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Dr. Naseer A

Reference Assistant (Higher Grade) Kerala Agricultural University, College of Agriculture,
Vellayani, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India--695522, naseer976@gmail.com

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UNVEILING PUBLICATION OUTPUT AND FUNCTIONAL AREAS OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS IN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Dr. A. Naseer
Reference Assistant (Higher Grade)
Kerala Agricultural University
College of Agriculture, Vellayani
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India -695522
e-mail: naseer976@gmail.com; Mobile:9349749641

Abstract

This study investigates the extent of publication output and functional areas of Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals. The research has been undertaken based on the primary data collected from the LIS professionals working in the various eight-state universities in Kerala, India. The population of the study consists of two hundred and sixty-six regular LIS professionals. The Census method was used for the collection of data. A questionnaire was designed and used as the instrument for extracting publication output and the relevant data. Based on the data analysis, the results show that the highest mean score for the publications of LIS professionals is in the conference papers followed by journal articles. It was also observed that the main primary functional area of most LIS professionals is in the circulation section, followed by the maintenance section and reference section.

Keywords: Publication Output; Functional Area; Library and Information Science; University; Kerala; Conference Paper; Journal Article; Circulation Section; Maintenance Section; Reference Section.

1. INTRODUCTION

Libraries can be called the repository of knowledge and wisdom. It is an integral part of the higher education sector. Libraries transfer information and knowledge. The prime function of the university library is to provide facilities and services for study, research and extension activities for the clientele. Nowadays, the resources of the libraries are both in printed and digital format. The role of the 21st century libraries and Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals in higher education is unique with innovative ideas and essential skills. Research output and publication output of LIS professionals are gaining

importance in the new evolving teaching and learning environment. University libraries in Kerala have been enriched with competent professional human resources. The LIS professionals are playing a major role in the publication of scholarly information. The librarianship is a tool for the dissemination of information. It is essential for the survival of the LIS profession in the networked environment. Publication of knowledge is a responsibility of LIS professionals to society. There are several sections in library and information centers, and each team strives to fulfil the library's overall objectives. LIS professionals have a functional role in the different library sections to help students, research scholars and members of faculty. Hence it was felt appropriate to study the publication output and major functional areas of LIS professionals working in the university libraries in Kerala.

1.1 Publications

Academic research is often presented in the form of publication. Publication is the action or process of publishing something (Concise Oxford English Dictionary, 2007). Publications are categorized into different groups based on the durability of information and the nature of contents. Considering the durability of publication, publications can be divided into ephemeral publications and enduring publications. In ephemeral publications, information is constantly updated, and information is relevant only for a brief period. However, in enduring publications, information is durable, and it has relevance for a long time. Enduring publications are classified based on their position in publication style as primary, secondary and tertiary publications. Primary sources, which come first in the publication cycle, reports original works. Secondary sources are derived from the primary sources of information. In tertiary sources, information is synthesized from both primary and secondary sources of information.

Human minds create knowledge. Knowledge is made available in several forms such as writing, speeches etc. A career in LIS provides opportunities for work with knowledge resources. LIS professionals grow throughout their careers with latest advancement in LIS. LIS professionals are realizing opportunities and repositioning themselves in the ever-changing learning environment for the dissemination of information. They are proactive to prove their role in academic community to improve citation and reference list. The universities' vision and mission guide LIS professionals to serve the academic community in the truest sense with innovate library space and services.

In the contemporary world, the world wide web and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are used to disseminate information. Knowledge is shared through videos, podcasts, blogs etc. Information support systems are essential in education and research. Publication fosters teaching and research. It helps to use the information on research areas and subjects. Major publications have changed into electronic versions to support research and provide up-to-date and reliable information with basic search, advance search, archives, document delivery service and request article. Books, journals and other sources of information are available through institutional IP authentication.

Copyrights, information ethics are very important in the information age. Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) are fair in applying the principle of fair use of documents for academic purposes. In India, the Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) by University Grants Commission (UGC) monitors and identifies the quality of journals across the discipline. Efforts of the academic community are needed to create awareness regarding the quality of journals among the researchers and members of faculty to avoid their academic and research publications in predatory or dubious journals. Journals indexed in the UGC-CARE list are used to give weightage for the

appointment and career advancement of faculty members and equivalent post. It would foster quality of articles, intellectual honesty and academic integrity.

