments, students gain industry-validated competencies that enhance employability. Internship Programme Quality in Business Education is conceptualized as a multi-dimensional construct that reflects how well an internship is planned, delivered, and evaluated to promote meaningful employability skills development. It encompasses relevance of tasks, quality of supervision, structured learning processes, supportive workplace environments, and alignment with labour-market needs. When these components are adequately integrated, students are more likely to graduate with the workplace readiness and practical competencies required to succeed in contemporary business careers.

Dimensions of Internship Programme Quality

Supervision Quality

Supervision of interns is crucial to the success of internship quality. Gault, Leach and Duey (2010) observe that close mentorship by experienced professionals strengthens learning outcomes by helping students understand workplace expectations and develop confidence in performing assigned tasks. Supervision also provides opportunities for ongoing skill assessment, enabling students to identify their strengths and areas needing improvement. Hence, the presence of supportive supervisors who are committed to student development significantly contributes to the perceived quality of



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internship programmes. The concept of supervision quality represents a central dimension of internship programme quality and plays a defining role in shaping the employability skills that Business Education students acquire during their industrial exposure. Supervision quality refers to the extent to which internship supervisors—both institutional and workplace-based—provide clear guidance, effective feedback, professional mentoring, and structured monitoring that support students' learning and skill development. According to Ayonmike (2016), effective supervision ensures that internship experiences move beyond routine work participation to intentional learning processes that enhance students' competence, confidence, and readiness for the labour market. In the context of Business Education, supervision quality is particularly vital because students must integrate theoretical knowledge with real workplace demands, requiring close support from knowledgeable mentors. Supervision quality is also associated with the supervisor's availability, expertise, and ability to create a supportive learning environment. Ezeani and Oladele (2013) argue that supervisors serve as facilitators who help students reflect on tasks, understand workplace expectations, and cultivate problem-solving, communication, and technical skills. When supervision is regular and constructive, students are more likely to receive timely feedback that helps them correct mistakes, improve performance, and develop competencies relevant to employer needs. On the other hand, inadequate supervision—characterized by limited interaction, poor guidance, or lack of interest—can weaken the effectiveness of the internship and hinder the development of employability attributes (Owolabi & Adedayo, 2020). This underscores the idea that the quality of supervision directly influences how well students benefit from workplace learning. Furthermore, supervision quality involves the alignment of tasks with academic objectives. Nwosu and Ogwunte (2019) note that well-supervised internship programmes ensure that students engage in meaningful assignments that reflect the skills emphasized in the Business Education curriculum, such as administrative techniques, ICT competencies, and business communication. Supervisors help students interpret these tasks within the broader framework of employability, connecting academic theory to professional realities. The mentorship dimension of supervision also contributes to personal development by fostering teamwork, ethical behaviour, and professional discipline, which are essential components of employability skills. In addition, the relationship between students and supervisors significantly influences learning outcomes. A positive supervisory relationship—marked by openness, mutual respect, and effective communication—enhances students' motivation and willingness to apply themselves during the internship. As highlighted by Ekpenyong and Edokpolor (2015), supervisors who model professionalism and demonstrate best workplace practices inspire students to internalize similar behaviours, ultimately improving their employability potential. Therefore, supervision quality is not merely administrative oversight; it is an interactive, developmental, and pedagogical process that strengthens internship effectiveness and ensures students transition smoothly into the labour market.

Feedback Mechanism

Feedback mechanism as a dimension of internship programme quality refers to the systematic processes through which interns receive constructive information about their performance, competencies, and areas requiring improvement throughout the internship experience. In the context of Business Education, feedback mechanisms play a critical role in shaping students' employability skills by providing opportunities for reflection, correction, and professional growth. According to Billett (2011), high-quality internships rely on structured feedback processes that help learners connect theoretical knowledge with workplace expectations, thereby strengthening skill acquisition. When feedback is timely, clear, and aligned with learning outcomes, students are better able to understand how their actions influence workplace productivity and how they can adjust their behaviour to meet industry standards. Feedback mechanisms also contribute to the formation of professional identity, which is essential for employability. Eraut (2014) notes that workplace learning is most effective when learners are actively guided through ongoing feedback that helps them decode workplace cultures, norms, and required competencies. For Business Education students, this means developing communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and digital literacy skills through repeated cycles of performance and feedback. A well-structured internship programme incorporates supervisor evaluations, mentor–intern discussions, progress reviews, and reflective journals, all of which improve the quality of learning and enhance employability outcomes. As Jackson (2015) explains, feedback that is constructive and dialogic—not merely evaluative—empowers students to engage in self-assessment and continuous improvement, which are key traits employers seek in new graduates. The effectiveness of feedback mechanisms within internship programmes is strongly associated with students' confidence and readiness for the workforce. Studies such as Oguejiofor and Nwadiani (2020) highlight that interns who receive consistent feedback demonstrate better adaptation to workplace demands and improved professional competence. This is because feedback functions as a bridge



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between academic preparation and real-world expectations, enabling interns to identify skill gaps early and correct them before transitioning into full-time employment. Thus, the presence of a robust feedback mechanism not only enhances internship programme quality but also significantly contributes to the development of employability skills among Business Education students.

