

Market Demand for ICT Literate Information Professionals: A Qualitative Study

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Librarian

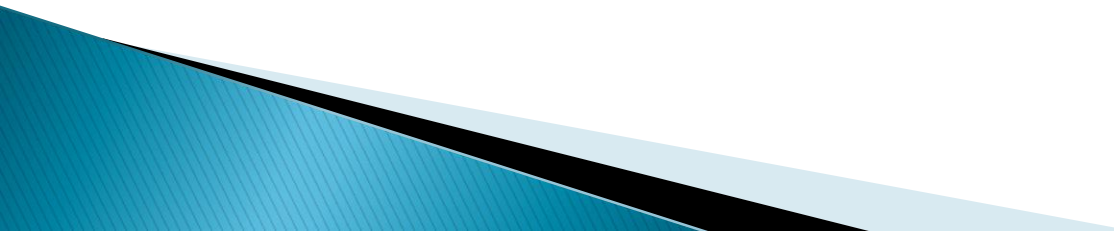
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Sequence of Presentation

- ▶ Summary
 - ▶ Introduction
 - ▶ ICT in national context
 - ▶ Objectives of the study
 - ▶ Research questions
 - ▶ Design of the study
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Summary

- ▶ ***Purpose*** – the study aims to disclose the LIS professionals' opinion about the current products and future demand for ICT literate information professionals of LIS market in Pakistan.
- ▶ ***Design/methodology/approach*** –
 - the study adopted qualitative research design.
 - interviews were conducted to answer the research questions.
 - collected data were analyzed through content analysis technique.

Summary.....Continued

- ▶ **Findings** –
- ▶ **Research Implementation-** The findings of the study can be helpful for HEC, University management and faculty of library schools:
 - in revisiting their ICT curricula courses/contents
 - in teaching methodologies
 - in ICT infrastructure and facilities provision
 - Moreover, it can also help to LIS professionals in learning ICT skills and enhancing professional knowledge in order to compete future demand of LIS market.
- ▶ **Keywords** - ICT, LIS Market Demand, LIS professionals, Pakistan
- ▶ **Research type** – Research paper

Introduction

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)



Intro...Continued

“The term (ICT) is used here to describe the design and applications of systems and equipment for exchanging data by electrical means between two or more stations. There are many kinds of telecommunication networks used for a diverse range of purposes.”

(Feather, 2005)



Intro...Continued

- ▶ ICT skills can be broken down into a number of subsets:
 - **IT literacy skills**; basic knowledge of how to use computers.
 - **Information searching skills**; knowledge of the range of EIS available and the ability to search databases and the Internet efficiently and effectively.
 - **Evaluative and critical skills**; to make effective use of the information.
 - **Information handling skills**; to cope with the vast amount of information available, and the rapid change in sources and services.

ICT in National Context

- ▶ ICT use in the libraries of Pakistan started in the mid-1980s.
- ▶ Financial assistance provided by the **Netherlands Library Development Project** (Pakistan)
- ▶ The **UNESCO** sponsored **CDS/ISIS** is the most commonly used software;
- ▶ other popular packages used include **ORACLE** and **INMAGIC**
- ▶ Presently a variety of open access and commercial software available in the market.

(Haider, 1998)

ICT in National Context...Continued

- ▶ ICT related courses were included in the curricula of LIS education such as:
 - Information Technology in 1973 Karachi University
 - Library Automation
 - Online Information Retrieval system
 - Resource Sharing & Networking.

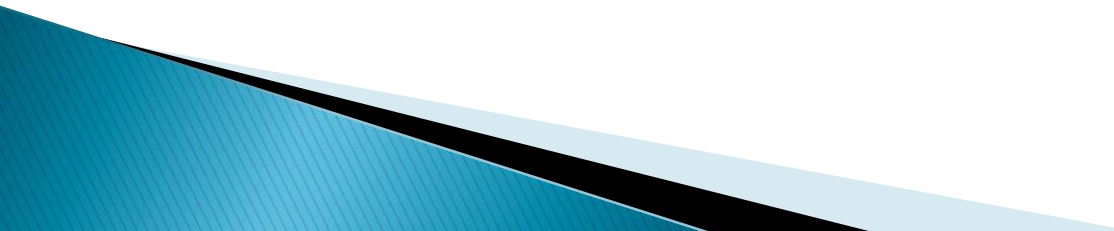
(Mahmood, 1996)

