



*Student
Attachment
Experience Survey
Report*

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Introduction

Industrial Psychology Consultants (IPC) carried out a survey to evaluate the attachment experience of students in Zimbabwean universities. The aim of the survey was to identify the relevance, advantages and disadvantages of industrial attachment as part of the curriculum of the universities in Zimbabwe from the students' perspective. This survey contains a total of four hundred and eighty seven (487) participants who studied at universities all over Zimbabwe.

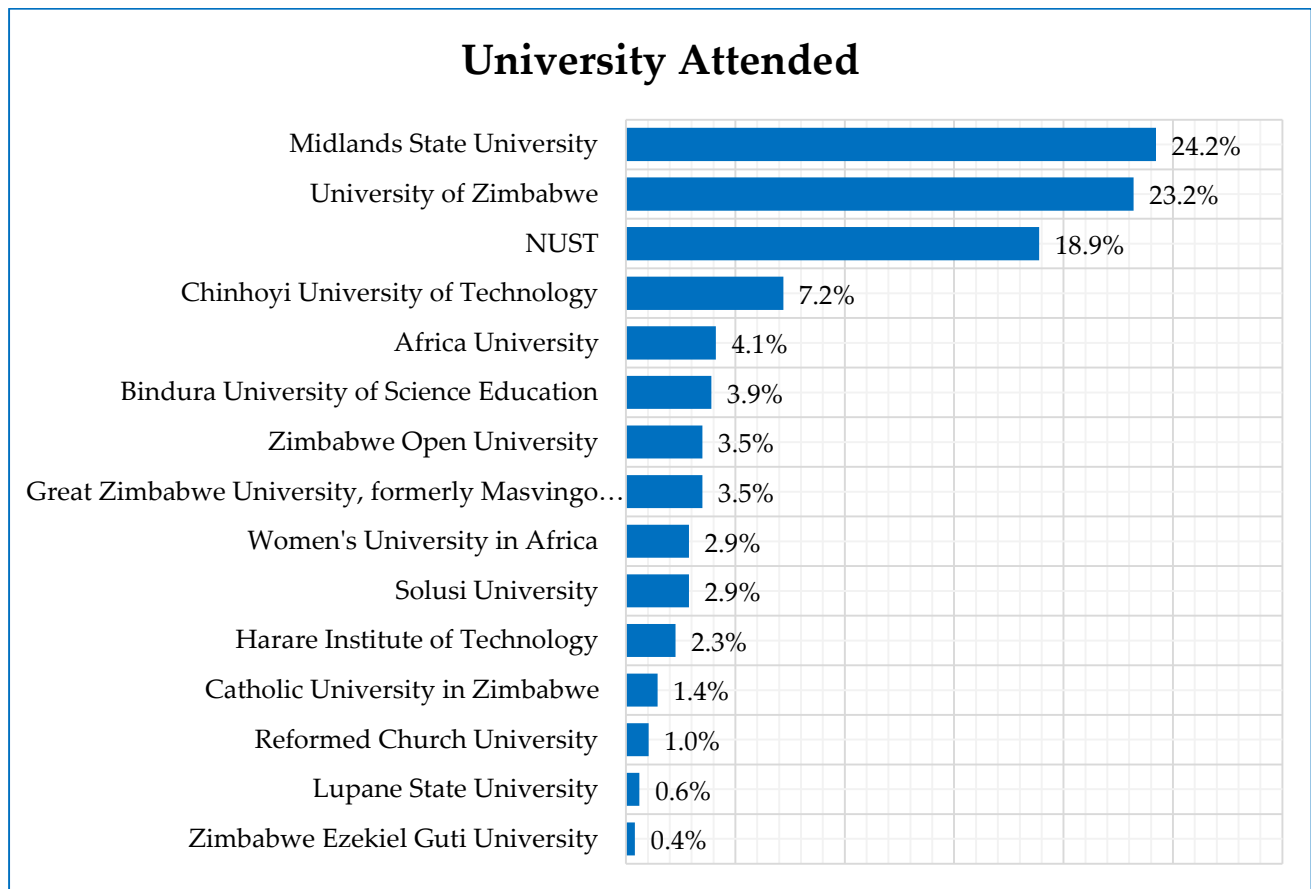
Key findings

1. Eighty nine percent (89%) of the students managed to secure attachment related to their degree programs.
2. Sixty five percent (65%) of the participants have a degree class of the upper second division.
3. Only three percent (3%) of the participants failed to secure a place for attachment, which suggests that the market is successfully absorbing attachment students.
4. Fifty percent (50%) of the participants felt their remuneration was fair during attachment and only 14% felt they were paid well.
5. Ninety- six percent (96%) of the participants feel attachment is important.
