



The Influence of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme on Academic Performance of Library and Information Science undergraduates in Two Library Schools in Osun State, Nigeria

Saheed A. Hamzat¹, Uwaebuka W. Madu²

¹ Department of Library and Information Science, Adeleke University, Ede, Nigeria

² Department of Library and Information Science, Federal Polytechnic Ede, Nigeria

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Corresponding author: saheed.abiola@adelekeuniversity.edu.ng | Saheed A. Hamzat

Abstract

The aim of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is to assist undergraduates in corroborating theories of the classroom with the realities of the workplace. Library and Information Science undergraduates like their counterparts in practical-oriented courses are expected to participate in the scheme while in advanced level of their training. However, the context observations of the researchers revealed that students often do not exhibit any form of improvement in their learning even after engaging in the exercise. This development necessitated the need to investigate the influence of SIWES on academic performance of LIS undergraduates with reference to Adeleke University and Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all the final year students in the two library schools in the 2020/2021 academic session totalling 259. Total enumeration was employed. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Out of the 259 copies of questionnaire administered, 220 were retrieved whereas 206 representing 80% were found valid for analysis. Data collected were analysed with the Statistical Product and Services Solution (SPSS) using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation. A significant improvement in the Cumulative Grade Point Average of most of the students in the semester immediately after participating in SIWES from the two schools was reported. The study recommends among others that undergraduates embarking on SIWES should endeavour to make maximum use of the opportunity to improve their academic performance, build professional capacity and brighten their chances of employment after graduation.

Keywords Academic performance, Library and Information Science Students, Library schools, Osun State

1. Introduction

Academic performance is a vague concept that is frequently employed in educational studies. However, the terms "academic performance", "academic achievement" and "academic success" are frequently used interchangeably (York et al., 2015). It is a term used to describe learner's competence in achieving educational goals, and it sometimes indicates how effectively the learner achieves criteria set in the institution or by educational authorities (Steinmayr et al., 2014). The society to which students will work places a high premium on performance of such students for employment with the assumption that the higher the performance, the higher the performance level at workplace. Corroborating this assertion, Ogbuanyan et al. (2018), stressed that no nation can develop to its full potential and keep up with modernisation trends without effective and efficient education and training. The authors found that the acquisition of practical skills needed for academic performance entails developing new skills, practise, and ways of doing things or completing a job, which is often obtained through training or experience. Students can obtain such training or experience through an initiative known as the Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES).

SIWES aims to expose and prepare students in higher education institutions for industrial job situations they may encounter after graduation. In other words, SIWES is an educational programme in which students engage in

work tasks while attending school. This allows students to be actively involved and be a part of the actual job environment outside of the classrooms. Similarly, Simisaye et al. (2018) explain SIWES with regards to LIS as a phase of librarianship education in which undergraduates at library schools are given a chance to get practical experience in a library setting, which constitutes a vital component of the library school programme.

The demand for SIWES was necessitated by heightened competitiveness and the requirement to create graduates with the skills required in sectors within and across Nigeria. The Scheme is a mandatory academic prerequisite that carries two or more credit units. It is required in all LIS programmes in library schools because it allows undergraduates to get practical skills that will enable them to operate professionally when they finally employment in libraries and information centres after graduation. According to Ojokuku et al. (2015), SIWES aims to bridge the current gap between theory and practice and expose students to required skills for a smooth transition from the classroom to the world of work. Griffin and Celhoso (2018) noted that SIWES allows students to connect with others to evaluate their talents and performance. It helps to enhance cooperation, problem-solving, and other essential employability skills. Such experience leads to increased career opportunities for graduates. Agboola and Ademiluyi (2016) assert that there is ample evidence that the SIWES has positively impacted students' personality, demeanour, knowledge, experience and competence, all of which are required for academic performance. However, Ibegbulam et al. (2017) are of the opinion that the LIS profession in Nigeria is not immune to the broadening trajectory of the competency gap, which has previously been related to students' academic performance and outcomes in higher institutions. This circumstance raises the question of whether SIWES possesses the capacity to influence LIS students' academic performance. It therefore, became essential to conduct an empirical study to ascertain the influence of Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme on the academic performance of Library and Information Science undergraduates with focus on two library schools in Osun State, Nigeria.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The study examined the influence of Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) on the academic performance of Library and Information Science Students in two library schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. compare the academic performances of LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State before and after participating in SIWES;
2. examine the influence of SIWES on academic performance of LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State, Nigeria;
3. determine the perception of SIWES by LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State, Nigeria; and
4. determine the challenges facing LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State during SIWES.