Objectives of the Study

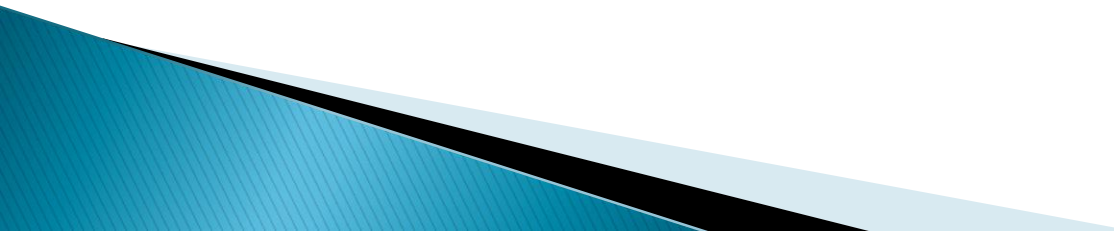
The main objectives of the study were to explore the LIS professionals' opinion about the current products and future demands for ICT literate information professionals of LIS market in Pakistan.

Research Questions

The study was conducted to seek answers of the following research questions:

- What is the level of ICT skills of IT literate professionals in Pakistan?
 - What is the opinion of senior LIS professionals about the current products of LIS profession?
 - What are the future LIS market demands towards ICT literate information professionals in Pakistan?
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Methodology

- The study adopted qualitative research design.
 - Interviews were conducted using semi structured questionnaires to collect data.
 - Senior LIS professionals (who were mostly involved in training of LIS students during their practicum at their libraries; moreover they were among the experts of selection committees of most institutes of Pakistan.) were selected for interviews.
 - Collected data were analyzed through content analysis technique.
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The interviews with Information Professionals

- ▶ **The interview questions:**
 - What do you think about ICT skills of current products coming from the library schools of Pakistan?
 - What are the future demands of LIS market towards ICT literate information professionals? Do you feel that there is gap between the learned and required skills of MLIS professionals?
 - Do you think that the syllabus/curricula of the library schools should be changed (if yes then which courses/contents should be included)?
 - What are your recommendations in this regard?

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

- ▶ **(Q. 1) Opinion about ICTs skills of current products coming from the library schools**
 - The areas urban/rural in which the professionals belong to and their academic background influence the ICT skills (n=4)
 - There is a difference between the attitude, aptitude and skills of each professional (n=2)
 - Some internees/professionals do not have the basic knowledge of computer, searching techniques, terminology that are used in digital libraries (n=1)

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

- ▶ **(Q. 1) Opinion about ICTs skills of current products coming from the library schools...Continued**
- The people of western Punjab are working in traditional environment and there is no automated system in most of the libraries so, the new professionals don't learn ICT skills much attentively (n=1)
- The current product from western Punjab have less ICT skills due to lack of facilities of labs and might be less skills of faculty who involve in teaching of ICT courses (n=1)

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

- **(Q.2) Future demands of LIS market towards current product**
 - LIS professionals should have the basic theoretical knowledge of the followings:
 - computer & its components
 - the use of email, internet and web applications especially the use of electronic resources
 - searching information from different databases and
 - they should have the knowledge about different library software modules (n=4)

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

(Q.2) Future demands of LIS market towards current product...Continued

- Professionals should also have the knowledge of Microsoft Office tools (n=3)
- They should have some practical knowledge/hands on practice of:
 - development of databases and websites
 - use of library management software
 - use of social networking tools to provide good services to their clients (n=1)

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

▶ **(Q. 3) Gap between the LIS market demand and current ICT literate information professionals**

- There is a gap between the LIS market demand and current product (n=4) due to:
- insufficient availability of hardware, software and the internet band to give them hands on practice at their schools (n=2)
- deficiencies in infrastructure and LIS faculty's skills (n=2), and
- background they belong to, so the professionals are not prepared to fulfill the market demand (n=2)

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

- ▶ **(Q.3) Gap between the LIS market demand and current ICT literate information professionals...Continued**
 - There is lack of communication between LIS schools' heads and chief librarians (n=1)
 - No parameter is being set about library operations and ICT skills that should learn the internees during their practicum (n=1)

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

- ▶ **(Q.4) Opinion about LIS Syllabus /curricula of library schools**
 - Syllabus /curricula of schools is good but the implementation of HEC approved courses, expertise, and dedication of the concerned faculty is required (n=3).
 - Teachers who are well trained and very good familiar with ICTs can teach their students in better way (n=3).