6. Eighty percent 80% of the participants feel attachment should remain at 1 year whilst only one percent (1%) feel that attachment should be removed totally from the curriculum.
7. The majority of students have not experienced sexual harassment either at university or at the work place but of those that have experienced sexual harassment, 3% experienced it at the work place and 2% were sexually harassed by lecturers from their university.
8. Seventy – nine percent (79%) of students felt the tasks they received during attachment were challenging and a corresponding twenty – one percent (21%) felt otherwise.

Methodology

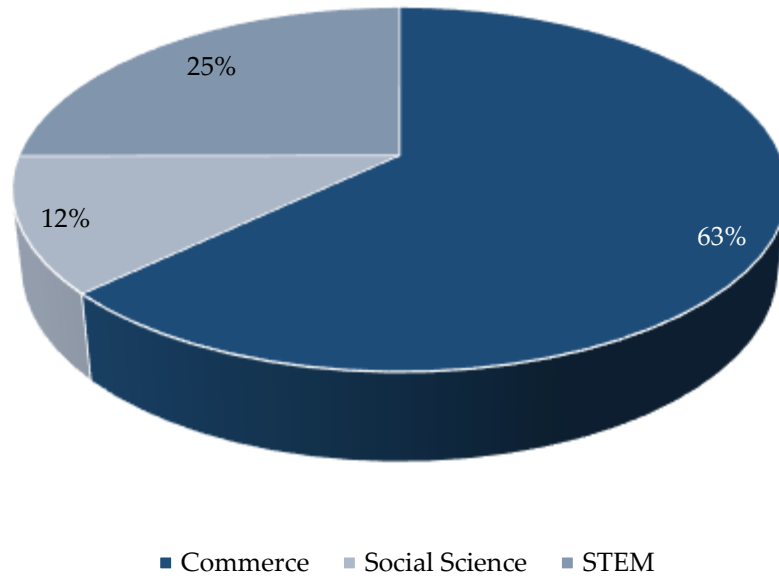
Questions were developed and uploaded onto survey monkey to come up with an online questionnaire which was sent via email to everyone on our mailing list. Questionnaires were completed online and responses were downloaded, cleaned, coded and analysed in SPSS and Excel. SPSS is a Statistical Package for Social Sciences which is one of the best statistical packages that is currently prevalently used for analysis.

Participants' Profile



A total number of fifteen (15) universities were represented in the survey. The majority of the participants (24.2%) studied at Midlands State University.

