# Competencies Trends in LIS Students

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**Abstract**: - *Now-a-days library environment is completely different from that of a century ago. It is imperative for LIS Students to be competent in areas such as IT skills, Computer skills, Communication skills, Research skills and so on. The present study is set to investigate skills among LIS Students. It is also important that Students be skilled in database searching, to efficiently search through and locate needed materials. Developing information technology training programs based on regular need assessment studies enhances LIS professionals Skills.*

**Keywords: Competencies, Library and Information Science Students, Skills, LIS education.**

## Introduction

LIS education and training should provide sufficient competencies to enable students to tackle real job or employment related problems. It should be enough to provide not only the understanding of jobs but also competencies and skills that make up a whole and complete librarian. To cope with current technologies, Library and Information science profession have recognized the importance of skills and competencies required in today's society.

A skill is the ability to carry out a task with pre-determined results often within a given amount of time, energy, or both. Skills can often be divided into domain-general and domain-specific skills. For example, in the domain of work, some general skills would include time management, teamwork and leadership, self-motivation and others, whereas domain-specific skills would be useful only for a certain job. Skill usually requires certain environmental situations to assess the level of skill being shown and used. Competency-based education and the identification of the related competencies could be considered as a main theoretical basis for LIS education.

Competence indicates sufficiency of knowledge and skills that enable someone to act in a wide variety of situations. Because each level of responsibility has its own requirements, competence can occur in any period of a person's life or at any stage of his or her career.

Competencies are defined as the knowledge, Skills and abilities that define and contribute performance in a particular profession. They are described so that they can be observed, measured and rated (FLICC, 2008).

**Different Competencies of LIS Student**

Understanding of Philosophy of Library Science (Introduction to Theoretical and Basic Subjects of the Discipline)

Geraei & Heidari (2015) discussed that most students in their first semester of their first year have an unrealistic understanding regarding their field of study and are uncertain about their future jobs. However, after the second semester and by using inquiry-based learning, students stated that they now know the main areas covered by LIS in society and were capable of comparing their field of study to other fields to rationally evaluate its characteristics.

Mansourian (2009) found that majority of fresh LIS students in Iran not only lack a real understanding of their discipline but also only have a uncertain view of their future job. However, after the second semester and by using inquiry-based learning, students stated that they now know the main areas covered by LIS in society and were capable of comparing their field of study to other fields to rationally evaluate its characteristics. Another important point in these results was the increased belief on the part of the students in the usefulness of their field of study and their desire to continue their studies at higher levels of education.

Information Technology and Computer Literacy

Findings by Chan-Lin (2009) showed that there was no meaningful distinction between computer literacy of first, second, third and fourth year students and those students keep the computer literacy and experience they had when entering the university. However, the findings of this study showed that computer literacy of most first year students is low and that their computer literacy will increase between second and eighth semesters of their education. The reason behind this increase in competency can be found in two places. First is the fact that information technology is presented as a separate part of the curriculum of bachelor level courses for librarianship and information science which includes the three-credit courses of "Word processing" and "Principals of computer science", and the two-credit course of "Introduction to information and communication technologies". The second reason is the incorporation of information technology in most courses and setting computer literacy as their common goal.

Self-efficacy and computer perceived competence were positively related to frequency of use of certain electronic activities and previous PC/ internet experience. The findings also suggested that increased levels of self-efficacy and computer competence were associated with higher grades. Almost every participant in this study owned a computer and had home access to the Internet, it is not surprising that students mostly used search engines, e-mail and/or Facebook and word processing. However, the emphasis given in the curricula of LIS Departments on IT and the integration of technology in an increasing number of courses, is not in line with the relatively reduced frequency of IT use. In fact, only almost one out of three of the respondents made use of any IT applications everyday or 1-3 times/week (Malliari, Korobili & Togia, 2012) .

The findings of Farzana & Fatima (2012) showed that the LIS students of Punjab University were slightly better in ICT skills as compared to Islamia University of Bahawalpur students. The major reasons of this difference were insufficient availability of ICT facilities such as hardware, software and the internet bandwidth, inadequate IT infrastructure, etc. They argued that the syllabus/course of both the LIS schools was quite good and up-to-date; however, the students had less opportunity of hands-on practice. The interviewees stressed on the management of both the library schools to improve their IT infrastructure, provide effective teaching environment, and ICT facilities to LIS students to bridge the gap. Their study respondents suggested that IT and communication skills of students should be improved and teachers' training should be a regular component along with the revision of the curriculum.

In the study done by Buarki & Hepworth (2011) it was showed that the majority of the students (71%) indicated that they had an intermediate ICT skills level, database maintenance and Web page construction skills were not practiced by students; whereas the "search and retrieve information from Internet" was the most frequently used skill by 88% of the students. In addition, the students' ICT skills did not satisfy the need of the job market, the findings suggested that they should possess other skills, in addition to ICT skills, to become information professionals.

