

## **LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE (LIS) STUDENTS' INDUSTRIAL TRAINING PROVISIONS FOR ENHANCED EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY OPPORTUNITIES**

**By**

**OKONOKO VERA NGOZI Ph.D**

**and**

**ERUVWE UFUOMA Ph.D**

### **Abstract**

The study focused on library and information science students' industrial training and opportunities for enhanced employment employability. The benefits of LIS students on industrial training was discussed. The competency of industrial training students and employment opportunity, employability skills were also captured in the study. LIS student encountered so much challenges such as ability to pay them allowance; some companies are unable to hire students into their enterprises; and some students prefer to select their own places of attachment for a variety of reasons, such as not wanting to be too far from home and wanting to use the time for enjoyment and leisure in the course of their industrial training. The study recommends that LIS students should be well prepared for this kind of employment environment. It is important to encourage organized commercial sectors, government agencies, and other relevant institutions to accept LIS students for training in their facilities. To solve the accommodation problem, employers should be urged to provide temporary housing for trainees who are enrolled in training programs.

**Keywords:** LIS students, Industrial training, employment, employability

### **Introduction**

Library and information science (LIS) is an interdisciplinary field of study that centers on the documentation that records our stories, memory, history, and knowledge. In both analog and digital form, LIS experts act as stewards of printed materials, records, pictures, audiovisual assets, and ephemera. These materials are gathered, arranged, maintained, and made accessible by librarians and other information specialists who are also the guardians of the knowledge they hold. The barriers between people, information, and technology are bridged by librarians. In

Nigeria, library and information school programs are offered in a number of educational institutions, including universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. Some of the library schools provide the following degrees in library and information science: OND, BLIS, MLS, and Ph.D. The goal of the LIS program is to develop graduates who will be well-versed in library and information science so they may meaningfully contribute to the provision of high-quality library and information services to society at large. The curriculum of LIS is so rich that it encompasses practical industrial training for students for duration of twelve and fourteen weeks or so.

Industrial training of LIS students refers to the placement of students in an organization to conduct supervised practical training in the industry sector within the stipulated time before they are awarded OND, BLIS, MLS and Ph.D degrees in library and information science. A skill-development program called the Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) was started by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in 1973, with its main office in Jos, Nigeria. It bridges the gap between theory and practice and is intended to help students at Nigeria's higher institutions gain technical expertise and experience for professional growth during their course of study. The recognized skills training program is what makes up the authorized academic requirement in a variety of degree programs at Nigerian higher education institutions. Before graduating, students must complete a BLIS course worth three credits and an MLS course worth six credits. According to Nse (2012), the program is a structured, supervised training and intervention program with clearly defined learning and career objectives that aims to help participants enhance their occupational competences. Additionally, it serves to expose and

prepare students at higher education institutions for the professional job environments they will encounter once they graduate. The program also gives students exposure to work practices and the practical skills they need to operate machinery and equipment that are unavailable at their schools.

The Federal Government of Nigeria (through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry), the Industrial Training Fund, NUC/NBTC/NCCE, the institution, the industries or employers, and the students are among the parties engaged in the functioning of SIWES. A cooperative industrial internship program involving all of its stakeholders called SIWES. All stakeholders are involved in the operation of SIWES, according to Mafe (2009), although students play a crucial part in its implementation directly; all other stakeholders have a smaller role to play throughout the training process itself. According to Mafe (2010), quoting Crag (1987), SIWES is a general term since it applies to more than 60 university programs, more than 40 polytechnic programs, and around 10 programs at colleges of education. Many students, including those majoring in library and information science, take part in this training program. The program helps students become ready for the workforce and has emerged as a cutting-edge phenomenon in Nigeria's training and development of human resources. According to Mafe (2004), training equips the user with the skills needed to do tasks that would improve employment. The effectiveness of industrial training is thought to increase graduates' employability.

Employability is the capacity to move independently within the labor market in order to realize potential through sustainable employment, whereas employment is an agreement between a person and another entity that specifies the duties, payment terms and arrangements, rules of

the workplace, and is recognized by the government. The employment of a man or woman to work in the university library is a goal that is not only necessary but also pursued in principles encapsulated in some factors that point to the competency of the employees. Industrial training equips students with crucial practical knowledge and abilities and motivates them to become the greatest and most successful professional librarians. The main objectives of the industrial training are to provide the best and relevant theoretical knowledge to gain in a particular time period. Students complete their industrial training during minimum period of 12 and 14 weeks and pass the training assessment in order to graduate. It provides the liability for real life work and internships to choose the career options with different work environments and publicity to the latest technologies that are currently being used by an important and relevant industry.

### **Benefits of Industrial training of LIS students**

The expected benefits by the students include:

1. Preparing students for employment and making the transition from school to the world of work easier after graduation.
2. Giving students the opportunity to learn about working practices and obtain experience with tools and machines that might not be available in their institution.
3. A chance for students to combine the theoretical information they have learned in the classroom with the hands-on experience they need to accomplish jobs in the workplace.
4. Making it easier for trainees to connect with possible employers.
5. Assisting students in understanding how their academic programs link to other fields of study that is relevant to the creation of commodities and services.

