



Basic Competencies for Library Professionals: A Study

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ABSTRACT

Over the decades, there has been a remarkable transformation in the information globe. Everyone has to adapt to these changes. Changes in society and demands for information utilization have forced the information professionals to look for more effective and efficient methods for processing, storing, and retrieving information to cope up with the application of modern information technology. This paper examines the Basic skills among Library Professionals in selected affiliated college of Bharathidasan University. The analysis of the data represents the extent and the level of skills possessed by the librarians of these institutions.

KEYWORDS : Competencies, Skills, Librarians, Professionals, Challenges, Training.

INTRODUCTION

In the changing environment, every library grows in terms of reading material, equipment, space, staff, readers, etc. The library and information scenario is changing at a dynamic pace; there is a paradigm shift from print media to web media; from ownership of documents to access to information; intermediary to end-user model of services; and from location of specific libraries to digital/virtual/hybrid libraries. Similarly, there is a change in the needs and interests of the readers. Hence, the role of library and information professionals has also changed dramatically. To meet the current requirements, library professionals must be able to perform various tasks coping up with the changes in technological environment.

COMPETENCY

A competency is an underlying characteristics of a person, which enables him to deliver superior performance in a given job, role or a situation.

This characteristic may be called an "Attribute bundle", consisting of knowledge, skills, traits, social role, self-image and motive. The "underlying characteristics". Manifest itself in the form of behavior, which helps identification and measurement of the competency.

DEFINITION

Unido (2002) a competency is a set of skill, related knowledge and attributes that allow an individual to successfully perform a task or an activity within a specific function or jobs.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Green Lois V.,Robert A. (1995) explained the changes in the role of the academic librarian have been variously attributed to: the enterprise culture, the new managerialism, economics, IT and educational changes. Explores whether the customer care movement is also having an impact on the concept of professional excellence. Presents the results of a study involving 83 professional and support staff from five west midlands universities who were asked to define the qualifications, qualities and abilities they would require of a library director and an information specialist. Finds a demand for traditional management skills on the part of the director far exceeding professional competence or scholarly achievement; customer care was not specifically mentioned; involvement with customers was required of the information specialist, but the skills required were interpersonal and at a problem solving rather than a strategic level; there was heavy demand for IT skills. Outlines suggestions for changing the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for professional excellence.

Pamment Terri (2008) explored the role of professional development (PD) in assisting established and new Library and Information Services' (LIS) practitioners to update and extend their knowledge and skills. Three methods of data collection have been used; literature review, content analysis of job descriptions, and interviews. The literature identifies PD as an integral part of being professional and a review of job advertisement indicates an employer demand for a

wide range of generic skills in addition to library-specific skills. Interviews with LIS practitioners and that PD is a useful tool on expanding knowledge and skills, with evidence of a generational difference in needs. Although this study has identified that some employers require generic skills at a high level, a study comparing job advertisement requirements with the skills of successful applicants may give a truer of the current skills level of the twenty-first century LIS workers.

METHODOLOGY

The main objectives of the study;

- To study the demographic pattern of respondents.
- To study the level of competency of academic librarians.
- To find out the areas that need training for an individual.

The universe constitute the librarians working in various colleges affiliated to Bharathidasan University. Using Simple Random Sampling among 100 librarians were given questionnaire. 76 completed questionnaires were received back, thus the percentage of respondents was 76. The questionnaire was framed with majority of close-ended questions. To analysis the data One-Way Anova and Chi Square test were used.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is a significant association between Gender and competencies.
- There is a significant association between Designation and competencies.
- There is a significant association between Experience and competencies.
- There is a significant association between Qualification and competencies.
- There is a significant association between Income and competencies.

LIMITATIONS

The study is confined only to 76 respondents.

The study is confined only to Arts and Science College libraries of Bharathidasan University.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

**Table – 1
Gender *Competency Cross Tabulation**

Count	ABILITY		TOTAL
	LOW LEVEL	HIGH LEVEL	
GENDER			
Male	31	23	54
Female	5	11	16
TOTAL	36	34	70

Chi-Square Test

	Value	df	Asymp.Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.381 ^a	1	.066

0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.77.

From the above table it is inferred that gender has no significant association with various competencies mentored in the study, hence the hypothesis for the above table is rejected.

Demographic Variables * Competencies

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
DISINGNATION					
Between Groups	3.551	4	.888	.877	.483
Within Groups	65.820	65	1.013		
Total	69.371	69			
EXPERIENCE					
Between Groups	73.931	4	18.483	21.670	.000
Within Groups	55.440	65	.853		
Total	129.371	69			
QUALIFICATION					
Between Groups	2.365	4	.591	.928	.453
Within Groups	41.406	65	.637		
Total	43.771	69			
INCOME					
Between Groups	52.339	4	13.085	15.535	.000
Within Groups	54.747	65	.842		
Total	107.086	69			

Association between different variables and the competencies of respondents are analyzed. The result reveals that except experience and income, the other variables designation and qualification do not show any significant association, thus rejecting hypothesis for the above variable.

FINDINGS

H¹ There is a significant association between gender and competencies.

Result: Gender does not show any significant association thus the hypothesis is rejected.

H² There is a significant association between the demographic variables designations experience, qualification experience, qualification and income.

Result: Except experience and income, the order variables do not show any association, thus rejecting the hypothesis for the above variables.

SUGGESTIONS

The management can provide training to the library professionals to improve their organization skills.

The management can delegate more authority to the library professionals to perform better.

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