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Dr. Dinesh S. Thakor
Librarian, Shrimad
Rajachandra Vidyapeeth,
Dharampur, Valsad, Gujarat,
India.

Skills and Competencies for Library and Information Science Professionals

Dr. Dinesh S. Thakor

Abstract
The library is a well-known repository of information and knowledge. In which our culture's valuable heritage is preserved in the form of a collection of books. The library professionals are responsible for the proper preservation, maintenance, and delivery of resources to society. Therefore, it is very important for library and information science professionals to possess the skills and competencies necessary to provide library information and services, offer proper guidance, and solve user problems for library users, visitors, etc. This article aims to provide insights into the essential skills and competencies required for library and information science professionals.

Keywords: Library, Library and Information Science, Professionals, Skills, Competencies.

1. Introduction

The library is a well-known repository of information and knowledge. Our culture's valuable heritage is preserved through a book collection. Which is carried from generation to generation. The library professionals are responsible for the proper preservation, maintenance, and delivery of resources to society. Libraries provide free information services to people of the society. People of the society can increase their knowledge by getting various types of information required by using the library. Through this, the mental, social and economic development of the human being takes place. A person acquires knowledge and uses it in his life to become a capable citizen. This will also make the country richer. Thus, any type of library is considered a very important place. Therefore, library and information science professionals need to have the appropriate skills and abilities to provide library information and services to library users, visitors, etc., provide proper guidance, and solve users' problems.

2. Meaning of Skills

A skill is the learned ability to act with determined results with good execution often within a given amount of time, energy, or both time and energy. Skills can often be categorized into general and specific skills. General skills, also known as power skills, essential skills, or core competencies, are skills that apply to all professionals. For example, general skills in your field of work include time management, teamwork, leadership, self-motivation, critical thinking, problem solving, public speaking, professional writing, digital literacy, professional attitude and work ethic, career management, and cross-cultural fluency. These skills are in contrast to specific skills that are unique to individual professionals. Specific skills also include technical skills. Specific skills are only used to get certain jobs. These are skills that can be acquired and improved through education and experience. Skill usually requires certain environmental stimuli and situations to assess the level of skill being shown and used. [12]

3. Meaning of Competencies

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors that contribute to individual and organizational performance. Knowledge is information developed or learned through experience, study or investigation. Skill is the result of repeatedly applying knowledge or

Correspondence:
Dr. Dinesh S. Thakor
Librarian, Shrimad
Rajachandra Vidyapeeth,
Dharampur, Valsad, Gujarat,
India.

ability. Ability is an innate potential to perform mental and physical actions or tasks. Behavior is the observable reaction of an individual to a certain situation. The target proficiency level for each competency will vary based on an individual's position and the organization's needs. [10] Competency is a set of demonstrable characteristics and skills that enable, and improve the efficiency of, performance of a job. Competencies are not skills, although they are similar. Skills are learned, while competencies are inherent qualities an individual possesses, such as collaboration skills, knowledge and ability. [11]

4. Skills and competencies for library and information science professionals

The skills of library and information science professionals refer to the general and specific abilities they need to perform their duties effectively. General skills are transferable skills. Which once developed can be implemented at various positions. These include the ability to communicate effectively in both written and verbal, adept at working with others, leadership and problem solving. Specific or technical skills include library management software, archiving, documentation and some other specialist knowledge. Through these skills one can provide effective services to the users, attract more readers, provide faster information services, and enhance one's and the library's reputation.

In any library, librarians play an important role for their users. They provide information and services required their various types of users, such as readers, researchers, professors, teachers, and housewives. Therefore, there are certain skills and competencies required for library professionals, which are as follows:

- **ICT skills**
Nowadays, ICT is extensively utilized in all types of libraries to provide information and services on a daily basis. So Library professionals must have knowledge and the ability to use various types of ICT equipment, such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, computers, printers, etc. They should also be proficient in the purchase, operation, maintenance, and updating of technology.

- **Ability to adapt new tools, systems, and situations**
Technology changes with new discoveries. As a result, libraries and information technology also undergo continuous transformation. Therefore, library professionals must be able to evolve and adapt along with it.

- **Information management skills**
Managing various library-related information is very important in libraries. The main responsibility of library professionals is information management. Therefore, a library professional must have the ability to collect, document, arrange and store library information in a systematic manner.

- **Time management skills**
One of the five laws proposed by Dr. S. R. Ranganathan is the "Save the time of the reader' is very important. Which emphasizes the importance of time management for both library professionals and users. Library professionals should properly organize all the information and services provided by the library. So that the time of both professionals and users can be saved.