1.2 Universities in Kerala

Kerala is a state that belongs to the southern part of India. The state universities in Kerala are HEIs accredited by the national agencies of the Government of India like UGC/ICAR etc. HEIs are being reformed with blended learning as a strategy in the light of e-learning environment. It is a boon for higher education in ICT era. The universities in Kerala are dedicated to teaching research and extension activities. The state universities are established by the act of the state Government. University libraries are considered the heart of university education systems. Libraries empower LIS professionals to impart knowledge, disseminate information and act as an instrument of university education, teaching and research.

Publications play an indispensable role in academic research for the dissemination of research outcomes. Publications of LIS professionals in Kerala's university libraries contribute to attaining the well-defined goal of their parent organization. Details of publications, conferences attended by LIS professionals and members of faculty are available in the annual report of the universities concerned. The LIS professionals are reinventing the scope of university libraries with creativity, innovation and experimentation. Dedication and passion for work are the pre-eminent qualities of LIS professionals. The LIS professionals are hardworking personnel by applying their intellect and expressing readiness and willingness to share their expertise with the professional fraternity and those who are in need of it. They organize seminars, workshops, conferences, and various Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes to prove their commitment to the profession and bring out several experimentations and professional excellence in librarianship. They inspire and motivate everyone in the profession in the digital age.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Bisaria (2021) examined the gender differences in the published LIS literature. The study was conducted in the four journals of the UK during 2007-2017. The study has proved gender differences in research among LIS professionals though the difference is marginal.

Fiawotoafor., Dadzie., and Adams (2019) examined publication output among professional librarians in four public universities in Ghana. They investigated the challenges confronting the publication efforts of professional librarians, among others. The study revealed that publication output was low among the respondents and journal articles were the most popular publication format. The study also indicated that the higher-ranked professional librarians were more prolific than lower-ranked ones. The professional librarians from two of the public universities were most prolific. The results also revealed the challenges that hampered the publication efforts of professional librarians.

Naseer (2019) investigated the adequacy of infrastructural facilities in the libraries of eight state university libraries in Kerala. The study was conducted by measuring the opinion of the regular LIS professionals. The study revealed that the LIS professionals have a moderate and above moderate opinion about the adequacy of infrastructural facilities except for IT infrastructure and furniture.

Patra (2019) mapped Twitter activity. Tweets of 18 Indian libraries' (5 academic libraries, five government libraries, five school libraries and three public libraries) were downloaded during June and July 2019 and analysed. The study finds that Indian libraries are less active on Twitter. The word cloud based on the most frequently occurring words from the Tweets observed variations in Tweets depend upon the type of libraries. Sentiment analysis of Tweets showed that most of the libraries' Tweets are positive in nature. The study recommends the use of Twitter to promote collections and services in libraries.

Anyaoku, Ebele and Okonkwo (2018) studied bibliometric analysis of Library and Information Science Digest. A total of nine volumes of the journal containing eighty-two articles were analyzed. Findings showed that half of the published articles were reporting on original research while the other half were reviews and feature articles. The majority of the authors was affiliated with universities, and the highest percentage was from institutions situated in the place of publication of the journal. Other contributors were from seventeen states of Nigeria. Results showed that journals, books and web pages were the highest cited sources in the published articles. Information and Communication Technology / Internet use and school library services were the two major themes of the articles for the period reviewed.

Sharma (2018) bring out the research productivity of permanent Library and Information Science faculty members in the Department of Library and Information Science in Panjab University, Chandigarh, Punjabi University, Patiala and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Five hundred fourteen publications published till 31st December 2014 were analyzed and examined the research productivity by different ways like document type, authorship pattern and degree of collaboration. The study also examined the relative growth rate of publications and the doubling time of publications.