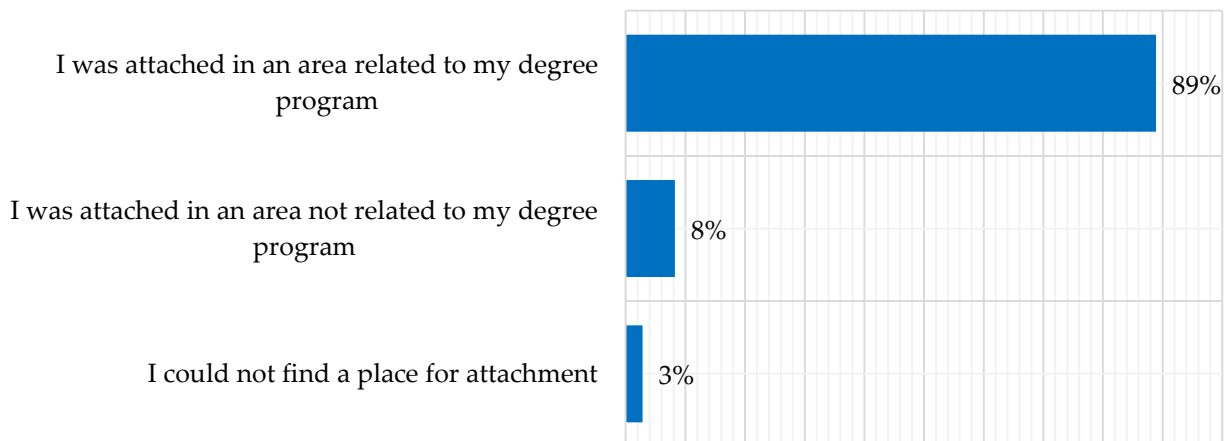
Related Field of Degree Studied



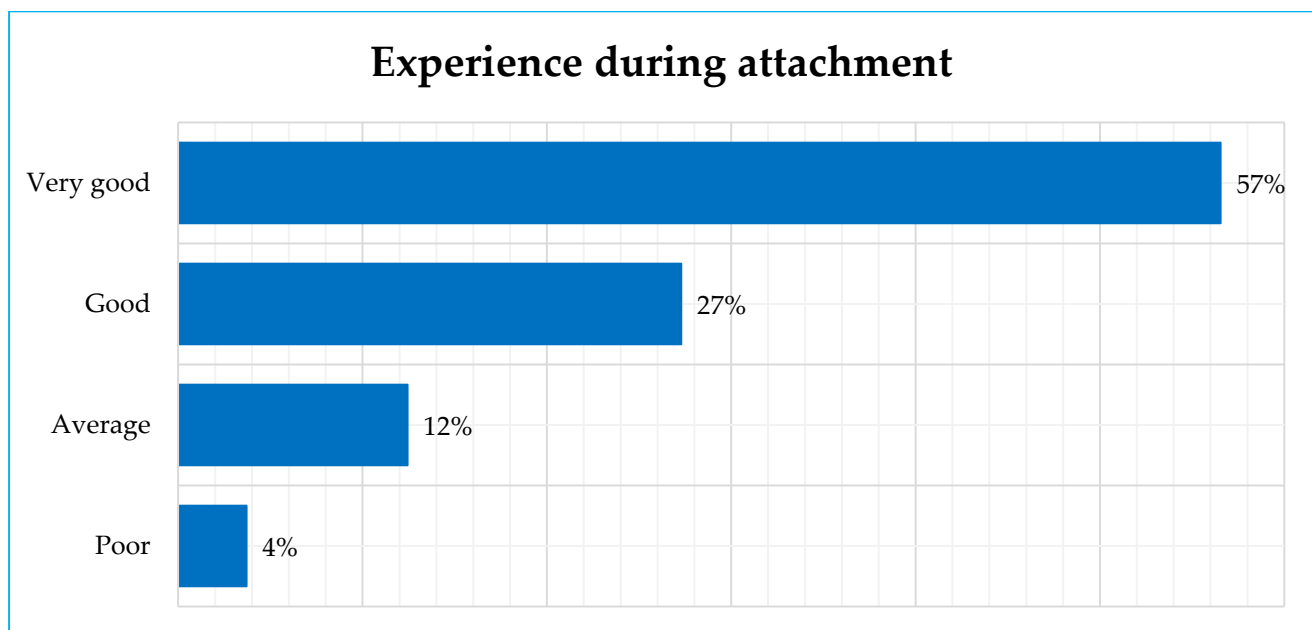
The majority of the participants (63%) studied commerce related degrees and those who studied social science (12%) related degrees participated the least in this survey.

