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# EFFECTIVENESS OF SIWES SUPERVISION AND MENTORSHIP OF STUDENTS IN RAMAT LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF MAIDUGURI

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**Abstract**

This study investigated the effectiveness of supervision and mentorship for Library and Information Science (LIS) students during their Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) attachment at Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri. It examined the quality of supervisory arrangements, the nature of mentorship received, and the challenges impeding effective supervision. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with all 75 LIS students who completed their SIWES attachment at Ramat Library during the 2023/2024 academic session as the population. Sixty-eight valid responses were analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that while students acknowledged the assignment of supervisors, they rated the quality and consistency of institutional supervision and mentorship as inadequate. Major challenges included insufficient institutional supervisory visits, absence of structured mentorship programmes, and lack of formal orientation for industry-based supervisors. The study recommends that the University of Maiduguri should allocate adequate resources for regular supervisory visits, Ramat Library should establish a formal mentorship programme, and both institutional and industry-based supervisors should receive training in supervision and mentorship techniques. Improved coordination among the ITF, University of Maiduguri, and Ramat Library is essential for enhancing the professional development of SIWES participants.


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**Keywords:** SIWES, supervision, mentorship, Library and Information Science, Ramat Library

## Introduction

The Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) was established in 1973 by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to bridge the persistent gap between theoretical instruction in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the practical competencies demanded by the workplace (Ochuba, 2019; Tambuwal, 2012). The scheme operates as a tripartite arrangement involving the ITF, educational institutions, and employers, with the primary objective of exposing students to industrial work methods and enabling them to develop hands-on skills with equipment and processes unavailable in their institutions (National Open University of Nigeria, 2024).

For Library and Information Science (LIS) students, SIWES holds particular significance. Librarianship requires a blend of theoretical understanding and practical competence that classrooms alone cannot provide (Adomi, 2002). Trainees are expected to develop proficiency in cataloguing and classification, reference and information services, collection development, and increasingly, digital information management (Onuoha & Chukwueke, 2025). Whether students acquire these competencies depends largely on the quality of supervision and mentorship they receive during their attachment (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024).

Within SIWES, supervision operates along two distinct but complementary tracks. Institutional supervision, conducted by lecturers and SIWES coordinators from the


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student's institution, ensures that training remains faithful to academic objectives and that students are appropriately placed (Tambuwal, 2012). Industry-based supervision, delivered by designated staff at the host organisation, provides day-to-day guidance, technical instruction, and professional modelling (Adomi, 2002). Mentorship differs from supervision in that it constitutes a deeper relationship in which experienced professionals consciously guide a trainee's career development, offering technical instruction, professional orientation, networks, and career advice (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024).

Studies on SIWES effectiveness consistently identify supervision as a decisive factor in training outcomes (Ochuba, 2019; Usman, 2021). Inadequate supervision and monitoring regularly emerge as among the gravest challenges facing the scheme (Fumen et al., 2026). Within libraries specifically, trainee librarians report that poor coordination and weak supervision are major constraints (Adomi, 2002; Oladimeji et al., 2017). The quality of mentorship has likewise been linked to how strongly LIS students develop professional identity and commitment to the career (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024).

This study therefore examines the effectiveness of SIWES supervision and mentorship at Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri. Specifically, it addresses the following research questions:

1. How often do institutions supervise SIWES students at Ramat Library, and what does that supervision look like?
2. How do students rate the quality of the industry-based supervision they received?


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3. **What is the perception of SIWES students on their mentorship experience?**
4. What are the challenges associated with effective SIWES supervision and mentorship at Ramat Library?

## Literature Review

### The Framework of SIWES Supervision

SIWES supervision operates through a structured network of stakeholders. The Industrial Training Fund holds the coordinating and oversight role, paying out allowances and ensuring that institutions follow established guidelines (National Open University of Nigeria, 2024). Educational institutions place students in suitable organisations, conduct periodic supervisory visits, and strive to keep the training experience aligned with programme objectives (Tambuwal, 2012).