Jabeen (2015) explored growth rates and trends in global publications in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) produced by library science professionals. Journal Citation Reports 2010 was used for selecting forty LIS core journals. A bibliometric analysis was conducted. Visualization and mapping software was utilized to present a picture of the growth in and trends relating to LIS publications. The study finds that 18,371 research articles were published from 2003 to 2012. A significant growth rate (11.37%) was found in 2009. Self-citation tendencies have been increasing, with an average rate of 38.56%. Of all publication types, “article” was the most popular among the

researchers. China has contributed remarkably in terms of collaborative publications.

3.OBJECTIVES

The focus of the current study is to investigate the extent of publication output of LIS professionals in the university libraries of Kerala. The specific objective of the study include:

1. To investigate the publication output of the regular LIS professionals working in the university libraries in Kerala.
2. To identify the most preferred format of publication of LIS professionals in the University Libraries of Kerala.
3. To determine the professional experience of LIS professionals in the universities of Kerala.
4. To study the major functional areas of LIS professionals working in the university libraries in Kerala.

4.METHODOLOGY

The state of Kerala was selected for the study as the researcher hails from the state and is familiar with the library and information set up. Kerala state comprising 14 districts. There are 14 state universities functioning in Kerala (Economic Review 2020). The study was carried out during 2017 - 2018 among the regular LIS professionals of eight state universities in Kerala. The researcher has personally visited almost all the LIS professionals selected for the study. Major publications of the LIS professionals were identified through initial discussion with the respondents and from the review of relevant literature. The universities selected for the study have well-equipped libraries and adequate qualified LIS professionals. The study targeted collecting primary data relating to publication details in the area of Library and Information Science from the LIS professionals. To select the participants, the census method was used. A

structured questionnaire was designed and used as a tool for data collection and circulated among the LIS professionals.

There is 385 sanctioned post of LIS professionals in the selected eight universities. The total number of LIS professionals working at the time of the current investigation was only 276. To fulfil the objectives of the study, the 276 copies of the questionnaire are distributed to all the 276 regular LIS professionals. However, 266 questionnaires were duly filled and returned. The response rate was 96.38%. Data was collected from the entry-level cadre of Library Assistant/Professional Assistant Grade. II to highest existing promotion cadre of Deputy Librarian. The collected data has been organized, processed and presented using MS Excel and SPSS.

5. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope of the current study is limited to investigate publication output in the area of LIS professionals working in the eight-state universities in Kerala. The target respondents of the study are regular LIS professionals, excluding those working on a temporary and contract basis. The present study is confined to a period from October 2017 till April 2018, and the subject covered is Library and Information Science only.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In social science research, it is essential to analyse the characteristics of population. It will give an understanding of the background of the population selected for the study. After collecting the data from the LIS professionals, the next step was analysing and interpreting the data. The collected data has been tabulated and analysed, and presented under the following headings.

6.1 University-wise Distribution of Respondents

The study was carried out among the two hundred and sixty-six LIS professionals working in the eight-state universities in Kerala. The current study's data was based on the responses collected from the permanent regular

two hundred and sixty-six LIS professionals. The data has been presented using a figure and tables.

Table 1 presents the university wise distribution of respondents and the name of state universities selected for the study. Frequency and percentage analysis were found out.

Table 1
University-wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Name of Universities	Frequency	%
1.	University of Kerala (UoK), Thiruvananthapuram	75	28.20
2.	University of Calicut (UoC), Malappuram	60	22.56
3.	Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala (MGUK), Kottayam	42	15.79
4.	Cochin University of Science and Technology (CUSAT), Kochi, Ernakulam	35	13.16
5.	Kannur University (KU), Kannur	23	8.65
6.	Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit (SSUS), Kalady, Ernakulam	15	5.64
7.	Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), Vellanikkara, Thrissur	10	3.76
8.	Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (KVASU), Pookot, Wayanad	6	2.26
Total		266	100.00

Table 1 depicts that 28.20 per cent of respondents are from UoK, and 22.56 per cent of the respondents are from UoC. Respondents from MGUK are 15.79 per cent, and the respondents from CUSAT is 13.16 per cent. The total number of respondents from KU is 8.65 per cent. Respondents from SSUS are 5.64 per cent, and 3.76 per cent of respondents are from KAU. Respondents from KVASU are 2.26 per cent. The study has clearly shown that the highest per cent of the respondents for the current study is from UoK, followed by UoC,

6.2 Cadre of LIS professionals

The work in the university library is teamwork. Several cadres of LIS

professionals are working at technical and supervisory levels in the libraries. There is no uniform staff pattern in the libraries of the universities. There are variations in promotional avenues, pay scale and designation among the universities.