Explanation of results

Exposure Related to Area of Study

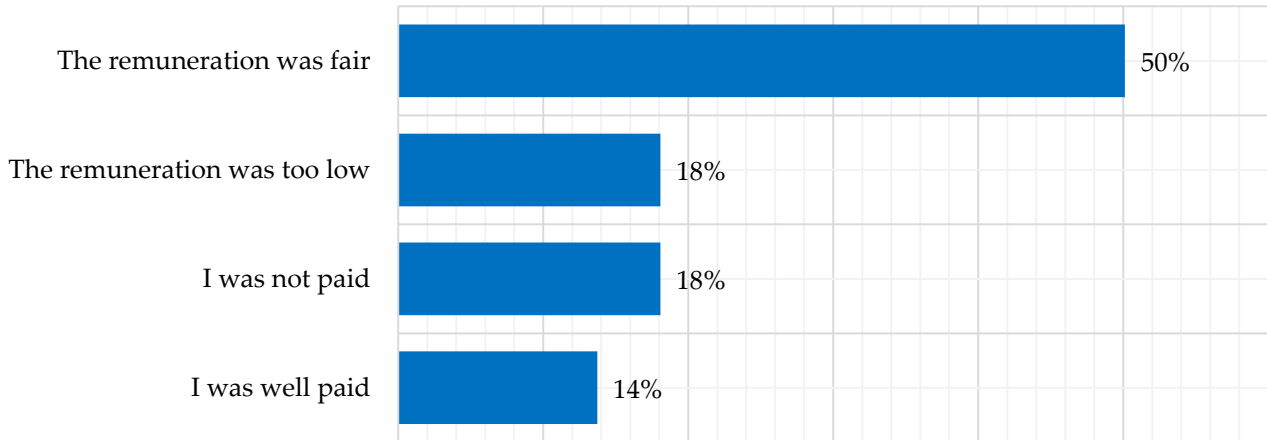


Eighty nine percent (89%) of the students managed to secure attachment related to their degree programs. Ninety seven percent (97%) of the total number of the participants managed to secure a place for attachment whether they secured attachment related to their degree or not. Only 3% of the participants failed to secure a place for attachment, which suggests that the market is successfully absorbing attachment students.



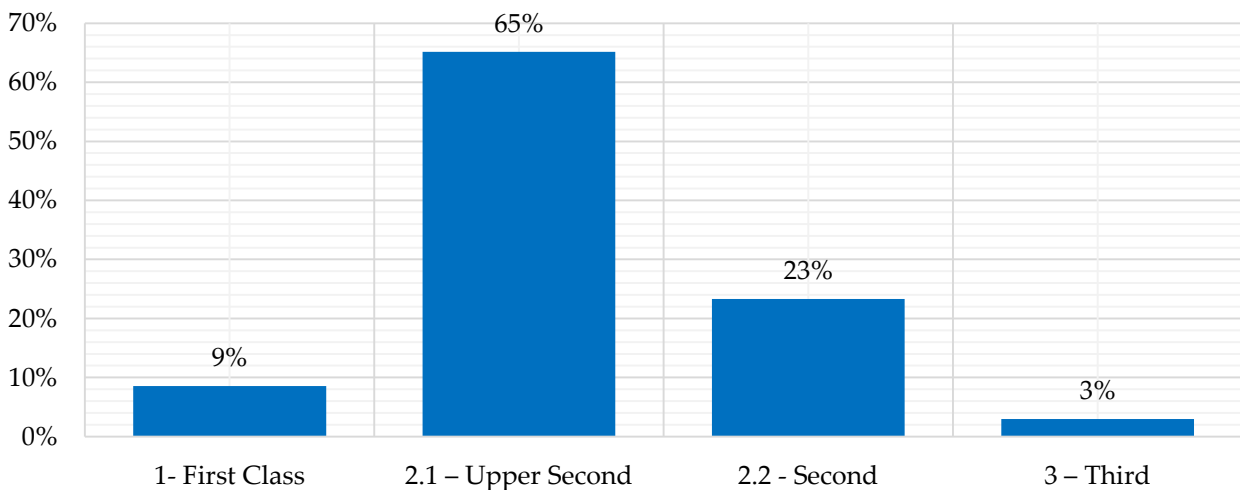
More than half of the participants enjoyed their attachment experience. This means that in one way or the other students benefited from their year on attachment as only 4% of the participants had a bad experience. Even though those that had a bad experience are seen to constitute a lesser percentage of the participants, this has to be addressed to ensure a better attachment experience for students in future.