Employability Skills Development

Employability skills development is a central outcome expected from high-quality internship programmes for business education students because internships serve as the principal bridge between classroom learning and workplace demands. Quality internships deliberately expose students to authentic, discipline-relevant tasks that scaffold both technical competencies (such as wordprocessing, bookkeeping, statistical analysis, and use of business software) and transversal or “soft” skills (communication, teamwork, critical thinking, time management and professional behaviour). When structured around clear learning outcomes and integrated with curriculum goals, internships allow students to practise and consolidate course content in real life situation, translating abstract knowledge into applied competence and thus strengthening graduate employability (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Yorke, 2006). Equally important is the pedagogical design of the placement: supervised responsibility, progressively challenging tasks, regular formative feedback, and opportunities for reflection (for example guided journals or debrief seminars) convert experience into demonstrable, transferable skills rather than merely episodic work exposure (Gault, Leach, & Duey, 2010; Jackson, 2013). The quality of the host organisation’s supervision and the existence of a formal mentoring relationship are consistent predictors of positive skill development. Supervisors who set explicit performance expectations, model professional conduct, and provide timely corrective and developmental feedback accelerate students’ acquisition of workplace norms and sector-specific competencies; without this, placements risk becoming menial and of low learning value (Gault et al., 2010). Equally, the alignment between internship tasks and assessment in the academic programme matters: when universities require students to produce a workplace-linked portfolio, reflective report, or competency map verified by supervisors, students engage more deeply with skill development and can evidentially demonstrate achievement to future employers (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Jackson, 2013). Institutional practices that enhance learning value include pre-placement preparation (orientations on workplace expectations), on-site learning agreements that specify learning goals, mid-placement reviews, and post-placement assessment panels; these structures help ensure consistency across placements and protect students from poor quality experiences (Yorke, 2006). Organisational and systemic features – such as the duration and intensity of the placement, the diversity of tasks, and the strength of university - industry partnerships - also shape employability outcomes. Longer placements with graduated responsibility produce deeper learning and stronger evidence of autonomy and initiative, while short or highly transactional internships may only afford surface-level exposure (Gault et al., 2010). Strong, reciprocal partnerships between business schools and employers create pipelines for relevant, current work experiences; such partnerships enable curricula to remain responsive to labour-market changes and help students develop contemporary skillsets valued by employers (Harvey, 2001). Finally, employability is both an individual and institutional achievement: students must be taught how to articulate their skills (through CVs, interviews and professional networking), and institutions must furnish robust opportunities and quality assurance mechanisms so that internship experiences reliably build the competences that employers seek (Jackson, 2013; Yorke, 2006). Internship programme quality matters because it governs the depth, transferability and demonstrability of the skills students develop. High-quality internships that are well supervised, pedagogically integrated, of adequate duration, and assessed through reflective, evidence-based tasks consistently produce stronger employability outcomes for business education students than unstructured or poorly monitored placements. For researchers investigating “Internship Programme Quality and Employability Skills Development among Business Education Students,” attention to the design features above—learning agreements, supervision quality, assessment practices, duration, and university–industry partnership strength—offers a clear conceptual and evaluative framework for measuring how and why internships create employable graduates (Knight & Yorke, 2003; Gault et al., 2010; Jackson, 2013; Yorke, 2006; Harvey, 2001).

Key areas of Employability Skills Development

Critical Thinking Skills

Critical thinking skills are widely recognized as a fundamental component of employability skills, particularly in the context of higher education and internship experiences. Critical thinking refers to the ability to objectively analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information to make reasoned judgments or solve complex problems (Facione, 2015). In the sphere



