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PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF INDUSTRIAL TRAINING ON STUDENTS' CAREER PATH IN POLYTECHNICS IN OSUN STATE

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Abstract
The study examined the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths at polytechnics in Osun State. The study is descriptive, using 300 HND students from three polytechnics in Osun State as participants. Four research questions were developed to lead the investigation. How does industrial training influence the career paths of polytechnic students in Osun State? What are the problems that polytechnic students face in their professional paths in Osun State? Is there a substantial variation in how students view the impact of industrial training on their career pathways by gender? Is there a significant variation in the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths based on age? The data was collected via a questionnaire, with a reliability level of 0.76. The acquired data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically mean, standard deviation, the t-test, and ANOVA. The study found that industrial training has a beneficial impact on polytechnic students' career paths in Osun State. Polytechnic students in Osun State, however, face several challenges in their career paths. The following recommendations were made: the government should ensure that the industrial training program is adequately funded; the government and stakeholders should strive to ensure that the boss of the IT trainee is supportive in terms of expressing concern and patiently directing the students; and the government and stakeholders should ensure that industry is well-oriented and educated to fully supervise, train, and play their role in the development of students.

Key Words: Industrial training, Students' Career, Polytechnic, Career path

INTRODUCTION

Working as a bridge between polytechnic and the workplace, industrial training (IT) offers pre-professional job experience with specific assignments and responsibilities. Successful industrial training helps students make educated judgments and increases their marketability after graduation. Industrial training programs are becoming increasingly popular among students as they pursue their studies. Ezeali and Esiagu (2019) define training as the systematic, coordinated development of knowledge, abilities, and attitudes required by an industrial worker to master a given scenario or perform a certain

task within an organizational setting. Many studies have been undertaken to determine the utility of IT. According to Osman and Kofli (2018), industrial training is a time of practical experience under the supervision of a mentor that allows trainees to combine information learned via formal education with experience in a real-world work context.

Ukwuoma and Akanwa (2018) noticed that good training brings about an improvement in knowledge necessary in the work, knowledge of the structure and business arms of the organization. Training is an important aspect in increasing the efficiency and knowledge of employees. Adomi (2020) said that ninety percent of the students tested agreed that IT is highly relevant, and as part of the study's recommendations, he suggested six months for IT rather than three. Preparing students for success in their job pathways is the major purpose of higher schools. Even while graduates' knowledge and skills from their polytechnic education should be enough to meet labor market expectations and enable them to enter the workforce with ease, there are still impediments in their path to obtaining a job for recent graduates. Higher education institutions are continually looking for ways to improve students' job opportunities.

According to Baron (2017), the biggest hurdle confronting polytechnics is educating their students with the required competencies, exposure, and understanding to manage the expectations and environment of the labor market. It is vital for students to continually cultivate the skills and competence that will propel them in their careers, regardless of their academic background. In the near future, educational institutions will have to reevaluate their curricula and how best to educate their students with the knowledge and skills required to improve their job prospects. After graduation, students must begin the process of looking for work. The unexpected reality of the labor market, which includes the existence of a work environment in which abilities such as specialized skills or prior experience are required as a prerequisite for employment, which are uncommon among graduates, frequently shocks recent graduates. This is the location where many hurdles and problems arise. Not only do new grads face challenges and concerns, but so do schools.
Students who participate in IT programs gain a lot from increased productivity, enhanced job experience, skill development, and professional network building, all of which increase their chances of landing a job after graduation. Adeboye (2018) claims that a large section of the labour force lacks expertise as a result of a poor educational system.

As Khan (2017) found in his research, several scholars have claimed that the fact that so many graduates are unemployed is proof that schools are failing to give their students the skills essential to enter the workforce. One of the primary challenges graduate students encounter is unemployment. More and more recent graduates are taking advantage of realistic short-term career opportunities, such as internships, before looking for long-term positions. According to Helyer and Lee's (2019) research, business owners are looking for graduates with specialized, industry-specific, and practical abilities, with an emphasis on detecting a skills gap and shortage. Employers also appreciate cross-functional abilities, including critical thinking, problem solving, communication, customer service, teamwork, and leadership.