Rating of Stipend received during Attachment



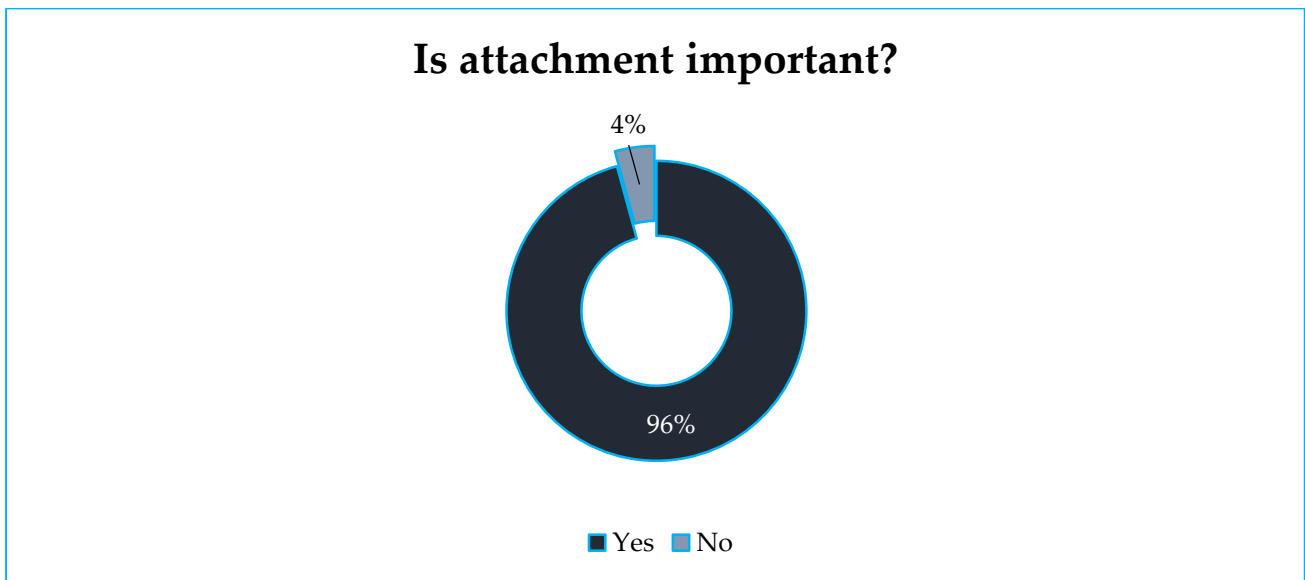
The percentage of participants that were paid well were less than those that either received remuneration of a low amount or were not paid at all. This leads to a conclusion that students on attachment generally are not paid well.