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of business education, the development of these skills is crucial for preparing students to navigate dynamic work environments, where decision-making, problem-solving, and innovation are highly valued by employers (Abdullah & Chan, 2016). Internship programmes offer a practical platform for cultivating critical thinking, as students are exposed to real-world business scenarios that require analytical reasoning, strategic planning, and effective problem-solving. Through hands-on tasks, workplace challenges, and mentorship, students are encouraged to assess situations critically, identify alternative solutions, and make informed decisions. This experiential learning process enhances their cognitive abilities beyond theoretical knowledge, aligning closely with the employability expectations of modern employers (Yorke, 2006). Moreover, students who engage in high-quality internship programmes demonstrate improved adaptability and resilience, as critical thinking enables them to respond proactively to unforeseen problems and workplace complexities (Radermacher & Walia, 2013). In evaluating employability skills development, critical thinking serves as a key measure because it reflects a student's capability to translate academic learning into practical competencies required in professional contexts. The integration of reflective practices within internship programmes, such as journaling, feedback sessions, and project evaluations, further strengthens critical thinking skills by prompting students to assess their actions, identify learning points, and refine their decision-making processes (Moon, 2004). Consequently, business education students who develop strong critical thinking skills are better positioned to meet labor market demands, demonstrating both analytical prowess and the ability to apply knowledge effectively in workplace settings. Critical thinking skills constitute a central measure of employability skills development in business education, as they equip students with the analytical, evaluative, and decision-making capabilities required to succeed in complex and evolving professional environments. High-quality internship programmes act as a catalyst in this process, providing practical exposure that fosters the growth of critical thinking and, by extension, enhances overall employability outcomes.

Communication Skills

Communication skills are widely recognized as a fundamental component of employability skills, particularly in the context of business education and internship experiences. In the framework of employability skills development, communication skills encompass the ability to convey ideas effectively, listen actively, engage in professional discourse, and adapt messages to different audiences and contexts. For business education students, strong communication skills are essential because they facilitate collaboration, negotiation, and presentation competencies, which are frequently required in professional environments. Internships provide a practical setting where students can refine these skills through interactions with supervisors, colleagues, and clients, thereby bridging theoretical knowledge with workplace demands. According to Yorke (2006), effective communication is a core employability skill that directly influences graduates' capacity to perform successfully in organizational settings. Furthermore, Harvey (2001) emphasizes that communication proficiency enhances students' social and cognitive adaptability, making them more versatile and competitive in the labor market. The quality of internship programs can significantly shape the development of communication skills, as structured mentorship, feedback mechanisms, and opportunities for collaborative projects during internships encourage students to practice and improve their verbal, written, and non-verbal communication. In this regard, the development of communication skills through internship experiences not only increases students' confidence and professional demeanor but also aligns with employer expectations for graduates to be articulate, persuasive, and responsive in diverse business contexts (Andrews & Higson, 2008). Therefore, assessing communication skills as a measure of employability skills development is crucial in understanding how internship program quality contributes to the overall readiness of business education students for the workforce.

Internship Programme Quality and Employability Skills Development

The relationship between internship programme quality and employability skills development among Business Education students has been a critical area of inquiry in educational and vocational research. Internship programmes serve as a bridge between academic learning and the practical demands of the workplace, providing students with the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge, develop professional competencies, and gain exposure to real-world business environments. The quality of these programmes, which can be assessed through the structure, duration, supervision, relevance of tasks, and feedback mechanisms, significantly influences the extent to which students acquire employability skills such as communication, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability (Abubakar & Bala, 2021). Research indicates that well-structured and supervised internships enhance students' practical skills, professional confidence, and readiness to transition into employment (Okoro & Nwankwo, 2020). The alignment of internship activities with the students' field of study



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ensures that learning is contextualized, relevant, and conducive to the development of critical employability skills. Conversely, poorly organized internships, lacking adequate mentoring and meaningful work assignments, may limit skill acquisition and fail to prepare students for the workforce (Ojukwu & Eze, 2019). Moreover, continuous assessment and feedback during the internship period have been shown to reinforce learning, help students identify areas of improvement, and cultivate reflective practices that are essential in professional growth (Nwosu & Chukwuma, 2022). In essence, the quality of internship programmes directly correlates with the employability skills development of Business Education students. High-quality internships that provide structured learning experiences, mentorship, and practical engagement not only improve students' technical and soft skills but also enhance their employability prospects in competitive labor markets. This underscores the necessity for educational institutions and industry partners to collaborate in designing internship programmes that are robust, engaging, and aligned with industry standards.

