

**STUDENTS INDUSTRIAL TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION
SKILLS FOR EMPLOYABILITY OF LIBRARIANS IN NIGERIA**

By

UGWOKE, SARAH CHINAGOROM

PHANUEL, PATRICK UMORIYA

And

MAJINDU, RUFINA KOSISOCHI

Abstract

Information skills, which are sometimes referred to as media literacy or digital literacy skills, refer to your ability to identify, assess, organize, utilize and communicate information in any format. Information skill is the ability to find, evaluate and use information effectively. Though these skills are important in a wide range of situations, they are particularly valuable when evaluating the quality and credibility of a website, attributing credit to a source, acquiring new knowledge, solving a problem or making a decision, which is why they are essential for functioning effectively in the workplace. Student's Industrial Training which is seen as an on the job training or before the job training is designed to provide technical skills, work ethics and industry experience in a course field or course program. Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is a human capital formation programme through industrial attachment for which students are expected to have a practical experience on the basis of theories and principles acquired in the teaching-learning process. This paper therefore discusses the student's industrial training and development of information skills for employability of librarians in Nigeria, benefits of industrial training and job opportunities for LIS graduates in Nigeria. This paper concludes that Student's Industrial Training is a stepping tool to having a work experience and it also creates a pathway of long lasting work experience which is capable in taking one far in life.

Keywords: Information, Information Skills, Industrial Training, Employment and Employability

Paper type: Conceptual

Introduction

The Students Industrial Training also known as Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is the accepted training programme, which is part of the approved Minimum Academic Standard in the various degree programmes for all Nigerian Universities. The scheme

is aimed at bridging the existing gap between theory and practice of Sciences, Agriculture, Medical Sciences (including Nursing), Engineering and Technology, Management, Information and Communication Technology, and other professional educational programmes in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. It is aimed at exposing students to machines and equipment, professional work methods, and ways of safeguarding the work areas and workers in industries, offices, laboratories, hospitals, and other organizations. It is a cooperative industrial internship program that involves institutions of higher learning, industries, libraries, the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), and the Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC).

Transition from a student to a professional is facilitated through industrial training, which is also a term for learning. As a company trainee, there is a lot of learning involved, and students gain a practical introduction to working life. Students can put their academic knowledge into practice and realize their whole potential during industrial training. Industrial training is a crucial component of the curriculum because it is thought to be a “would-be expert’s” first job experience. A major component of creating an expanding, flourishing firm is a never-ending hunger for education.

Information according to Mole (n.d) can be defined from the point of view of data and knowledge. From the point of view of data, information is data processed to convey clear meaning. From the point of view of knowledge, information is the communication of knowledge gained from human experience through experiment and observation. Information is knowledge in motion and is being passed from one person to another. To become information, data need to be *well-formed* and *meaningful*. Well-formed means that data are clustered together correctly, according to the rules (syntax) of the chosen language or code.

Skill has to do with the ability to carry out a task with determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both. According to Osinem (2005), skill refers to the ability to perform an act expertly. It is that expertness, practiced ability or proficiency displayed in the performance of a task. It involves the acquisition of performance capability through repetitive performance of an operation. Skill is a manifestation of acquired knowledge. The practical or activity components of skill relate to those areas of knowledge that pertain to the mode of doing. The essence of training should be to help the learner acquire a blend of theory and practice skills for achieving the occupational objectives.

Information skills are talents and knowledge that allow an individual to efficiently discover, process, model, analyze, evaluate, communicate and manage knowledge. This is a basic life skill and academic skill that can progress to advanced professional skills such as information science and information management. The sets of skills and competencies required finding and using information, usually in a formal education context is known as information skill.

Employment and Employability

In laymen's terms, employment refers to the idea that an individual has entered some form of verbal or written commitment with an entity, known as the employer, under certain stipulations such as payment, schedule, etc. Employment is distinctly different from contract work. Employment is an agreement between an individual and another entity that stipulates the responsibilities, payment terms and arrangement, rules of the workplace, and is recognized by the government. Organizations use employment daily to fuel their businesses, expand, and increase output.