1.2 Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. what is the academic performance of LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State before and after participating in SIWES?
2. What is the influence of SIWES on academic performance of LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State, Nigeria?
3. What is the perception of SIWES by LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State, Nigeria?
4. What are the challenges facing LIS undergraduates in two library schools in Osun State during SIWES?

2. Literature review

Human societies in the quest for development have identified and developed structured training and educational programmes as major avenues for processing human beings to acquire the necessary skills and technical competence for their roles in the development of the society. This follows the recognition that human capital development is prerequisite for the attainment of the development desires of man. In Nigeria, the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is one of the human capital formation programmes through

industrial attachment for which students of tertiary institutions are expected to have a practical experience on the basis of theories and principles acquired in the teaching-learning process (Oyeniya, 2012).

The establishment of SIWES by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in 1973 was motivated by complaints from industrialists and other employers of labour who felt concerned that graduates of Nigeria tertiary institutions were deficient in practical background studies preparatory for employment in industries and other organizations. SIWES was established majorly to: expose and prepare students to method in handling equipment and tools that may not be available in educational institution; expose the instructors/lectures to new developments in industrial sectors; promotes cordial relationship between institution and industrial sectors; involve employer of labour in the entire educational process of preparing students as future employers; expose and prepare students in vocational technical and science related course for the industrial work situation they are likely to meet after graduation; bridge the gap between theoretical learning in the class and practical experiences in the field; and prepare students for business career by merging their analytical power with the practical skills for self-reliance. In achieving these objectives, SIWES is expected to engender positive changes in the student which should be measurable in the classroom performance of the student in the aftermath of the SIWES period (*Ademiluyi & Ademiluyi, 2018*).

There are mixed concerns about how much of SIWES that is actually helpful to students' academic performance (Anyaneh & Ochuba, 2019). According to Duignan (2003) it is not self-evident that work experience translates into enhanced academic performance. Awe and Adebisi (2014) believed that many students returning from SIWES are worse in some skills than they were while in school because many of them simply go their own way for four months, returning with fake SIWES log books attesting to industrial training that took place in default. Academic performance involves factors such as the intellectual level, personality, motivation, skills, interests and self-esteem which can be developed through participation in schemes like SIWES. (Oyeniya, 2012; and Abraham-Ibe, 2015). According to Agboola and Ademiluyi (2016) evidences abound that the SIWES has had salutary effect on student personality, comportment, knowledge and experience. The authors further stated that SIWES represents the student's first real exposure to the real nature of his career, with all its intricacies, detours, opportunities and challenges. The training received during the internship is expected to enable students have real life experience which can make them better learners.

Empirically, some researchers have studied the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme from diverse perspectives. Oyeniya (2012) examined SIWES and the incidence of occupational misfit among a population of 2,242 comprising of students from polytechnics, monotechnics and Industrial Training Officials of SIWES in Science, Technology and Agriculture related courses selected through the purposive and stratify random sampling techniques. Findings from the study showed that SIWES has contributed significantly to skill acquisition and skills utilization in industrial development in Nigeria. Similarly, the study by Anyaneh and Ochuba (2019) sought to ascertain the influence of students' SIWES on enhancing employable skills of business education students in Federal Tertiary Institutions in Anambra State. Findings revealed that majority of business education students studied benefited from SIWES to a high extent. The employable skills enhanced through SIWES included; typing skills, time management skills, innovation skills, leadership skills, team work skills among others. Noticeable challenges facing SIWES include finance, students' placements as a result of non-acceptance of students by some employers into their establishments, inadequate supervision of trainees as well as irregularity in academic calendar of institutions among others. With all the skills enhanced through SIWES, one would expect better academic performance from the students on resumption to school.

The study by Chukwuedo (2011) examined the perception of the influence of SIWES on academic achievement of final year students of the Faculties of Agriculture, Engineering, and the Department of Vocational and Technical Education, University of Benin. The findings of the study showed that SIWES influenced students' academic performance and was relevant to their practical skill acquisition. The results further showed that SIWES enhances competency of students in the workshop/laboratory, improves students' classroom learning and creates employment opportunities. Relatedly, *Ademiluyi and Ademiluyi (2018)* assessed the influence of SIWES on the academic performance of Office Technology and Management students in polytechnics in Osun State. The study shows that Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) has great influence on student's performance in Word Processing while Desktop Publishing and Webpage Design were not greatly influenced by Scheme (SIWES).