Institutional supervision typically involves SIWES coordinators and departmental lecturers visiting students' places of attachment. During these visits, they examine logbooks, engage with industry-based supervisors, and assess the quality of training (Ochuba, 2019). The frequency and seriousness of these visits underpin the entire supervision framework. Industry-based supervision rests with designated staff at the host organisation, whose responsibility is to guide trainees through daily tasks, model professional practice, and provide feedback on performance (Adomi, 2002). The effectiveness of this arrangement depends on the supervisor's technical ability, willingness to teach, and available time for trainees (Usman, 2021).

### Mentorship in Library and Information Science Training


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Mentorship extends beyond routine supervision. While supervision focuses on task completion and rule compliance, mentorship addresses career development, professional identity formation, and psychosocial support (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024). For LIS students, meaningful mentorship during industrial training can shape career trajectories and commitment to the profession (Onuoha & Chukwueke, 2025).

Effective mentorship in a library setting operates on multiple levels. Technical mentorship develops concrete skills such as cataloguing, reference interviewing, and database searching (Adomi, 2002). Professional mentorship addresses broader career questions including professional ethics, continuing education, and participation in professional associations (Oladimeji et al., 2017). Psychosocial mentorship, though less tangible, provides encouragement, role modelling, and support as trainees develop professional identities (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024). Research connects mentorship quality during SIWES to both skill acquisition and career outcomes. Students who receive structured mentorship report stronger competence development and greater satisfaction with the training experience (Alonta et al., 2025). Without such support, trainees may feel isolated, undervalued, and uncertain about their professional direction (Ochuba, 2019).

**Challenges Affecting Supervision and Mentorship**

The literature identifies several persistent obstacles that undermine supervision and mentorship during SIWES. Financial constraints rank foremost, as institutions often cannot afford sufficient supervisory visits, resulting in scarce and shallow monitoring (Ochuba, 2019; Tambuwal, 2012). This problem has intensified as participation has grown without matching resources (Fumen et al., 2026). On the industry side, supervisors


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frequently lack time, training, or motivation to mentor effectively (Usman, 2021). Some staff are unwilling to expose students to the skills the scheme exists to teach, occasionally treating trainees as cheap labour rather than developing professionals (Oladimeji et al., 2017). Fear of being replaced by trainees has also been cited as a factor in shallow training (Adomi, 2002).

Placement mismatches compound these difficulties. When students are placed in organisations unrelated to their professional interests or assigned menial chores, the training loses its developmental purpose (Ochuba, 2019). In library settings, trainees have reported being marginalised and excluded from challenging work (Oladimeji et al., 2017). LIS students specifically face inadequate supervision and monitoring, uncooperative establishments, and financial problems that affect attendance and engagement (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024). Erratic academic calendars resulting from strikes and institutional closures further fragment training and reduce time for skill development (Fumen et al., 2026).

**Research Method**

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. This design was considered appropriate as it allowed for the systematic capture of SIWES participants' perceptions and experiences regarding supervision and mentorship at Ramat Library (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The population consisted of all 75 Library and Information Science students who completed their SIWES attachment at Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri, during the 2023/2024 academic session. A census approach was employed,


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targeting every member of the population. Of the 75 questionnaires distributed, 68 were returned properly completed, yielding a response rate of 90.7%.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researchers. The instrument comprised four sections: Section A captured demographic information such as gender and length of attachment; Section B measured the frequency and nature of institutional supervision; Section C assessed the quality of industry-based supervision and mentorship; and Section D examined challenges encountered during training. Items in Sections B through D were rated on a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1). Two Library and Information Science experts validated the instrument, and their feedback informed the final version. A pilot test involving five former trainees produced a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.82.

Questionnaires were administered personally to respondents who had completed their attachment at Ramat Library. The researchers distributed the instruments and collected them upon completion. Participants were assured of confidentiality and informed that their responses would be used solely for research purposes. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores. The criterion mean was set at 2.50; items meeting or exceeding this threshold were considered accepted by respondents (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

## Results and Discussion

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents


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The demographic analysis revealed that 28 respondents (41.2%) were male while 40 (58.8%) were female, all from the Department of Library and Information Science. Regarding duration of attachment, 52 respondents (76.5%) completed the full standard six-month training period, while 16 (23.5%) undertook a shortened attachment due to academic calendar readjustments.