According to Yorke, (2014), Employability is a set of achievements skills, understandings and personal attributes that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy. Employability, therefore, is not just about getting a job; it is about a broader set of skills and attributes that will enable a graduate to be successful throughout their working life. Employability refers to your ability to gain initial employment, maintain employment, and obtain new employment if required. In simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work. “Employability is having a set of skills, knowledge, understanding and personal attributes that make a person more likely to choose and secure occupations in which they can be satisfied and successful (Dacre & Sewell, 2007). Your employability depends on: Your knowledge (what you know); Your skills (what you do with what you know); Your Attitudes (how you approach things) and The way you use your knowledge and skills and present them to employers (Down, 2011).

Concept of Industrial Training

Industrial Training 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 a bachelor’s degree. The training conducted is based on the concept of learning through the practice of practicing theories and academic concepts that have been learned in real work situations (Jose, 2010). Industrial Training is on the job training or before the job training designed to provide technical skills, work ethics and industry experience in a course field or course program.

Internships or industry experience takes about 3 - 6 months to complete or sometimes even more. Industrial Training or Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is the organized way of improving and enhancing knowledge and skill set of both students and graduates in a particular field of study to properly position them and prepare them practically for the real job. Industrial Training is a training program that is provided during the course of study, with the sole purpose of delivering on-the-field training or practical experience to the students who are going to become the prospective employees. It equips the students with the necessary skills-set required to perform a particular job which helps in building their self-confidence. Industrial Training is given in almost every sector, be it government or be it private sector.

Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is a human capital formation programme through industrial attachment for which students are expected to have a practical experience on the basis of theories and principles acquired in the teaching-learning process (Zaharim et al, 2010). However, SIWES is an avenue for equipping students with practical experiences to consolidate the theories and concepts they were thought in the classroom in preparation for the world of work. Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is a programme designed to expose and prepare students of Universities, Polytechnics, Colleges of Technology, Colleges of Agriculture and Education for Industrial Work situation which they are likely to meet after graduation. It is a skills training programme which affords students the opportunity of familiarizing, acquiring and exposing themselves with the needed experience in handling industrial equipment and machinery that are not usually available in their institutions. The vision and mission of SIWES is to equip students with the necessary practical knowledge

and technical skills for self-employment and effective involvement in Nigeria's industrial growth.

History and Objectives of SIWES

SIWES was founded in 1973 by ITF (Industrial Training Funds) to address the problem of tertiary institution graduates' lack of appropriate skills for employment in Nigerian industries. The Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) was founded to be a skill training programme to help expose and prepare students of universities, Polytechnics and colleges of education for the industrial work situation to be met after graduation. This system facilitates the transfer from the classroom to the workplace and aids in the application of knowledge. The program allows students to become acquainted with and exposed to the experience required in handling and operating equipment and machinery that are typically not available at their schools (Coralie, 2021).

Prior to the establishment of this scheme, there was a rising concern and trend among industrialists that graduates from higher education institutions lacked appropriate practical experience for employment. Students who entered Nigerian universities to study science and technology were not previously trained in the practical aspects of their chosen fields. As a result of their lack of work experience, they had difficulty finding work. As a result, employers believed that theoretical education in higher education was unresponsive to the needs of labor employers. Thousands of Nigerians faced this difficulty till 1973. The fund's main motivation for establishing and designing the scheme in 1973/74 was launched against this context.

The ITF (Industrial Training Fund) organization decided to aid all interested Nigerian students and created the SIWES program. The federal government officially approved and

presented it in 1974. During its early years, the scheme was entirely supported by the ITF, but as the financial commitment became too much for the fund, it withdrew in 1978. The National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) were given control of the scheme by the federal government in 1979. The federal government handed over supervision and implementation of the scheme to ITF in November 1984. It was taken over by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in July 1985, with the federal government bearing entire responsibility for funding.

The Industrial Training Fund's Policy Document No. 1 of 1973 which established SIWES outlined the objectives of the scheme as:

- Provide an avenue for students in Institutions of higher learning to acquire industrial skills and experience in their respective courses of study.
- Prepare students for the Industrial Work situation they are likely to experience after graduation.
- Expose students to work methods and techniques of handling equipment and machinery that may not be available in their Institutions.
- Make the transition from school to the world of work easier; and enhance students' networks for later job placements.
- Provide students with an opportunity to apply their knowledge to real work situations, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice; and
- Enlist and strengthen Employers' involvement in the entire educational process; thereby preparing the students for employment in Industry and Commerce.