The determination of the influence of SIWES on professional development of Library and Information Science students in South-West, Nigeria was the focus of the study by Ojokuku et al (2015). Findings indicated high positive perception of SIWES as an influencer of professional development among LIS students with response rate of 97.7% agreement, and that SIWES exposed the students to new work methods also with response rate of 97.7% agreement. There is a tremendous relationship between the ideals of SIWES and Librarianship as a profession. According to Ojokuku et al (2015) SIWES is an inevitable programme to professional development of LIS students

because the intellectual work of librarians is derived from the application of scientific principles in organizing, storing, retrieving, and disseminating information.

The major benefits accruing to students who participate conscientiously in industrial training are the skills and competencies they acquire leading to their professional development. For LIS students, there is the opportunity to blend theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom with the practical hands-on application of knowledge required to perform technical works in the library. It also includes exposure to the environment in which they will eventually work, thereby enabling them to see how their future profession is organized in practice. Active participation in SIWES enables LIS students to appreciate work methods and gain experience in handling equipment and machinery which may not be available in their institutions. It prepares them to contribute to the productivity of their employers and national development immediately after graduation and as well creates enabling environment where they can develop and enhance their personal attributes such as critical thinking, creativity, initiative, resourcefulness, leadership, time management, presentation skills and interpersonal skills, amongst others. Participation in SIWES enhances LIS students' contacts with potential employers while on training. It enables them to bridge the gap between the knowledge acquired in institutions and the relevant production skills required in work organizations. It makes them appreciate the role of their professions as information providers and also enables students appreciate the connection between their courses of study and other related disciplines in the production of goods and services (Ojokuku et al, 2015).

Certain challenges have been identified to undermine effectiveness of SIWES. Ubale (2014), identified inability to secure the right places of attachment among students; conflict between what is taught in classrooms and what obtains in the industries; inadequate/poor supervision of students; inadequate training due to inadequacy of facilities for training of the students; unwillingness or lack of commitment by companies/establishment staff to expose the students to the required skills and training needed, hostility of some industry based supervisors; and accommodation problems. Effah, et al. (2014) also identify barriers such as poor supervision from industry based supervisors, and restriction of trainees from accessing machinery and equipment. Other barriers include shortness of the industrial training period which makes it difficult for trainees to have sufficient industry exposure (Karunaratne & Perera, 2015); unfriendliness of industry workers towards trainees, who for fear of losing their jobs to trainees.

3. Methodology

Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all the final year students in the Department of Library and Information Science, Adeleke University Ede and Federal Polytechnic Ede in the 2021/2022 academic session totalling 259, out of which 10 were from Adeleke University while 249 were from Federal Polytechnic Ede. The two institutions were purposefully selected from the four library schools in Osun State due to proximity and ease of data collection. Total enumeration was employed. Structured and validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Out of the 259 copies of questionnaire administered, 220 were retrieved whereas 206 representing 80% were found to valid for analysis. Data collected were analysed with the Statistical Product and Service Solution (SPSS) using descriptive statistics of frequency count, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation, and presented in tables. Test norm was also employed to gauge the average response cut-off and the description indicated that mean response of 2.50 and above were taken as agreed and as such accepted in decision rule.

4. Result and Discussion

The results are as presented in tables 1- 5. The demographic information of the respondents is as presented in Table 1. The analysis showed that high percentage of the respondents (58.7%) are female while 41.3% are male. The table also revealed that 40.3% of the respondents are within the age range of 21-25 years and 26-30 years. Only 7% (15) falls within 16-20 years of age. The comparison of the academic performances of the respondents before and after SIWES participation presented in Table 2 indicated that prior to SIWES engagement, 2 (1.0%) of the respondents were on probation; 26 (12.6%) were on 3rd class (lower credit); 83(40.3%) were on second class lower (lower credit); 68 (33.0%) were in second class upper (upper credit) and 27 (13.1%) were in first class (distinction). The table further revealed the performances of the respondents in the following semester after participating in SIWES. Analysis of data revealed that only 1 of the respondents remained on probation; the number of respondents on 3rd class (lower credit) reduced from 26 to 18; and the number of respondents on second class lower (lower credit) reduced from 83 to 69. Interestingly, the number of respondents on Upper Credit (2nd Class Upper) increased from 68 (33%) to 89 (43.2%) indicating a 10.2% raise in that category. Also, the number