Israel & Edesiri (2014) examined ICT skills and Internet usage of LIS student in Delta and Edo states. Findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between the ICT skills possessed by LIS students in Delta and Edo states. Findings also revealed that the most popular way of acquiring ICT skills by the students was self-taught with manuals and handbook, through courses of study at the university and friends.

Buarki & Hepworth (2011) studied ICT skills and it showed that the highest level of technology competency was in using tools such as blogs, e-mails, instant messaging and others. While all age groups indicated e-mailing and presentation tools

as the highest level, emergent tools such as social networking and file sharing tools were rarely used in courses. ICT skills are taught and learned during LIS schools, these skills needs to be improved, practised, and sometimes learned again during employment. Moreover, LIS students should have certain ICT skills that employers demand and they should prove that they are able to respond to the needs of the job market.

Ugwu & Ezeani (2012) examined the entrepreneurship awareness and skills among Library and Information Science students in two Nigerian Universities. Findings showed that up to 70% of the students were not aware of entrepreneurship opportunities within LIS. The paper recommends that entrepreneurship courses and practical training in various aspects of ICT be included in the LIS curriculum. This implies that students do not acquire the relevant skills that can make them compatible with and accessible to the variety of entrepreneurship opportunities in the profession. In addition, they also agreed on all items dealing with the problems of entrepreneurship within LIS and the strategies for enhancing entrepreneurship awareness and skills in LIS. In their ability on LIS professional skills, about 60% of the students do not possess the enumerated skills.

Information Literacy Skills

Saunders & Becker (2015) Showed that LIS students are confident in their overall searching abilities, but they have a hard time getting started on research assignments, including defining and narrowing down topics. They rely heavily on search engines, and express some concern about their ability to evaluate Web sources. They also report concern with determining what constitutes plagiarism and knowing when to cite sources. They raise some concerns as to whether LIS students are moving beyond the in their location, search, evaluation, and use of resources and building up the information literacy skills necessary.

Geraei & Heidari (2015) The findings showed that the information literacy of second semester LIS students was below average and that a significant difference existed between the information literacy of first year students and graduates. Combined with results of this study, the results show that the university has an important role to play in improving the students' information literacy competency.

Baro & Fyneman (2009) showed that the students was know and understand that academic information is needed to write their course assignment, write their seminar papers, prepare for class discussion and write their final year research paper. The study also revealed that the students use the internet, different search engines, and different web sites to source for information, as well as using e-mail as a means of communicating with others to obtain relevant academic information.

Research skills

Geraei & Heidari (2015) Findings showed that a significant difference between the research skills of eighth and second semester students. As the main skill needed for all LIS students, this competency appears to have attracted sufficient attention and its requirements are fulfilled. It also showed that the competency of students in "using analytical statistics" which is useful in the area of research is very poor. Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the diversity and continuity of content provided in different semesters to increase the competency of students in the areas of writing and research.

Communication skills

Geraei & Heidari (2015) A study showed that the significant difference between communication skills in eighth and second semester students depicted the improvement through the periods of instructions. The ability to use verbal skills in presentations is among one of the competencies needed for students alike and, although employers prefer to hire people with soft skills, such as communication skills, such skills are not taught in LIS courses. General skills such as communication skills were among the necessary skills lacking in new LIS graduates in Iran.

Cobb, Meixelsperger, Seitz (2015) The findings showed that most common skill desired by students both in and outside of the LIS profession is communication. By participating in a LIS student organization, students strengthen their communication skills in a variety of contexts, including students with students, students with faculty/staff, and students with the community. While a student communicating with other students simulates co-worker relationships, a student communicating with faculty/staff simulates worker supervisor communication.

Critical thinking

Geraei & Heidari (2015) The findings showed that classic education system in Iran, mostly helps strengthen learning basic, with less attention toward critical thinking, a sense of criticism and creativity. It seems that an instruction system based on critical thinking elements and using problem-based learning methods could be helpful. It seems that the foundation of the Iranian education system at primary levels and higher education in general is more concerned with increasing the knowledge of the students, and that the betterment of critical thinking is often ignored.

**Conclusion**

This paper has discussed the literature review of Competencies trends in LIS students. It is also important that students be skilled in database searching, how to efficiently search through and locate needed materials. The paper showed the effects of an LIS education on the improvement of competencies. The idea behind the desire for the improvement of competencies, such as communication skills, teamwork and critical thinking, is to shift from the explicit to concealed or implicit curriculum which motivates students and empowers their ability for innovation and

creativity. In short, competency-based education and identification and strengthening competencies can be useful for current and future LIS programs.

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