Degree Class

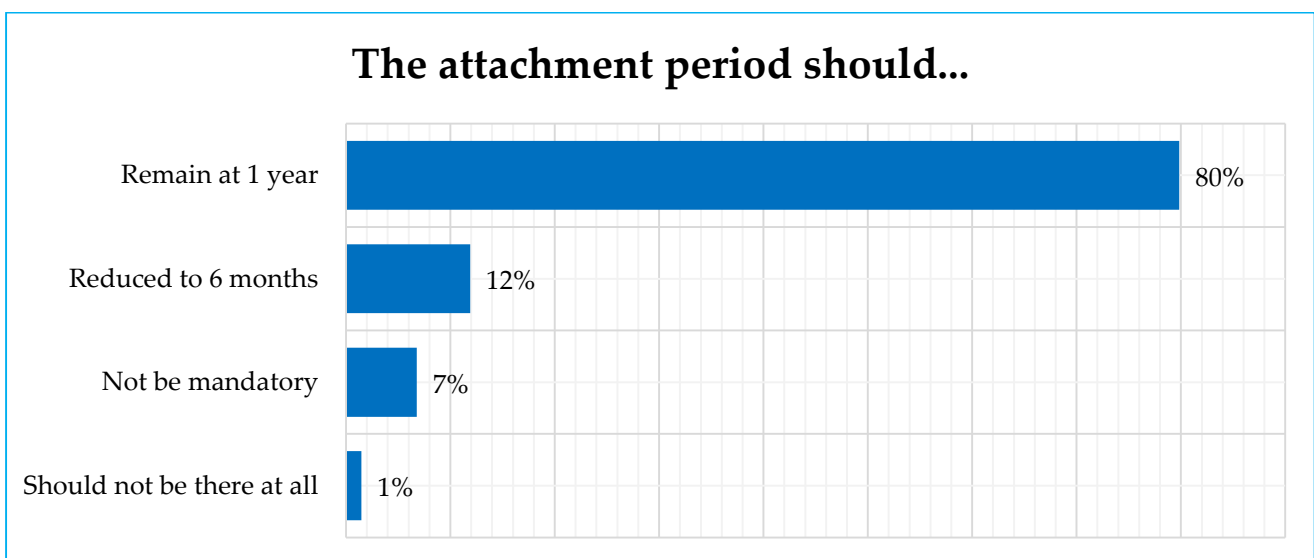


Results obtained in terms of the degree class obtained by participants upon completion of their degree demonstrates a normal distribution. As shown in the diagram above, the majority either have an

upper second division or second division. With very few participants either having a first class division (9%) or third division (3%) respectively.

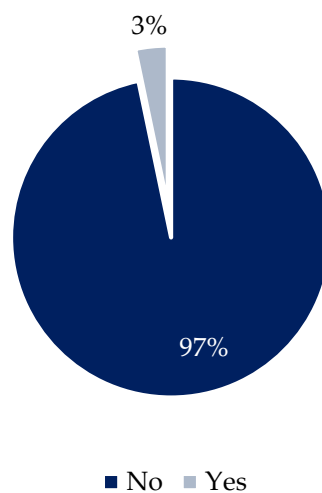


Almost all the participants believe that attachment is important.



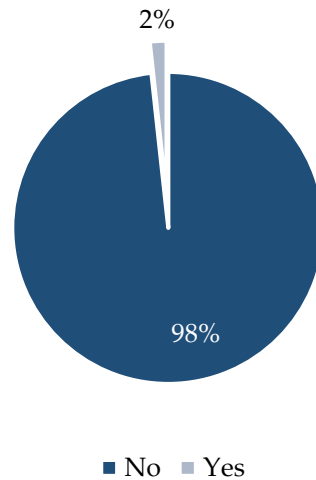
The majority suggest that attachment period should remain at 1 year. 7% of the participants would prefer for attachment to not be mandatory and 1% would prefer for attachment to be removed from the university curriculum totally.

Did you experience any sexual harassment at the place you were attached?



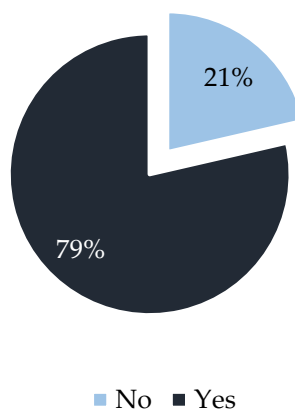
3% of the participants experienced sexual harassment at the work place, meaning that though this might seem as an insignificant percentage it needs to be addressed. Companies should put in place policies that address sexual harassment at the work place and there should be serious consequences for such behaviour.

Did you experience any sexual harassment from the Lecturers from your university?



The rate of sexual harassment is 1% lower at universities than at the work place but it does exist at universities.

Where you given challenging assignments as part of your attachment?