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Categories	Frequencies (N=206)	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	85	41.3
	Female	121	58.7
Age Range	16-20 years	15	7.3
	21-25 years	83	40.3
	26-30 years	83	40.3

Table 2. Academic performances of the Respondents before and after SIWES Participation

Grade Before SIWES	Freq.	%	After SIWES	Freq.	%
Probation	2	1	Probation	1	0.5
Pass (3 rd Class)	26	12.6	Pass (3 rd Class)	18	8.7
Lower Credit (2 nd Class Lower)	83	40.3	Lower Credit (2.2)	69	33.5
Upper Credit (2 nd Class Upper)	68	33	Upper Credit (2.1)	89	44.2
Distinction (First Class)	27	13.1	Distinction (1st Class)	29	14.1
Total	206	100		26	100

of students in Distinction (First Class) from 27 (13.1%) to 29 (14.1%). It can therefore be deduced that there was an improvement in the academic performances of the respondents after participating in SIWES.

The improvement in the performances of the students after participating in SIWES could be attributed to their exposure to the practical reality of their course of study which consequently improved their understanding of the course content. The finding of this study confirms the assertion of Ademiluyi and Ademiluyi (2018) that SIWES is expected to engender positive changes in the student which should be measurable in the classroom performance of the student in the aftermath of the SIWES period.

The influence of SIWES on the respondents' academic performance presented in Table 3 revealed that an aggregated 193 respondents representing 93.7% affirmed that their last semester result improved due to their involvement in SIWES. Also, 198 (96.1%) agreed that involvement in SIWES improved their understanding of technical terms associated with librarianship. Given that all the items in the table exceeded the cut-off mean of 2.5 and yielded a weighted mean of 3.47, it can be deduced that there is a strong influence of SIWES on the students' academic performance.

The finding of this study agrees with Chukwuedo (2011) whose study examined the perception of the influence of SIWES on academic achievement of final year students in University of Benin and reported that SIWES positively influenced the students' academic performance. Similarly, the finding of the present study is in line with Ademiluyi and Ademiluyi (2018) whose assesment of the influence of SIWES on the academic performance of Office Technology and Management students in polytechnics in Osun State indicated that SIWES has great influence on student's performance in Word Processing. The claim by Duignan (2003) that, it is not self-evident that work experience translates into enhanced academic performance is contradicted by the finding of this study given that analysis of data clearly indicates an improved academic performance among the study population.

The perception of SIWES by LIS undergraduates as analysed indicated that an aggregated 203 respondents representing 98.5% perceived that SIWES enables students to develop abilities and skills necessary for proficiency in their profession. The table further reveals that all the items attracted mean scores above the cut-off mean of 2.5, with a weighted mean of 3.46 indicating that the respondent have a very high positive perception of SIWES as a vital component of LIS training. This finding affirms the result of Ojokuku, et al. (2015) who reported high positive perception of SIWES as an influencer of professional development among LIS students South-West, Nigeria.

The challenges LIS undergraduates are confronting during SIWES was analysed based on the responses from the respondents. The analysis revealed that all the items on the table constitute challenges to the respondents during SIWES. Accommodation related challenges and none payment of allowances by some employers rank among the major challenges facing the respondents. With a weighted mean of 3.19, it could be deduced that there are myriad of challenges that undermine for the effectiveness of SIWES. The finding of this study is in line with Ubale (2014), Effah, et al. (2014) and Karunaratne and Perera (2015) who variously reported accommodation difficulties; lack of commitment by companies/establishment staff to expose the students to the required skills and training needed; shortness of the industrial training period; inadequate/poor supervision of students, among others.