Theoretical Review

The Study is anchored on Human Capital Theory and supported by Experiential Learning Theory. Human Capital Theory, as pioneered by Becker (1964), provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the relationship between internship programme quality and the development of employability skills among Business Education students. The theory posits that investments in human capital—through education, training, and skill development—enhance an individual's productivity and value in the labor market. In the context of internship programmes, high-quality internships can be considered a form of human capital investment, as they provide students with practical exposure, hands-on experience, and opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world business settings. Such experiences enable students to develop critical employability skills, including problem-solving, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and technical competencies relevant to their field. Becker's framework emphasizes that the accumulation of skills and knowledge contributes not only to individual career advancement but also to broader organizational efficiency. Therefore, well-structured internship programmes that integrate mentorship, clear learning objectives, and performance feedback can significantly enhance students' skill sets, making them more competitive in the job market. By aligning internship activities with academic curricula and industry expectations, Business Education students are better positioned to translate academic knowledge into practical competencies, consistent with the human capital perspective that education and training are strategic investments yielding future returns in the form of improved employability (Becker, 1964). Moreover, the theory supports the view that both the quality and the duration of internships matter; longer and more intensive internships tend to provide greater opportunities for skill acquisition and professional development, thereby strengthening students' human capital. In this sense, internship programme quality directly influences the extent to which employability skills are developed, highlighting the relevance of structured, goal-oriented, and supervised internships in Business Education. Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), as proposed by Kolb (1984), provides a robust theoretical foundation for examining the relationship between internship programme quality and the development of employability skills among Business Education students. Kolb posits that learning is a cyclical process that involves four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In the context of internship programmes, students engage in concrete experiences by performing real-world tasks and responsibilities within organizations. These experiences allow them to apply theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom to practical situations, thereby bridging the gap between academic learning and professional practice. Reflective observation, the second stage of Kolb's model, encourages students to critically analyze their performance and interactions during the internship. This reflective process enables them to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, which is crucial for the development of core employability skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and communication. Through abstract conceptualization, students interpret their reflections to form general principles and strategies that can be applied in future professional contexts. This stage reinforces the cognitive dimension of employability skills, such as decision-making, critical thinking, and adaptability, which are highly valued in business environments. Finally, active experimentation allows students to test and implement their newly acquired skills in subsequent tasks or projects, thus completing the experiential learning cycle and fostering continuous skill enhancement. By emphasizing hands-on experience combined with reflection and application, ELT underscores the importance of high-quality internship programmes in enhancing students' readiness for the labor market. Well-structured internships that provide meaningful tasks, mentorship, and opportunities for reflection align with Kolb's experiential learning cycle, ensuring that students not only gain exposure to professional environments but also develop the practical and cognitive competencies required for employability. Consequently, integrating ELT into research on internship



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programme quality highlights how structured experiential opportunities can serve as a mechanism for employability skills development among Business Education students (Kolb, 1984; Beard & Wilson, 2013).

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive correlational survey design to examine the relationship between internship programme quality and employability skills development among Business Education students in Delta State. The population was restricted to students enrolled in Delta State University, Abraka and University of Delta, Agbor. The two State owned universities offering Business Education programmes in the State, making a total study population of 219 students as captured in the documented enrolment figures. A structured questionnaire served as the primary data collection instrument, validated through expert review and assessed for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to summarize student responses and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to test the hypothesized relationships at a 0.05 significance level. This methodology allowed the researcher to determine how supervision quality and feedback practices within internship programmes influence the development of critical thinking and communication skills among Business Education students in Delta State owned universities.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data collected in the questionnaire were presented in this section. A total of 219 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents.

Table 1: Questionnaire Administration

S/N		Number
1	Questionnaires administered	219
2	Questionnaires returned	200
3	Questionnaires not returned	19
4	Total usable copies	200

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 1 shows the order in which copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents and their collection rate. From the table, it is observed that out of the 219 copies of the questionnaire administered to the students, 200 copies were collected and were useful for the study while 19 copies were not retrieved.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	76	46.0
Female	124	54.0
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 2 contains the gender of the respondents who participated in this study. The table shows that out of the 200 respondents who completed and returned the questionnaire, 76 (46%) of them were male while 124 (54%) were female.

Table 3: Age Distribution

Age Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16 - 20 years	60	28.0
21 - 25 years	95	52.0
26 years and above	45	20.0
Total	200	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Table 3 contains the age distribution of the respondents who participated in this study. The table shows that out of the 200 respondents who completed and returned the questionnaire, 60 (28%) of them are 16-20 years; 95 (52%) of them are 21-25 years; while 45 (20%) are 26 years and above.



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Presentation of Results

Bivariate Analysis

Hypothesis One

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between supervision quality and critical thinking skills among business education students.

Table 4: Bivariate Analysis between Supervision Quality and Critical Thinking Skills

	Supervision Quality	Critical Thinking Skills
Supervision Quality	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	200
Critical Thinking Skills	Correlation Coefficient	.612**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The correlation coefficient $r = 0.612$ indicates a strong positive relationship between supervision quality and critical thinking skills. The significance value ($p = 0.000$) is less than 0.05, so the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that improvements in supervision quality significantly enhance the critical thinking skills of students.