There are seven cadres among LIS professionals. The entry cadre of the LIS professionals in the university is Library Assistant or Professional Assistant Grade II. They are subsequently promoted to higher-level posts. In the position of Assistant Librarian and Deputy Librarian, there is both the UGC/ICAR scale of pay and the state scale of pay. University Librarian heads university Library. In Kerala Agricultural University and Kannur University, there is Central Library that Librarian leads. The post of University Librarian or Librarian is a selection post, and UGC prescribes the requisite qualification for the statutory post.

Table 2 shows cadre wise distribution of respondents in the selected eight state universities in Kerala.

Table 2
Cadre-wise Distribution of Respondents

Cadre		Name of Universities								Total
		UoK	UoC	MGUK	CUSAT	KU	SSUS	KAU	KVASU	
University Librarian/ Librarian	n	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deputy Librarian	n	3	1	3	3	0	1	1	0	12
	%	4.00	1.67	7.14	8.57	0.00	6.67	10.00	0.00	4.51
Assistant Librarian	n	31	16	7	16	1	0	4	2	77
	%	41.33	26.67	16.67	45.71	4.35	0.00	40.00	33.33	28.95
Reference Assistant HG/Reference officer (HG)	n	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	5
	%	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	40.00	16.67	1.88
Reference Assistant/Junior Librarian/Reference officer	n	14	13	10	8	5	2	0	2	54
	%	18.67	21.67	23.81	22.86	21.74	13.33	0.00	33.33	20.30
Technical Assistant/ Professional Assistant Gr. I	n	25	22	15	7	10	5	0	0	84
	%	33.33	36.67	35.71	20.00	43.48	33.33	0.00	0.00	31.58

Professional Assistant Gr II/ Library Assistant	n	2	8	7	1	7	7	1	1	34
	%	2.67	13.33	16.67	2.86	30.43	46.67	10.00	16.67	12.78
Total	n	75	60	42	35	23	15	10	6	266
	%	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

It is observed from Table 2 that the cadre of University Librarian/Librarian is lying vacant in all universities. Next to University Librarian/Librarian is the Deputy Librarian cadre. Deputy Librarians/Assistant Librarians are currently holding additional charge of the University Librarian/Librarian. Respondents in the cadre of Deputy Librarian are 4.51 per cent, and Assistant Librarians are 28.95 per cent. The total percentage of Reference Assistants (Higher Grade)/Reference officer (Higher Grade) is 1.88 per cent, and Reference, Assistant/Junior Librarian/Reference officer, is 20.30 per cent. Respondents in the cadre of Technical Assistant/Professional Assistant Grade. I are 31.58 per cent, and 12.78 per cent of respondents are in the cadre of Professional Assistant Gr-II/Library Assistant. In the study, the majority of respondents are in the cadre of Assistant Librarian. It was observed that majority of respondents are working in the supervisory and above level.

6.3 Professional Qualifications of Respondents

Educational qualification is one of the socio-economic factors. Professional qualification is operationally defined as the extent of the professional qualifications obtained by the respondents at the time of the current investigation.

Table 3 classified respondents of the study according to their professional qualifications achieved.

Table 3
Professional Qualification of Respondents

Sl. No.	Name of Professional Qualifications	n	%
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1.	Bachelor of Library and Information Science (BLISc)	17	6.39
2.	Master of Library and Information Science (MLISc)	161	60.53
3.	Master of Philosophy in LIS (M.Phil.)	49	18.42
4.	Doctor of Philosophy in LIS (Ph. D.)	39	14.66
Total		266	100

From Table 3, it was found that only 6.39 per cent of respondents have the essential minimum qualification of BLISc degree and 60.53 per cent of respondents have the higher qualification of MLISc degree. Besides, 18.42 per cent of respondents have M. Phil. degree in Library and Information Science, and 14.66 per cent of respondents have Ph.D. degree in Library and Information Science. From the findings, it is evident that the majority of the LIS professionals have master level academic qualifications and research degrees.