**Research Question 1: How often do institutions supervise SIWES students at Ramat Library, and what does that supervision look like?**

**Table 1**

*Institutional Supervision Received*

| Item | Mean Score | Standard Deviation | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Institutional supervisor visited my placement** | 2.24 | 0.89 | Disagreed |
| **My supervisor examined my logbook during visits** | 2.18 | 0.92 | Disagreed |
| **I received adequate guidance from institutional supervisor** | 2.31 | 0.87 | Disagreed |
| **The frequency of supervisory visits was adequate** | 2.06 | 0.94 | Disagreed |
| **My supervisor interacted with my industry-based supervisor** | 2.15 | 0.91 | Disagreed |

Respondents disagreed with every item concerning institutional supervision, with mean scores ranging from 2.06 to 2.31, all below the 2.50 criterion. The lowest-rated item was the adequacy of visit frequency (mean = 2.06), followed by logbook examination


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during visits (mean = 2.18). These results indicate that students perceived institutional supervision at Ramat Library as too infrequent and superficial.

The finding that institutional supervision was both rare and shallow aligns with earlier research, which has consistently identified inadequate supervision and monitoring as a chronic weakness of SIWES (Ochuba, 2019; Tambuwal, 2012). The poor ratings for visits and logbook checks suggest that the accountability mechanisms designed to ensure quality training are not functioning effectively. Observations that SIWES supervision has been starved of human and material resources (Fumen et al., 2026) support this conclusion, as funding problems have impacted precisely where institutions need to mount meaningful monitoring (Usman, 2021).

**Research Question 2: How do students rate the quality of the industry-based supervision they received?**

**Table 2**

*Industry-Based Supervision*

| Item | Mean Score | Standard Deviation | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| **A designated supervisor was assigned to me** | 3.28 | 0.71 | Agreed |
| **My supervisor provided clear instructions for tasks** | 2.87 | 0.83 | Agreed |
| **My supervisor demonstrated professional practices** | 3.06 | 0.78 | Agreed |
| **I received regular feedback on my** | 2.65 | 0.88 | Agreed |


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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **performance** | | | |
| **My supervisor was available when I needed guidance** | 2.74 | 0.86 | Agreed |

**Research Question 3: What is the perception of SIWES students on their mentorship experience?**

**Table 3**

*Mentorship Experiences*

| Item | Mean Score | Standard Deviation | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| **My supervisor took interest in my career development** | 2.42 | 0.91 | Disagreed |
| **I received guidance on professional ethics** | 2.18 | 0.95 | Disagreed |
| **My supervisor discussed career opportunities with me** | 2.09 | 0.97 | Disagreed |
| **I was encouraged to participate in professional activities** | 2.31 | 0.89 | Disagreed |
| **My supervisor served as a professional role model** | 2.68 | 0.84 | Agreed |
| **I received support for developing professional identity** | 2.24 | 0.93 | Disagreed |

Most mentorship items attracted disagreement, with five of six falling below the 2.50 threshold. The only item respondents accepted was seeing their supervisor as a professional role model (mean = 2.68). Career discussions (mean = 2.09) and guidance on


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professional ethics (mean = 2.18) received the lowest ratings, indicating that mentorship at Ramat Library tended toward task completion rather than holistic professional development.

The mentorship results are particularly concerning. With career development, professional ethics, and identity support all drawing disagreement, the mentorship dimension of SIWES at Ramat Library appears largely absent. Students may have recognised their supervisors as role models (mean = 2.68) yet never experienced the relational engagement that genuine mentorship requires (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024). This echoes recurring criticism that SIWES often falls short of the comprehensive professional development it was created to provide (Oladimeji et al., 2017; Onuoha & Chukwueke, 2025).