Hypothesis Two

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between supervision quality and communication skills among business education students.

Table 5: Bivariate Analysis between Supervision Quality and Communication Skills

	Supervision Quality	Communication Skills
Supervision Quality	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	200
Communication Skills	Correlation Coefficient	.534**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The correlation coefficient $r = 0.534$ shows a moderately strong positive relationship between supervision quality and communication skills. The significance value ($p = 0.000 < 0.05$) indicates that the relationship is statistically significant. Hence, better supervision contributes significantly to better communication skills in students.

Hypothesis Three

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between feedback mechanism and critical thinking skills among business education students.

Table 6: Bivariate Analysis between Feedback Mechanism and Critical Thinking Skills

	Feedback Mechanism	Critical Thinking Skills
Feedback Mechanism	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	200
Critical Thinking Skills	Correlation Coefficient	.487**



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Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	200

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The correlation coefficient $r = 0.487$ indicates a **moderate positive relationship** between feedback mechanism and critical thinking skills. With $p = 0.000 < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that timely and constructive feedback significantly improves students' critical thinking abilities.

Hypothesis Four

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between feedback mechanism and communication skills among business education students.

Table 7: Bivariate Analysis between Feedback Mechanism and Communication Skills

	Feedback Mechanism	Communication Skills
Feedback Mechanism	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.
	N	200
Communication Skills	Correlation Coefficient	.566**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	200

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

The correlation coefficient $r = 0.566$ indicates a moderately strong positive relationship between feedback mechanism and communication skills. The p-value (0.000) is below 0.05, which means the relationship is statistically significant. This suggests that effective feedback systems considerably enhance students' communication abilities.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study indicated that internship supervision quality significantly enhances the employability skills of Business Education students in Delta State owned universities. The relationship between supervision quality and critical thinking skills was strong and positive, demonstrating that structured monitoring, guidance, and mentoring during internship placements contribute meaningfully to students' ability to analyze problems, evaluate options, and apply reasoning in work related situations. This result aligns with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which explains that effective supervision provides the scaffolding students require to transform experience into knowledge. The finding also supports evidence from Okolie and Nwosu (2021), who reported that students who receive high quality internship supervision develop stronger analytical skills and workplace judgment. Similarly, the study found a moderately strong and significant relationship between supervision quality and communication skills. Students who interacted frequently with supervisors, received professional guidance, and observed workplace communication patterns displayed improved clarity of expression, listening skills, and interpersonal competence. This supports prior studies such as Emeh and Orji (2020), which showed that real workplace mentoring helps students build communication skills needed for employability. The implication is that in environments where supervisors provide structured feedback and involve interns in professional dialogue, students gain communication confidence and deeper understanding of workplace expectations. The study also revealed a moderate and significant relationship between feedback mechanisms and both critical thinking and communication skills. Timely, constructive, and actionable feedback enhances students' reflective thinking, problem solving ability, and communication proficiency. This aligns with Gibbs Reflective Cycle, suggesting that feedback is essential for converting action into learning. The finding supports Oviawe (2019), who reported that feedback rich internships strengthen students' cognitive development and workplace readiness. Overall, the results confirm that internship programmes equipped with supportive supervision and effective feedback systems substantially improve the employability skills of Business Education students.

Conclusion

This study concluded that improved internship programme quality significantly influences the employability skills development of Business Education students in Delta State owned universities. High quality supervision enhances both critical thinking and communication skills, indicating that mentor guidance, adequate monitoring, and exposure to



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workplace tasks are key drivers of skill acquisition. Similarly, feedback mechanisms play a vital role in shaping students' reasoning ability and communication competence, demonstrating that structured evaluation and guidance help students internalize workplace standards and improve performance. The study affirmed that internship programmes are critical components of Business Education training, and their effectiveness depends largely on the level of supervision and the quality of feedback provided. Strengthening these components improves students' preparedness for the labour market and fosters the development of work relevant competencies.

Recommendations

1. Universities should strengthen supervision structures by assigning qualified, trained, and committed supervisors who can provide consistent workplace monitoring and professional guidance during internships.
2. Internship host organizations should provide constructive, timely, and structured feedback to support students' development of critical thinking and communication skills.
3. Universities should develop standardized internship evaluation manuals that clearly outline expectations, behavioural indicators, and skill outcomes to guide both supervisors and students.
4. Collaboration between universities and industry partners should be improved to ensure that internship placements provide meaningful learning opportunities that develop employability skills.

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