Table 3. Influence of SIWES on Academic Performance

SN	Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean \bar{x}	Std. Dev.
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
I	Improvement in the last semester result	103	50	90	43.7	12	5.8	1	0.5	3.43	.62
li	Improvement in understanding of the technical terms associated with librarianship	117	56.8	81	39.3	5	2.4	3	1.5	3.51	.62
lii	Improvement in passion for Library and Information Science	105	51	88	42.7	7	3.4	6	2.9	3.51	.62
iV	Improvement in performance in practical courses	104	50.5	88	42.7	13	6.3	1	0.5	3.43	.63
V	Improvement in understanding of course content	109	52.9	88	42.7	6	2.9	3	1.5	3.47	.62
Weighted Mean										3.47	.62

Table 4. Perception of SIWES by LIS Undergratuates

SN	Participation in SIWES	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean \bar{x}	Std. Dev.
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
I	is necessary for LIS undergraduate	130	63.1	67	32.5	7	3.4	2	1	3.57	.60
li	enables students to develop abilities and skills necessary for proficiency in their profession.	130	63.1	73	35.4	2	1	1	0.5	3.61	.53
lii	helps students to develop the necessary work ethics and habits needed in Librarianship	117	56.8	86	41.7	3	1.5	0	0	3.55	.52
Iv	exposes student to the intricacies in LIS	100	48.5	98	47.6	8	3.9	0	0	3.44	.57
V	empowers students to be more useful and productive members of the society	105	51.0	92	44.7	8	3.9	1	0.5	3.46	.59
Vi	exposure helped me to develop more interest in workshop/laboratory activities	99	48.1	86	41.7	15	7.3	6	2.9	3.34	.76
Vii	The ways of handling materials in the workshop/laboratories are enhanced after SIWES exposure	71	34.5	121	58.7	13	6.3	1	0.5	3.27	.59
Weighted Mean										3.46	.59

Table 5. Challenges facing LIS Undergraduates during SIWES

SN	Challenges facing LIS undergraduates during SIWES include	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean \bar{x}	Std. Dev.
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
I	difficulty in getting relevant industrial placement	68	33.0	108	52.4	25	12.1	5	2.4	3.16	.72
Ii	inadequate supervision of trainees	67	32.5	99	48.1	35	17.0	5	2.4	3.10	.76
Iii	irregular academic calendar of institutions	84	40.8	94	45.6	26	12.6	2	1.0	3.26	.71
Iv	Accommodation related challenges	101	49.0	77	37.4	22	10.7	6	2.9	3.32	.78
V	None payment of upkeep allowance by some industries	97	47.1	83	40.3	20	9.7	6	2.9	3.31	.76
Vi	Security concerns that hinder students from going to some part of the country for their SIWES attachment	88	42.7	88	42.7	24	11.7	6	2.9	3.25	.77
Vii	short duration of SIWES which makes it difficult to acquire all the needed practical skills	65	31.6	87	42.2	45	21.8	9	4.4	3.10	1.62
Viii	Engaging the students in other assignments that are unrelated with their course of study	72	35.0	91	44.2	33	16.0	10	4.9	3.09	.83
Ix	Lack of commitment by establishment staff to expose the students to the required skills and training needed	83	40.3	84	40.8	33	16.0	6	2.9	3.18	.80
X	high cost of undergoing the programme	81	39.3	93	45.1	25	12.1	7	3.4	3.20	.78
Xi	lack of appropriate skills among professionals	81	39.3	78	37.9	43	20.9	4	1.9	3.15	.82
	Weighted Mean									3.19	0.85

5. Conclusion

The Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) has significant influence on the academic performance of LIS undergraduates in the two Library schools in Osun State, Nigeria. The Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) was introduced to bridge the gap between classroom and industry experiences, with an expectation that engagement in the programme will improve the participants' performance on return to their classrooms. Moreover, the changing role of librarians requires that LIS trainees are comprehensively exposed to the practical components of the curriculum which will in turn aid their mastery of the subject of librarianship. Therefore, SIWES remains a yardstick to enhance learning activities of LIS students in the selected library schools in Osun State, Nigeria.

6. Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Undergraduates embarking on SIWES should endeavour to make maximum use of the opportunity to improve their academic performance, build professional capacity and brighten their chances of employment after graduation by committing themselves to the task that may be assigned to them at their attached library.
2. Management of libraries and other relevant organisations that absorb LIS SIWES students should be equipped with relevant facilities, equipment and infrastructure to enable them expose the trainees to relevant industrial experiences and knowledge.
3. The supervision of SIWES trainees should be meticulously carried out by the concerned officers to enable the trainees benefit maximally from the programme and avoid situation where some trainees display laxity during the programme. Officers in charge of SIWES students should see their roles as service to humanity and discharge same with utmost sense of responsibility; and
4. The host organisation should endeavour to incorporate the payment of stipends for transportation to trainees for improved commitment to organisation while the exercise last.

Declarations

Data availability Data will be made available upon reasonable request.

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Competing interests Authors declare no known competing or financial interests.

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