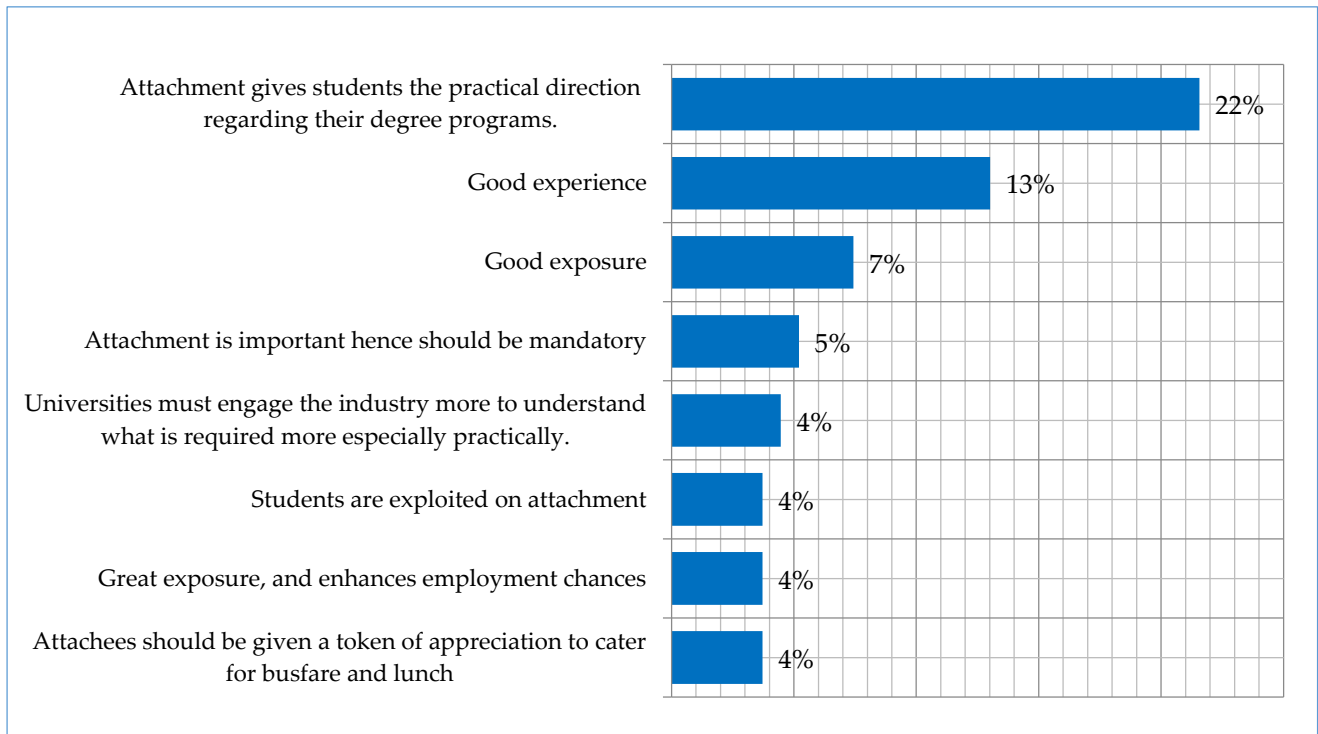
The assignments given to students during attachment were challenging to a greater extent (79%). Approximately twenty – one percent (21%) of the assignments they received were not challenging.

Interpretation of associations found between variables used in the survey.

Associations among variables were calculated using the Chi-squared test whereby variables with a Pearson Chi-square coefficient of less than 0.05 are considered to have an association with each other. Only variables with an association were reported on and the results were as follows:

- With a Pearson Chi- Square value of 0.001, we conclude that there is an association between the university a student attended and how they rate their remuneration during attachment. Although the majority of the students across universities felt the remuneration was fair, a special case would be that of the students at the Reformed church of Zimbabwe where 75% of the students were not paid at all during attachment whilst half of the students at Ezekiel Guti University felt they were paid well.
- With a Pearson Chi- Square value of 0.009, we conclude that there is an association between the university a student attended and how long they think the attachment period should be. Although the majority of the students across universities felt attachment should remain at 1 year, a special case would be that of the students at the Reformed church of Zimbabwe and Ezekiel Guti University where 50% of the students say the attachment periods should be reduced to 6 months.
- With a Pearson Chi- Square value of 0.047, we conclude that there is an association between the university a student attended and whether they experienced sexual harassment whilst at university. Although the majority of the students across said they did not experience any sexual harassment, a significant percentage of the students at Catholic University, Great Zimbabwe University and Women's University (14.3%, 12.5% and 7.7% respectively) said they experienced sexual harassment from lecturers from the university.
- With a Pearson Chi- Square value of 0.02, we conclude that there is an association between the student degree class and how they rate the remuneration received during attachment. An interesting finding would be that, the majority (53.8%) of students with a third division felt they were paid very well.
- With a Pearson Chi- Square value of 0.00, we conclude that there is an association between the student degree class and the year one was attachment.