6.4 Professional Experience of LIS professionals

Table 4 presents professional experience of LIS professionals

Table 4

Professional Experience of LIS professionals

Sl. No	Professional Experience (In years)	Frequency	%
1.	up to ten	46	17.3
2.	10 to 14	86	32.3
3.	15 to 19	44	16.5
4.	20 to 24	52	19.5
5.	25 and above	38	14.3
Total		266	100.00

Table 4 reveals that 32.3% of respondents have total professional

experience between 10 to 14 years. The respondents having up to 10 years of professional experience are 17.3%. Respondents have professional experience between 20 to 24 years is 19.5% and respondents having above 25 years of professional experience is 14.3%. It reveals that there is scope for improving professional skill of LIS professionals.

6.5 Salary-wise Distribution of Respondents

Salary is a significant factor for motivating the work of employees. It strengthens the commitment of the employees towards the organization. Respondents of the study are classified by those drawing salary in UGC/ICAR scale of pay and those who are getting salary in the Kerala state scale of pay.

Table 5 presents salary wise distribution of respondents.

Table 5
Salary-wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Scale of pay	Frequency	%
1.	Kerala State Scale of Pay	220	82.71
2.	UGC/ICAR scale of Pay	46	17.29
Total		266	100.00

Table 5 depict that 82.71% of respondents were working in the state scale of pay and the respondents who were working in the UGC/ICAR scale of pay is 17.29%. It is clear from the table that the majority of the LIS professionals were working in the Kerala state scale of pay. There is no recruitment in the post of UGC/ICAR scale of pay in LIS professionals. Library and information professionals are recruited through the state scale of pay.

6.6 Publications of Respondents

Analysis of publication output is becoming one of the important components of research. Publications are referred to as journal articles,

chapters in books, books, conference papers, reports and other documents of the LIS professionals to get it noticed by a wider audience. In the study, publications of LIS professionals are categorized into six different formats.

Table 6 describes publications of respondents using the mean score and median.

Table 6
Distribution of Publications of Respondents

Sl. No	Category wise Publications	n	Mean	Median
1.	Journal Articles	81	4.67	3.00
2.	Chapters in Books	45	3.09	1.00
3.	Books	19	3.11	1.00
4.	Conference Papers	75	4.88	3.00
5.	Reports	6	2.17	1.50
6.	Others	7	2.57	1.00

Table 6 presents that the mean score of the journal article is 4.67, and the median is 3.00. However, the mean score of chapters in books is 3.09, and the median is 1.00. The mean score of books is 3.11, and the median is 1.00. Moreover, the mean score of conference papers is 4.88, and the median is 3.00. The mean score of reports is 2.17, and the median is 1.50, and the mean score of other categories of publications of LIS professionals is 2.57, and the median is 1.00. Hence, it can be inferred that the highest number of publications are journal articles and conference papers. However, the mean score of conference papers is 4.88 and the mean score of journal articles is 4.67.

Category wise publication of respondents is illustrated in figure 1. The figure gives a clear idea about the category wise publication of the LIS professionals.