Furthermore, graduates are expected to have high standards for themselves in terms of reliability, dependability, and behavior at work. Graduates find it extremely difficult to get work since they don't match the requirements set by the job market. Higher education institutes are under scrutiny for producing graduates who struggle to meet the expectations of the job

market (Kalufya & Mwakajinga, 2016). Through hands-on learning opportunities like IT programmes, students can acquire the technical skills required to perform job-related tasks. According to Steven (2021), IT programs prepare graduates to integrate classroom theory and knowledge with real-world application and skill development in the workplace. The design of IT programs ensures that graduates are prepared to enter the workforce.

There is no doubt that industrial training is a commendable skills development course aimed at bridging the gap between classroom theories and real-world experience.

This study examined how to bridge the present gap between graduates' competencies and knowledge and what businesses and labor markets want. This causes the researcher to conduct an inquiry into the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths in polytechnics in Osun State. Specifically, the study aims to assess the influence of industrial training on polytechnic students' career paths in Osun State, as well as identify obstacles they face. Determine whether there is a substantial variation in the perceived influence of industrial training on students' career paths based on gender and age.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions, which were determined by the study's purpose.

1. How does industrial training influence the career paths of polytechnic students in Osun State?
2. What are the problems that polytechnic students face in their professional paths in Osun State?
3. Is there a substantial variation in how students view the impact of industrial training on their career pathways by gender?
4. Is there a significant variation in the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths based on age?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Industrial Training

Industrial training is the process of providing practical, hands-on experience and instruction to individuals in a specific sector (Ajidahun, 2017). It entails providing trainees with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to work in their chosen field. Industrial training can take place in a variety of fields, including manufacturing, engineering, technology, and construction. This sort of training could include on-the-job training, apprenticeships, internships, and co-op programs, among others. The purpose of industrial training is to prepare people for the challenges of the industry and help them succeed in their chosen careers.

Industrial training is the process of delivering practical, hands-on experience and instruction to persons in a particular sector. It entails providing trainees with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to work in their chosen field. Industrial training can take place in a variety of fields, including manufacturing, engineering, technology, and construction. This sort of training could include on-the-job training, apprenticeships, internships, and co-op programs, among others. The purpose of industrial training is to educate people for the demands of the industry and help them succeed in their chosen careers (Akerejola, 2018).

According to Igbinosa (2017), industrial training is an organized program that aims to provide learners with hands-on experience and practical skills in a particular sector or field. It is often conducted by students or professionals looking to improve their knowledge and skills in the workplace. According to the International

Labour Organization, industrial training is an essential component of vocational education that prepares people for the demands of the labor market. It entails acquiring the technical skills, knowledge, and competencies required to accomplish specific activities within a given industry or career. This sort of training is typically delivered by businesses or training institutes, and its goal is to bridge the gap between theory and practice by providing participants with real-world learning opportunities.

In education, industrial training is commonly referred to as "work-based learning" or "on-the-job training." This form of training provides students with hands-on experience in a real-world setting, allowing them to apply what they've learned in the classroom to actual job activities. Working with professionals in the industry allows trainees to build critical skills and competencies required for successful employment. One of the primary benefits of industrial training is that it allows students to gain a better grasp of the industry in which they are interested. Trainees can obtain firsthand experience in the workplace by seeing day-to-day business operations, interacting with industry specialists, and learning about industry-specific practices and procedures. This exposure can help individuals make more informed professional decisions and have a better understanding of their own talents and interests (Industrial Training Fund [ITF], 2022).

Career Opportunity and Information Gained from Industrial Training

Career prospects can follow training for students, and the experience itself can help them move from student to job (Garavan, 2017). As a result, this experience may lead some students to pursue or abandon their jobs. As a result, training serves as a stepping stone into the world of work, allowing students to check out industries for future settlements, work functions for future employment, and self-alignment of career fit. If graduates want to be noticed by graduate recruiters, they must stand out by strategically using the experiential learning they obtain from industrial training.

According to Tovey (2021), more than half of the top graduate recruiters believe that, because of the clear benefits of work experience to an individual's skill set, graduates with work experience are given preference in their selection procedures. While job-specific talents are always desirable, most employers expect students to have some broad skills. These general job abilities are sometimes referred to as employability skills. The word 'employability skills' is used in a variety of contexts, ranging from abilities required to secure a job, such as interview methods, job-searching skills, and the ability to produce a professional curriculum vitae, to skills required to perform a job effectively. Transferable and generic abilities are more important than ever in a quickly changing environment. "Globalization and technological processes are altering the way that people all over the planet make a living, and graduates need adaptability and resilience to thrive in this world."