**Research Question 4: What are the challenges associated with effective SIWES supervision and mentorship at Ramat Library?**

**Table 4: T**he challenges associated with effective SIWES supervision and mentorship at Ramat Library

| Challenge | Mean Score | Standard Deviation | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Inadequate institutional supervisory visits** | 3.18 | 0.72 | Agreed |
| **Supervisors had limited time for mentoring** | 3.06 | 0.78 | Agreed |
| **Lack of structured mentorship programme** | 2.94 | 0.81 | Agreed |


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| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Supervisors lacked training in mentoring** | 2.76 | 0.85 | Agreed |
| **Financial constraints limited supervision logistics** | 2.88 | 0.83 | Agreed |
| **Heavy workload for industry-based supervisors** | 3.12 | 0.75 | Agreed |

Respondents agreed with every challenge item, with mean scores ranging from 2.76 to 3.18. The most serious challenge was inadequate institutional supervisory visits (mean = 3.18), followed by heavy workload for industry-based supervisors (mean = 3.12). The absence of structured mentorship programmes (mean = 2.94) also constituted a significant constraint.

The challenges identified echo the wider SIWES literature. The crushing workload on industry-based supervisors (mean = 3.12) reflects the reality that Ramat Library staff juggle supervision alongside their primary duties (Usman, 2021). With no training in mentoring (mean = 2.76), supervisors lack the pedagogical skills effective guidance demands (Ochuba, 2019). Without structured mentorship programmes (mean = 2.94), mentorship is left to chance rather than being consciously built and supported (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024). These gaps directly affect the professional development of LIS students, who may complete their attachment without developing the professional identity, ethical foundation, and career awareness needed to enter the library profession successfully (Onuoha & Chukwueke, 2025). With industry-based supervisors overburdened and unprepared for mentorship, the burden of professional development falls on students themselves, creating potential inequalities among trainees (Alonta et al., 2025).


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The findings also call into question the tripartite arrangement governing SIWES (National Open University of Nigeria, 2024). If institutional supervision is weak and industry-based supervision lacks structured mentorship, the complementary roles the scheme was designed around are not materialising (Tambuwal, 2012). Addressing these gaps requires coordinated action from the ITF, the University of Maiduguri, and Ramat Library alike (Fumen et al., 2026).

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Enhanced Institutional Supervision:** The University of Maiduguri should allocate sufficient resources to fund regular supervisory visits to Ramat Library and other SIWES training sites. At least three visits per six-month attachment should be mandated, each supported by structured assessment instruments to gauge training quality (Ochuba, 2019).
2. **Structured Mentorship Programme:** Ramat Library should establish a formal mentorship programme pairing each trainee with a designated mentor who will make time for regular career discussions, guidance on professional ethics, and support for identity development. Mentors should be selected for their willingness and skill as guides, not merely their rank (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024).
3. **Training for Supervisors:** Both institutional and industry-based supervisors should receive training in supervision and mentorship techniques, including feedback skills, adult learning principles, and strategies for facilitating career development (Usman, 2021).


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4. **Recognition of Supervisory Role:** Ramat Library management should formally recognise supervision and mentorship as part of designated staff's professional duties, making room in workloads and implementing proper recognition mechanisms (Adomi, 2002).
5. **Improved Coordination:** The ITF, University of Maiduguri, and Ramat Library should strengthen coordination so that supervision responsibilities are clearly mapped and accountability mechanisms are established (National Open University of Nigeria, 2024).
6. **Financial Support for Supervision:** The ITF and the Federal Government should review funding allocations to ensure institutions have adequate resources for regular supervisory visits. The slow, drawn-out allowance payments that discourage participation also require attention (Fumen et al., 2

## Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of SIWES supervision and mentorship at Ramat Library, University of Maiduguri. The findings reveal a considerable gap between what LIS trainees need and what current arrangements deliver. Industry-based supervision exists and offers basic guidance, but institutional supervision is patchy and shallow, and structured mentorship is almost non-existent. The challenges identified—insufficient institutional visits, overloaded supervisors, untrained mentors, and financial pressures—are not peculiar to Ramat Library; they reflect systemic issues in how SIWES is administered across Nigeria (Ochuba, 2019; Tambuwal, 2012). Addressing these deficiencies requires concerted efforts from all stakeholders to ensure that SIWES fulfils its mandate of preparing competent, professionally grounded library and information science graduates (Oyeniran & Oyeniran, 2024).

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