6. Enabling students to understand the importance of their profession as wealth and change makers who are essential to the expansion of the economy and the advancement of the country.
7. They will become job-ready and capable of working in any setting.
8. They will have access to chances for paid employment and internships.
9. They will receive free certifications in generally accepted soft skills.
10. They will learn the skills needed by businesses throughout the world for professional success.
11. At the employment center, they will have access to career counseling and help from job counselors.
12. They will have access to other training opportunities

### **Employability skills Acquired from SIWES**

Employability skills are transferrable skills that are useful in nearly every job. They entail the acquisition of skills, information, or attitudes that increase your attractiveness to employers. The terms employment skills, soft skills, work-readiness skills, and fundamental skills are all frequently used to refer to employability skills. They frequently help one perform better, make less mistakes, and encourage teamwork with coworkers, which enables you to carry out your job more successfully. Even though they may not be included in a job description, employability skills are crucial and can increase your appeal to potential employers. Possessing these qualities might help LIS graduates stand out from other job applicants who are seeking for the same position, which is the key advantage. Even if other applicants may have the same credentials and

experience, LIS graduates may have a greater chance of landing a job if they possess employability skills that are especially pertinent to the position.

Qualities, abilities, and understanding are among the attributes that graduates should have (Bowden, Hart, King, Trigwell, & Watts, 2017). Employers want graduates with these skills when hiring new employees (Zehrer & Mossenlechner, 2009). Graduates are expected to be proactive and able to handle challenges in novel ways. Employers often seek out graduates with communication skills, empathy, drive, and the capacity for sound judgment, planning, and improvisation (Bagshaw, 2009). Employers search for both behavioral and technical traits appropriate to the professional working environment when hiring for professional companies like the library (Hassan, Ismail, Ahmad Zaini, Hassan & Maisham, 2011).

Industrial training student according to Myung (2004) should have the qualities of competence, accuracy, efficiency, consistency, adaptability, judgment, problem-solving, commitment, research ability, and self-discipline. This industrial training is a crucial technique that blends academic learning and the working world in accordance with what society and the corporate world want. In this instance, industrial training helps both the industry and the students, in addition to the (LIS) students.

Employer feedback reveals unhappiness with the caliber of graduates entering the workforce (Kagaari, 2007). The primary critique is on how graduates' educational programs failed to adapt to the shifting reality and business practices (Jamali, 2005). In order for their businesses to be more adaptable and flexible in response to shifting market demands, Bennett (2017) claims that employers are striving for a workforce that is more flexible and adaptive.

According to Cox and King (2006), this employer expectation does not imply that graduates should be able to perform the work immediately without additional training, but rather that they should have the capacity to learn the skills that facilitate and improve employment opportunities, as correctly argued by several authors (Kagaari, 2007; Maher & Graves, 2008). In this context, Harvey (2021) claimed that hiring qualified graduates will increase their chances of success in their chosen field, whether in paid or unpaid work.

### **Challenges affecting industrial training of LIS students**

There are some noticeable challenges facing students' industrial work experience scheme which impede the fulfillment of its objectives. Among these difficulties is money, which has an impact on the monitoring of students and the distribution of participant allowances, among other operational elements.

Another difficulty that the SIWES organization faces is the placement of students. Due to certain students' views and their unwillingness to assume responsibility for paying students after the program is over, some companies are unable to employ students into their enterprises; this presents a hurdle.

Another issue is that some students prefer to select their own places of attachment for a variety of reasons, such as not wanting to be too far from home and wanting to use the time for enjoyment and leisure, such as the summer, leading them to select locations unrelated to their careers. An illustration of this is a student studying library and information science who is trained at an accounting business rather than a library or information center; this defeats the

purpose of the program since at the conclusion of the training, no practical experience will have been gained.

### **Recommendations for Enhancement**

The study recommends thus:

1. LIS students should be well prepared for employment environment provided by SIWES. They must pick operational libraries and organizations that support libraries for their training in order to build the skills essential for their professional growth. The program should also incorporate self-employment options connected to ICT and LIS. Students' capacity to select useful libraries, compliance with ICT, acquisition of vital knowledge, and computer literacy might all help them do this.
2. It is important to encourage organized commercial sectors, government agencies, and other relevant institutions to accept LIS students for training in their facilities. This might be achieved by setting up operational libraries where LIS students would receive training and organizations would benefit greatly from the free services of the students.
3. To solve the accommodation problem, employers should be urged to provide temporary housing for trainees who are enrolled in training programs.
4. In order to alleviate the problem of limited funding for students, it is also advised that schools provide funds for the payment of stipend to trainees. Additionally, funding ought to be made available to organizations for efficient student monitoring throughout SIWES training.

### **Conclusion**



The program has exposed LIS students to new working techniques and provided the skills needed to handle facilities and equipment that were not available in the classroom but were necessary to execute certain jobs. With the aid of SIWES, LIS students were able to close the knowledge gap between what they learned in school and the pertinent practical skills needed in the workplace (library). However, LIS students experience several difficulties throughout their training, such as a shortage of housing, unpaid stipends, transportation issues, and the inability to find appropriate and related training locations. Therefore, in order for LIS students to be properly and thoroughly trained throughout their course of study, the scheme's creators must come up with a better method that will address the issues that the students experience.

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