According to Boosting and George (2017), "businesses want graduates who not only add value but who have the skills to help transform their organization in the face of continuous and rapid economic and technological change," reiterating what Harvey and Greey (2014) said but emphasizing the speed of economic and technological change. Furthermore, Brian (2016) advocated for the necessity of experiential learning, stating, "Words can be learned and repeated, but that does not imply you have the skills. This clearly demonstrates that industry training can offer students abilities that they may not get from academic study.

Industrial training can bridge the gap between academic theory and practical company operations, in part by allowing students to apply

what they've learned in the classroom to a real-world business environment. It also makes it easier to get your first job and increases the number of job opportunities. When students complete industrial training, they may be able to go immediately into permanent positions within the same firm. Because experience is an important factor in entering the workforce, industrial training can provide a chance for students to get experience in a cost-effective environment while also allowing them to evaluate their fit with the enterprise.

Influence of Industrial Training on Students' Career Decision Making

Industrial training has a significant impact on students' career choices. This period of hands-on experience in a real-world setting not only allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to real-world situations but also enables them to critically evaluate their professional aspirations and objectives. As such, industrial training has a large and complex impact on students' career decisions.

Raimi (2015) evaluates the students' industrial work experience scheme. It was discovered that exposure to the actual work world helps students comprehend the complexities of their chosen subject, as well as the many employment duties and obligations that come with it. For example, a student pursuing a degree in computer science may have a better understanding of programming languages and software development after completing an internship at a technology company. This hands-on experience allows students to assess their strengths and limitations in certain job responsibilities, which helps them make career decisions.

Industrial training helps students gain a better knowledge of their own career interests, values, and goals. Working in a real-world situation allows students to determine whether their selected career pathways are compatible with their personal and professional aspirations. For example, a student interning at a financial institution may discover that they are more interested in social entrepreneurship than traditional banking. This self-discovery process can have a substantial impact on students' job choices, causing them to seek more meaningful routes that are consistent with their interests and values.

Industrial training also helps students develop a professional network by offering information about career choices, job prospects, and industry trends. It also helps students develop soft skills such as communication, time management, and adaptability, which make them more marketable and competitive in the job market. Industrial training also helps students comprehend industry trends and job market expectations, which allows them to make more educated career decisions. Overall, industrial training enables students to take control of their careers, make educated decisions, and pursue opportunities that are relevant to their interests and aspirations.

Relationship between Industrial Training and Employment Competencies

The link between industrial training and job skills is critical in preparing people for the workforce. Individuals who receive industrial training gain hands-on experience and practical skills that are required for success in the workplace. Industrial training refers to the hands-on experience and practical skills that people gain from on-the-job training or internships in a certain industry or sector. This sort of training is intended to equip learners with practical experience and prepare them for the needs of the labor market. Industrial training programs are critical for people who want to develop relevant skills and expertise in their chosen sector and improve their job prospects (Wodi and Dokubo, 2019).

Employment competences, on the other hand, are the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to complete a job successfully. These abilities can include technical skills and industry knowledge, as well as soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. Employers frequently want workers with a mix of technical and soft skills related to the job needs, and industrial training plays an important role in building these competencies. Individuals benefit from industrial training because it helps them build the technical skills required for job performance. Working in a real-world setting and receiving hands-on experience allows learners to learn how to operate machinery, handle tools and equipment, and perform specific activities required in their chosen area.

This practical experience is crucial in assisting individuals in developing their technical abilities and becoming competent experts in their field (Wodi & Dokubo, 2019). In addition to technical skills, industrial training helps individuals acquire soft skills that are required for success in the workplace. Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management are essential for developing good working relationships, cooperating with colleagues, and resolving issues in the workplace. Industrial training allows learners to practice and perfect these abilities in a real-world setting, increasing their employability and making them well-rounded professionals.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey research in which thoughts and opinions were gathered from all of the students sampled using a questionnaire. The study's population included all HND students in polytechnics in Osun State. A simple random sampling technique was employed to choose three polytechnics in Osun State, namely, Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State Polytechnic, Ire, and Interlink Polytechnic, Ijebu-Ijesa. One hundred (100) HND students were chosen at random from each of the three (3) polytechnics. The study's sample size consisted of 300 polytechnic students. A self-created questionnaire was employed to obtain important data. The questionnaire items were arranged to reflect the study's specific aims. The questionnaire was broken into three pieces. Section A of the questionnaire includes items on personal information from respondents. Section B contains items on the impact of industrial training on students' career paths. Section C contains items on the problems that students face while choosing a career.