Comments about attachment



Other comments include:

- The industrial attachment period is a time for the student to gain exposure and to learn the working experience. I learnt a lot during the attachment so much that the employers ended up calling me even after my attachments to help them do other projects and work and to mentor other attachees. It also helped me secure employment even before my first degree graduation.
- A good experience for real work experience but can we have the real work experience even at primary school, high school, University level.
- As a male student, I didn't experience any sexual harassment however this is prevalent to female students.
- Attachment is all about one's commitment to the job and passion. The industry is seeking for people who ask questions, critical thinkers who are hard workers.
- Attachment is good since it gives students exposure to the operations in the industry but the problem is getting a job that is related to your study area after completion of study. I studied banking and finance but now working in the freight industry.

- Attachment is not necessary, all that is needed is a change in the curriculum at universities to make them more practical.
- Attachments work best for those with connections, the majority of students end up taking anything, even though not challenging and lacking exposure.
- Bosses should have students do major reports and make sound decisions.
- Company HR should design a proper toolkit for attachees.
- Experience is the best teacher. The Polytechnics apprenticeship model, in my view is better than the university model where engineering work is concerned.
- Government should make sure all students from state universities get attachment in their areas of study.
- I did not gain much exposure.
- It bridges the gap between theory and industry.
- It is difficult to get attachment as at one point in time I suffered emotional abuse from someone who was working there.
- Lecturers should inform students when they will be visiting for assessment in advance.
- Men in these organisations are vultures luckily I had my relatives to fight for me.
- Most students are failing to secure attachment related to their field of study.
- My attachment was a success story, I managed to work on 3 SAP projects. I got hands on experience and exposure to work as a consultant. It gave me an opportunity to learn SAP.
- My program had no attachment but applied for one myself, though a bit unrelated to my studies it was a perfect starting place for some qualities and approach to work today.
- National Employment council must play a role in assessing the conditions of service and treatment of attachees.
- No organisation covers all the aspects related to the field.
- Only needed because the universities are not hands on enough. Lack of equipment to use is a huge problem.
- So far my attachment days were better than my working life.
- Students are treated differently during attachment.
- The attachment period was short.

- The exposure which is availed during attachment must be there from day one of attending university.
- There is need to reorient the degrees being offered in Zimbabwe from just academic but to be applied using the science theories. Also majority of graduates lack communication skills, time management as well as discipline of execution.
- There needs to be flexibility in deciding when to do the attachments. One can add up their vacation periods instead of dedicating a full year specifically for that.
- There was no room to be creative and contribute meaningfully in the organization.
- Though I benefited immensely from I attachment I think we can do without it, particularly for Accounting students who would need to do CTA and board exams to qualify as CAs.
- University students must get Zimdef grants when on attachment, currently only polytechnic students benefit from the grant.
- Attachment is a boring exercise.
- Attachment is useful and supervision is what is required to avoid an overload of mundane tasks.
- Attachment is very necessary for student development.
- Attachment not necessary during study but after study.
- Attachment should not be mandatory, as it is not relevant to all fields of study.
- Did not get attachment in the correct field.
- Government should incentivize companies to motivate them to take students for attachment.
- It should be extended to postgraduate degrees.
- Universities should lecture students on the content required during attachment before they go for attachment.
- Attachment should be done in final year.
- Companies need to be more research oriented to give even more to students.
- Companies should allow students on attachment to move to other departments so that there get exposure i.e. Finance, Marketing, HR.
- Tuition fees during attachment should be removed.
- Some universities did not have attachment as a requirement in my time.

- Students to be assessed/visited at least twice.
- Attachment is needed but it needs to be relevant to the area of study.
- Attachment should be removed totally from the curriculum.
- Universities should partner with the industry to ensure students are attached to departments in their field of study.

CONCLUSION

From the perspective of the students, the period of attachment has assisted the students to gain experience. It is not surprising therefore that the majority of them would like attachment period to remain part of the curriculum.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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