General Benefits of Industrial Training

Some of the benefits which students can derive from an Industrial Training Program as enumerated by Baker & Comer (2012) include:

- 1. Optimal Performance:** Industrial training boosts the performance of students and helps them to meet career objectives and current industry demands.
- 2. Practical knowledge:** The knowledge of working in the field comes from industrial training. Many fields like the librarianship, the tourism industry, Mass communication and journalism and many more need the students and fresher's to go into the field and work on-site to experience the practical situation in their workplace. Solving the problems in the place and using your resources will give them chance to learn something new and realistic. Based on this prediction, it can be stated that the odds of landing a reputable position in these industries are extremely high.
- 3. Being professional:** Every industry needs professionalism from its employees as this is what keeps them going in the organization. As a learner, you learn numerous important principles regarding how the various sectors operate. The standards of conduct and professional practices of an organization are crucial components of it. Additionally, it is anticipated that the students would uphold these principles in addition to learning about them. Certain rules and regulations of the organization have to be followed by the trainees and they should without fail. When you have industrial training you can face these problems and tackle them with ease.
- 4. Gain Mastery:** It helps students to update and master their skills. If they are not aware of new concepts and technology, the industrial training program lets them master the latest

advancements. It does not only build confidence but also helps in taking up complicated projects easily.

5. **Employability Skills:** Industrial training program is always a comprehensive practical learning opportunity and platform for students to improve their employability skills. They would become well prepared for the job and get sufficient real corporate exposure.
6. **Soft skills:** You can work in any industry because of your abilities in addition to your degree, employers in businesses and sectors seek professionals who can think beyond the classroom therefore, Soft skills proficiency is required in these professions to effectively communicate with the client. The greatest time to master these abilities and even employ them is during your industrial training.
7. **Trend Awareness:** The industrial training program improves student's and graduate's awareness in a particular field or technical part of a field in order to stay refreshed and updated.
8. **Communication between the peers:** Communication among the department peers is very important as the relationship with them will make a good work environment. A positive environment will also keep the workers motivated to work honestly and with dedication. You would need to communicate with numerous departments as an employee of an organization to complete the assignment. One must be able to successfully express their expectations to other departments and get work done from them. The workplace is the ideal setting in which to learn this.
9. **Perspectives on an Organization's Internal Operations:** As a professional entering the workforce, you are given little or no information regarding the operation and internal

workings of any firm. As a member of any organization, you can take part in the conversations and decisions that shape the business, providing you with a closer look at how an industry runs internally. Also when you know about the company it boosts your confidence in working in the industry.

10. Self-Confidence: Industrial training helps in increasing self-confidence at work place and identifying core proficiency in a team. It cultivates the leadership ability of the students and gives them the energy required to execute and perform the given task.

11. Work Ethics: Work ethics are the behavioural skills and set of moral principles a person uses in their job to function effectively in a team. Students and Graduates who undergo industrial trainings will develop work ethics and maturity to handle various responsibilities in any organization.

12. Career Advancement: With industrial training you possess the necessary skill set and experience and updated work ethics to soar higher in your career.

Conclusion and General Recommendations

Industrial training is an essential component of education that prepares a student to become a professional. Working directly with industry specialists allows you to develop a plethora of intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities. Training is frequently a smart investment due to the numerous benefits it may bring throughout your career. As you progress and your firm evolves, make sure to stay current so you can keep enjoying these rewards.

On this note, it is advisable for every student to not only participate in Industrial Training alone but to take the training more serious as it creates a pathway of long lasting work experience which is capable in taking one far in life. The opportunities offered by student's

industrial training for employability of graduate librarians are numerous, some of them includes; Information consultants, information brokers, information managers, library educators, librarians (working in the library), researchers, lecturers, head librarian, data and digital management service, head of instruction services, outreach librarian etc. The student's Industrial Training will make one outstanding among equals and the crowd. A wise man once said that, "whatever thing worth doing, worth doing well".

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