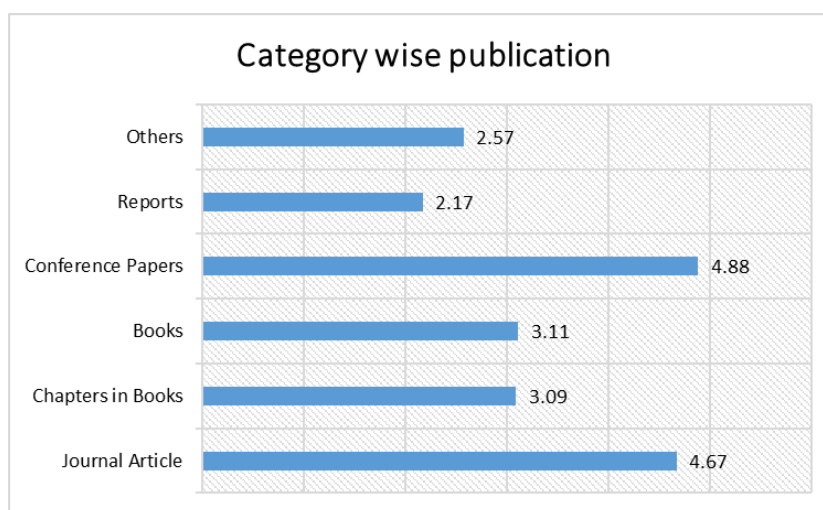


Figure 1
Category wise Publication of Respondents

6.7 Categorization of Respondents Based on Section of Work

University libraries have different sections. The functioning of these sections managed by the qualified LIS professionals depends on the necessity for disseminating information to the clientele. There is variation in the activities of similar sections in different universities based on their convenience.

The frequency and percentage of the LIS professionals based on the extent of categorization on the section of work in the libraries are presented in Table 7. It explains various functional sections in the libraries of selected universities for providing services to the library's clientele and upkeeping documents and equipment.

Table 7

Categorization of the functional area of Respondents

Sl. No	Functional Areas	Frequency	%
1.	Acquisition Section	140	53.03
2.	Technical Section	143	54.17
3.	Maintenance Section	147	55.68
4.	Periodical Section	136	51.52
5.	e-resources Section	128	48.48

6.	Reference Section	147	55.68
7.	Circulation Section	154	58.33
8.	Documentation Section	116	43.94
9.	Others	8	3.03

It could be inferred from Table 7 that 53.03 per cent of the respondents are working in the primary functional area of the acquisition section, 54.17 per cent in the technical section, 55.68 per cent of them in the maintenance section, 51.52 per cent of them in the periodical section, 48.48 per cent of them in e-resources section and 55.68 per cent of respondents in the reference section. The primary functional area of 58.33 per cent of respondents in the circulation section, 43.94 per cent of them in the documentation section and 3.03 per cent of respondents had other primary functional areas. It is concluded that majority of the professionals are working in all the major sections.

7. FINDINGS

The study was conducted mainly to ascertain the publication output and functional areas of LIS professionals.

Among the publications of LIS professionals, the highest number of publications of LIS professionals are in the journal articles (81) followed by conference papers (75). However, the least number of publications of the LIS professionals in the format of reports. The study highlights that, in terms of the extent of the publication format, the most preferred format of publication of the majority of the LIS professionals are in the conference papers (mean score 4.88) followed by journal articles (mean score 4.67).

Based on the data analysis, it may be observed that most LIS professionals have ten to fourteen years of experience in the profession, followed by LIS professionals having twenty to twenty-four years of experience. From the finding derived from the current study, it is evident that

the major functional area of LIS professionals in the universities are in the circulation section, followed by the reference section and maintenance section, where knowledge and skill of the professionals are utilized.

Moreno-Delgado., Gorraiz and Repiso (2021) confirm that English-speaking countries dominate in the publication output scenario in terms of the number of publications. Efe (2021) recommends that children use the public library more frequently to get acquainted with the library. Nagesh and Chandrashekara (2021) found that self-interest and professional interest are the major factors responsible for contributing to the LIS field.

8. CONCLUSION

It is obvious from this study's outcome that publication output and functional areas of the LIS professionals are very important in one way or the other. It can be concluded that the majority of LIS professionals have publications in printed and digital format. Among the publication output, conference papers have the highest mean score, followed by journal articles. The study indicates that the majority of LIS professionals are working in the circulation section, followed by the maintenance section and reference section. The study results show that the majority of the LIS professionals have ten to fourteen years of professional experience and a higher level of professional qualifications.

The present study could be helpful for all stakeholders of university libraries to integrate and monitor library functions through publications, human resources and functional areas of the library to enhance the scientific productivity and services of the professionals in the overall scenario. The role of the LIS professionals should be redefined for transforming libraries and information centres through quality assurance. The LIS professionals should be motivated and inspired to carry out basic research and applied research in Library and Information Science to improve professional competence. In the

light of the result of the study, it is also recommended that the publication of scholarly documents in digital format will increase the visibility of publications at the global level.

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