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

➤ **(Q.4) Opinion about LIS Syllabus /curricula of library schools...Continued**

- There should be collaboration among teachers of all library schools (**n=2**) and
- There should be exchange of faculty among library schools to overcome teaching problems (**n=1**).
- There is a very fast change in ICT equipments and ICT systems, tools and techniques so, the courses should also be changed with the same speed (**n=1**).

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

▶ **(Q.5) Suggestions for LIS Product Improvement**

- All library schools should improve their IT infrastructure and ICT facilities (n=4).
- Training programmes, meetings and workshops should be arranged for teachers to improve their ICT skills (n=3).
- Faculty should deliver the contents with more letter and spirit which are included in the curricula (n=2).
- Library visits may be included for the students during their study (n=1).

The interviews with Information Professionals...Continued

- ▶ **(Q.5) Suggestions for LIS Product Improvement...Continued**
 - Heads of library schools should prepare a parameter for internees and there should be check & balance about their learning, skills and weaknesses (n=1).
 - The teachers should contact with chief librarians regarding internees' problems and learning during practicum (n=1).
 - The professionals should also be prepared for presentations, book reviewing so they may fulfill this public relation period (n=1).

Conclusions

- ▶ The study revealed that there was a difference between the attitude, aptitude and skills of each professional.
- ▶ The areas rural or urban, and academic background influence the ICT skills of information professionals.
- ▶ Some major barriers were also found such as:
insufficient availability of hardware, software and the internet band to give students hands on practice, inadequate IT infrastructure, LIS faculty's teaching skills and background of students they belong to, cause the inefficient ICT skills.

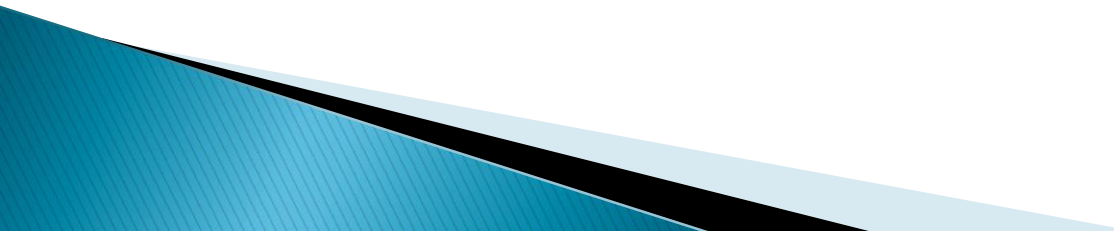
Conclusions

- ▶ The current products were not well equipped with modern ICT skills and the gap was found between the LIS market demand and ICT literate information professionals.
- ▶ On other hand, the experts argued that the syllabus/course of the LIS schools were quite accurate and fulfill the demands of modern era but the dedication of teachers with modern teaching methodologies and ICT facilities was required.
- ▶ In this prevailing situation, it is immediate need of all library schools to improve their IT infrastructure to develop better ICT skills in current LIS products and provide effective teaching environment and ICT facilities to LIS professionals in order to bridge the gap and to compete future LIS market demand.

Recommendations

- IT infrastructure of all library schools needs to be improved.
- All library schools should maintain their departmental labs and increase ICT facilities.
- Training programmes, meetings, seminars, workshops and video conferences should be arranged for teachers to improve their ICT skills, and professionals as well.
- Teachers of all library schools should deliver the course/ contents with more letter and spirit and there should be exchange system for teachers among all library schools.
- A parameter for internees/professionals should be developed (what types of skills should they learn during their practicum) by the heads of library schools.

Recommendations...Continued

- Mutual meeting should be conducted between the heads of library heads and senior LIS professionals.
 - Teachers should pay more attention on personality development, class participation, books reviewing, ICT and presentation skills so they may become good presenters, book reviewers in this modern and public relation era and to meet the future demands of LIS market.
 - Libraries' visit should also be included during their study.
 - ICT courses/contents must be included in LIS curricula with the same speed of changing modern technologies.
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Thanks