To guarantee the instrument's face and content validity, the questionnaire was distributed to measurement and evaluation professionals for feedback, criticism, and corrections. Their comments, edits, and observations were used to create the final copy. The test-retest reliability approach was used to determine the consistency of the instruments. The surveys were administered to a second set of 30 respondents who were not part of the study's sample over two weeks. Their responses were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and a reliability index of 0.76 was achieved. The researchers personally visited the selected polytechnics to seek authorization from the school officials as well as the approval of the participants. The researcher personally distributed questionnaires to respondents, assisted by two research assistants. The researcher promptly obtained copies of the administered questionnaire at the end of the exercise, which lasted two weeks. The mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the first and second study questions.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: How does industrial training influence the career paths of polytechnic students in Osun State?

Table 1: Analysis of the influence of industrial training on polytechnic students' career path in Osun State (N = 300)

S/No	Items	Mean	SD
1	Industrial training provides basic skills of leadership skills for students	3.3	0.97
2	It provides the skill of effective time management for students	3.3	0.95
3	It enables students to develop good interpersonal/human relations skills	3.3	0.90
4	It helps students acquire communication/presentation skills.	2.4	0.65
5	It enables students to acquire problem-solving skills.	3.3	0.87
6	Industrial training exposes students to get exposed to modern ICTs used in organizations	3.4	0.95
7	It enables students to learn how to perform a job under a formalized organizational setting	3.3	0.90
8	Industrial training helps students to develop creativity and initiative	3.3	0.85
9	It makes students acquire good writing skills.	3.0	0.72
10	It helps students to develop critical thinking skills.	3.2	0.81
	Grand Mean	**3.20**	

Interpretation of mean scores: 2.50 – 4.0 = Positively Influence, 1.00 – 2.49 = Negatively Influence

Table 1 presents the analysis of the influence of industrial training on polytechnic students' career paths in Osun State. As shown in Table 1, the observed grand mean is 3.20, which is within the benchmark of positive influence. This means that industrial training has a positive influence on polytechnic students' career paths in Osun State.

Research Question 2: What are the problems that polytechnic students face in their professional paths in Osun State?

Table 2: Analysis of the challenges facing polytechnic students in their career path in Osun State (N = 300)

S/No	Items	Mean	SD
1	Poor timing of the IT programme as lectures interfere with the training period.	2.72	0.50
2	Poor exposure of students to practical work.	2.64	0.53
3	Wrong placement procedure	2.58	0.59
4	Lack of funds to cater to the welfare of students	2.70	0.48
5	Poor supervisory circumstances	2.52	0.51
6	Poor working relationship between employees and students	2.56	0.53
7	Truancy during IT programmes by the students	2.52	0.45

8	Lack of willingness on the part of most organizations to accept students.	2.71	0.42
9	Lack of motivation, like allowances/stipends for students by the organizations	2.67	0.40
10	Insensitivity of organizations' management to students' problems.	2.69	0.43
	Grand Mean	**2.63**	

Interpretation of mean scores: 2.50 – 4.0 = Challenging, 1.00 – 2.49 = Not Challenging

Table 2 presents the results to know the challenges facing polytechnic students in their career path in Osun State. The items that the respondents established with that were the challenges facing polytechnic students in their career path in Osun State were: Poor timing of the IT programme, as lectures interfere with the training period. (Mean = 2.72), Poor exposure of students to practical work. (Mean = 2.64), Wrong placement procedure (Mean = 2.58), Lack of funds to cater for welfare of students (Mean = 2.70), Poor supervisory circumstances (Mean = 2.52), Poor working relationship between employees and student (Mean = 2.56), Truancy during IT programmes by the students (Mean = 2.52), Lack of willingness on the part of most organizations to accept students. (Mean = 2.71), Lack of motivation, like allowances/stipends for students by the organizations (Mean = 2.67), and Insensitivity of organizations' management to students' problems (Mean = 2.69). The overall mean of 2.63 shows that polytechnic students in Osun State face challenges in their career paths, and the students were homogeneous in their responses to the various items on challenges faced.