- **Ability to attract users to the library**
Library professionals should be able to attract users to the library. They must use a variety of technologies to attract

users and maximize the use of library information services and resources. For this purpose, they should conduct programs such as user orientation, book exhibition, etc. User orientation is essential for the smooth functioning of the library. It helps users to utilize library resources and services in a user -friendly manner. Therefore, library professionals need to be able to increase users' awareness of libraries in various ways.

- **Collection development skills**
Collection development in libraries is a major challenge in today's ICT era, as library staff have to manage both physical documents and electronic resources. Therefore, they must possess knowledge on how to develop a collection of printed and non-printed resources. Also, library professionals need to keep themselves updated about the best resources to meet the current needs of library users.

- **Interpersonal skills**
Library professionals must have interpersonal or interaction skills to build and maintain relationships in order to achieve library goals. They should motivate their support staff to contribute their best in order to achieve the target. Interpersonal skills are the most effective tool for library professionals to achieve desired results.

- **Motivational skills**
Motivation is the ability to inspire individuals to work towards achieving goals, also known as goal-directed behavior. It is a crucial managerial skill that plays an important role in achieving desired results by encouraging employees to put in an effort to achieve goals.

- **Managerial skills**
Library professionals must have managerial skills such as planning, directing, designing, supporting, and implementing the efficient operation of the library. Additionally, they should have achieved the library's set goals requires in-depth knowledge of total quality management and human resource management.

- **Ability to convert traditional services to web-based**
Advancements in information technology have led to the emergence of innovative methods for delivering information and services. Therefore, library professionals must be able to effectively deliver traditional library services using new technologies available and developed for this purpose. Ability to design and develop web-based content to deliver traditional services online as well ability to create, develop, and manage digital libraries.

- **Deep knowledge of books**
Generally, a good librarian reads a wide range of books. So that they can help advise library visitors about good books that suit their interests and reading levels.

- **Skill of classification and cataloging**
Classification and cataloging are important skills in any library as they are a fundamental requirement for the organization of collections and information retrieval in a library. Therefore, library professionals must be adept at documenting, tracking and retrieving bibliographic and digital resources. Most libraries today have digital cataloging systems, while many older libraries have ancient manuscripts and archival materials that require manual listing. Therefore, library professionals must be able to manage such resources for the benefit of the general public.

- **Leadership skills**
Inside a library, there is a librarian as the administrator who is considered the creator of the library. Therefore, good

leadership skills are required to effectively manage a library. Librarians provide guidance and training opportunities to ensure that users receive the best possible service. The librarian provides quality leadership to the staff and is also accountable for managing the library budget.

- **Knowledge of information requirements**

Library professionals must possess the ability to comprehend the information requirements of users and effectively provide them. Additionally, they must be able to balance between developing new services and serving the user community. The needs of the users change over time, so library professionals must be able to identify and provide the users' needs according to the situation.

- **Communication skills**

Effective communication skills are important for library professionals as they spend a significant amount of time communicating with library staff, readers, users, and visitors. Especially public library librarians who organize various programs and competitions for the community. They play an important role as coordinators of activities as well as in attracting a diverse range of students and users to the library. Effective communication also enables librarians to bridge the gap between users and staff, maintain contact, build trust, manage communication groups appropriately, resolve misunderstandings, and facilitate coordination. Therefore, library professionals must have effective communication skills.

- **Problem-solving skills**

Users visit the library every day to find new information, to do their work without interruption or to discuss with their friends and solve complex problems. Library professionals can help users solve their problems by providing a conducive environment to find the information they need, use the network, and achieve their goals.

- **Research skills**

Many universities and higher education institutions have students and faculty doing research in their specialized fields. During this time, librarians play a crucial role in assisting researchers in finding research-related information or relevant resources from the library to complete their research projects. Consequently, students and faculty can use library resources more effectively. Therefore, it is important for library professionals to have exceptional research skills.

- **Comparison of technology**

Library professionals must use new technologies to provide effective, efficient and timely service to the user community. However, there are various types of technology available in the market for the same purpose. Therefore, library professionals must be able to evaluate software and other technical equipment and purchase high-quality equipment.

5. Conclusion

Various types of libraries such as academic, public and specific libraries help their different types of users such as children, students, teachers, professors, researchers, unemployed etc. to make them a good citizen of the society by providing various information services for their needs. Hence, various types of libraries require professionals with diverse skills and competences to provide information services to different users of the society. These professionals should be able to guide, assist, and offer advice to users effectively. Additionally, they should continuously improve their skills and competencies. Some of these skills and competencies are taught, while others are gradually acquired and mastered through education or on-the-job experience.

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