Research Question 3: Is there a substantial variation in how students view the impact of industrial training on their career pathways by gender?

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis showing if there is a significant difference in the perceived influence of industrial training on students' career path based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remark
Male	113	48.18	5.65	0.789	298	0.431	Not Significant
Male	187	48.77	6.61				

Table 3 shows the data analysis to determine whether there is a significant difference in the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths based on gender. The findings show that there is no significant difference in the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths depending on gender ($t = 0.789$, $df = 298$, $p > 0.05$). This means that the perceived impact of industrial training on male students' career paths is comparable to that of female students.

Research Question 4: Is there a significant variation in the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths based on age?

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA showing if there is a significant difference in the perceived influence of industrial training on students' career path based on age

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	364.041	2	182.020	4.748	0.009
Within Groups	11386.106	297	38.337		
Total	11750.147	299			

A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether there is a significant difference in the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths based on age. Table 4 demonstrates a considerable difference in the perceived impact of industrial training on students' career paths based on age. ($F(2, 297) = 4.748$, $p = 0.009$). Because the p-value is less than 0.05, the perceived influence of industrial training on students' career paths is strongly related to their age.

DISCUSSION

Industrial training is the process of providing practical, hands-on experience and instruction to individuals in a specific sector (Ajidahun, 2017). This study's findings suggest that industrial training has a favourable influence on the career paths of polytechnic students in Osun State. Furthermore, industrial training provides students with basic leadership skills, effective time management skills, enabling students to develop good interpersonal/human relations skills, making students acquire communication/presentation skills, and enabling students to acquire problem-solving skills, which is supported by Van Wart et al. (2020) that industrial training allows students to build professional networks and establish contacts within their chosen industry. This networking opportunity is crucial because it might lead to potential job offers or provide information about the current job market. Students who have undergone industrial training may have access to mentors and professionals who can provide assistance and advice on career choices and opportunities, thereby influencing their career decisions. These professional relationships can supply students with useful tools, such as job postings and industry insights, to help them plan their careers.

Furthermore, Ugwuanyi and Ezema (2020) believe that industrial training is an important and necessary component of students' academic and career growth. Working alongside industry professionals exposes students to the day-to-day duties and challenges of their chosen career path, allowing them to determine whether it is a good fit for them. Industrial training also helps students develop a professional network by offering information about career choices, job prospects, and industry trends.

Poor timing of the IT program because lectures interfere with the training period, lack of finances to cater to the well-being of students. Poor timing of the IT program since lectures clash with the training period. Lack of willingness on the part of most organizations to accept students, as well as a lack of motivation in the form of allowances/stipends for students by the organizations, are the major challenges facing polytechnic students in their career path in Osun State, which agrees with Lenz et al. (2020), who discovered that students with an external locus of control have more difficulty making career decisions. The scores of students in eleven subcategories of the professional decision-making difficulty scale were analyzed by locus of control; students with an external locus of control had better scores, except for two subcategories. The differences between the four subcategories of the lack of information dimension are considerable. Students with an external locus of control struggle more than students with an internal locus of control because they lack information about the

decision-making process, themselves, vocations, and opportunities to gain extra information. Furthermore, differences in three subcategories of the contradictory information dimension were statistically significant in favor of individuals with an external locus of control.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Students and interns perceive industrial training as an invaluable educational experience that warrants academic credit, financial compensation, and a formal grade. To maximize its benefits, formal instruction should be provided at the outset of the industrial training. This instruction serves to familiarize students with the professional environment, equipping them with the essential knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary for a seamless transition into the workforce upon graduation. These findings reveal that industrial training has a profound impact on the career trajectories of polytechnic students. It compels them to refine their presentation and communication skills, which in turn enhances their ability to tackle workplace challenges.

Recommendations

1. The study recommends that the government allocate enough funding for industry training programs;
2. Government and stakeholders should work to ensure that the boss of the IT trainee is supportive in terms of expressing concern and patiently directing the pupils;
3. Government and stakeholders should ensure that industry personnel are well-versed and educated to adequately oversee, train, and contribute to student growth; and
4. The government should encourage trainees to provide input on various parts of the business and their training programs as a whole, as well as report any inappropriate conduct to the industry's industrial liaison office.

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