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Empowering Women LIS Professionals: A Comprehensive Guide to Essential Skills and Competencies

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This article provides an in-depth analysis of the crucial skills and competencies that are considered to be extremely necessary to empower women in the arena of Library and Information Science (LIS) in the existing world. It covers twenty (20) essential areas, such as, information literacy and continuous education, underscoring their importance and the relevance in the present day's information-rich environment. By drawing on academic sources and expert opinions, the article offers a detailed roadmap for female LIS professionals to overcome obstacles, foster innovation, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Each skill and competency is thoroughly examined, highlighting its role in creating diverse and fair library settings, advancing digital literacy and technological progress, and advocating for the significance of libraries and information accessibility. Through honing these abilities, women in the sphere of LIS can boost their own empowerment and that of their communities, amplify the impact of library services, and influence the future of the profession. The article ends with a plea for female LIS experts to embrace continuous learning, teamwork and leadership, and to champion diversity, inclusivity, and social justice within the LIS field and beyond.

Keywords: *LIS Professionsals, Empowering Women, Information Literacy, Information skills.*

0 INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic field of Library and Information Science (LIS), female professionals are instrumental in striving towards progress, acting as a driving

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force, promoting diversity, and improving information accessibility in current today's society.

As guardians of knowledge and advocates for intellectual freedom, women in LIS require a vast array of skills and competencies to effectively address the complicated challenges and opportunities within the profession. This main objective of the article is to investigate and clarify the crucial skills and competencies that empower female LIS professionals to thrive in their roles, contribute to the growth of libraries and information institutions, and have a positive influence on their communities. By delving into each skill and highlighting its importance in the contemporary information landscape, this article targets to offer a comprehensive resource for female LIS professionals looking to enhance their professional capabilities and intensify their impact in the field.

1 ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

The competencies and skills essential for women in Library and Information Science (LIS) are varied and multifaceted. The initial foundational information literacy enables effective information retrieval and evaluation. A fluency in Digital eloquence permits professionals to utilize technology for improved and optimal services. An effective communication and inter-personal skills facilitate positive interactions with stakeholders and users. It would be pertinent to mention that leadership and management capabilities are crucial for driving organizational change and strategic planning. In order to support effective decision making and innovative approach, problem-solving and critical thinking skills are highly supportive. In a similar manner, creativity and adaptability are essential for navigating transformation and progress. The advocacy and collaboration skills help promote the value of libraries and inclusive practices. The skills in efficient project and time management ensure timely project delivery and smoother operations. Efficiency in researching skills effectively contribute towards evidence-based practice and scholarly inquiry. Prioritizing user needs and satisfaction through customer service orientation is very essential. Upholding professional standards and values through ethical awareness is significant. The utilization of technological tools for enhanced service delivery through a technological aptitude is crucial. A lifelong learning and professional development through continuing education are fostered. These competencies collectively empower women in LIS to excel in their roles, make significant contributions, and shape the future of the profession. Major skills and competencies are provided in detail within the text.

1.1 INFORMATION LITERACY

Information literacy is the foundation of the LIS field, involving the capacity

to observe, assess, and utilize information from diverse outlets. In the current era of technology, female LIS experts need to have proficient abilities in navigating digital tools, databases, and online channels. They must excel in critically analysing information to determine its credibility and significance, guaranteeing that patrons of the library can access dependable and precise resources¹.

1.2 DIGITALFLUENCY

It is crucial for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science to possess digital fluency eloquence in order to effectively utilize technology in their roles. Being adept at utilizing digital tools, software programs, and online resources not only improves their information management skills but also enable them to interact with users and provide cutting-edge library services. Being well informed about the emerging and the latest state-of-the-art technologies and trends, from digital cataloguing systems to social media platforms, is imperative for women working in LIS to stay relevant and competitive².

1.3 COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Effective communication is extremely critical for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science to engage successfully with co-workers, partners, and patrons. Whether composing documents, giving speeches, or participating in community events, the ability to communicate clearly and succinctly is essential. Women working in Library and Information Science must be capable of explaining intricate concepts in a way that is understandable to various groups, nurturing strong connections and highlighting the importance of library resources and services³.

1.4 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Effective communication abilities are essential in developing connections and gaining trust with library patrons and partners. Female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science should exhibit compassion, tolerance, and attentive listening capabilities to comprehend the requirements and issues of various individuals and communities. Through nurturing significant relationships and showcasing sincere concern and curiosity, they can establish diverse and inviting library atmosphere that cater to the requirements of all patrons⁴.

1.5 LEADERSHIP ABILITIES

Women in the field of Library and Information Science must have an inclination for strong leadership skills in order to facilitate organizational

transformation and creativity. Whether they are overseeing library staff, coordinating projects, or championing for library assets, proficient leadership is indispensable. Female professionals in LIS should exhibit visionary leadership attributes, strategic planning capabilities, and the capacity to encourage and energize others towards shared objectives.

1.6 MANAGEMENT SKILLS

It is crucial for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science to possess strong management abilities in order to effectively supervise daily activities and strategic projects in libraries and information institutions. Women working in LIS should have the expertise in resource management, budget allocation, and goal setting. Efficient management plays a key role in ensuring the smooth functioning of libraries and the provision of top-notch services to patrons⁵.

1.7 PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS

It is essential for female LIS professionals to possess problem-solving skills in order to tackle difficulties and surmount barriers in their field. Whether it involves fixing technical problems, resolving disputes, or creating new and inventive solutions, women working in LIS must demonstrate the ability to think critically and creatively. Through pinpointing the underlying causes of issues and executing efficient resolutions, they can improve library services and cater to the requirements of their communities⁶.

1.8 CRITICAL THINKING

Critical thinking is crucial for female professionals in Library and Information Science to critically evaluate information and make informed decisions. In today's information-rich environment, women in LIS area must be able to distinguish between fact and fiction, recognize bias, and analyse complex issues from multiple perspectives. By honing their critical thinking skills, they can empower library users to navigate the information landscape confidently and discerningly⁷.

1.9 CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Creativity and innovation play a crucial role in driving advancement and expansion within the field of LIS. It is essential for women in LIS to have a creative outlook and a readiness to delve into novel concepts and methods. Whether it involves creating captivating programs or adopting state-of-the-art technologies, the ability to think creatively and innovate empowers women in LIS to break barriers, question norms, and elevate the effectiveness of library

services⁸.

1.10 ADAPTABILITY

The ability to adapt is crucial for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) to flourish in the dynamic contemporary landscape. With the constant evolution of technology and evolving user requirements, women in LIS must possess the capability to swiftly adjust to new situations and view change as a chance for personal development and knowledge acquisition. By maintaining agility and flexibility, they can effectively tackle emerging challenges and seize opportunities.

1.11 CULTURAL COMPETENCE

It is imperative for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) to possess cultural competence in order to offer comprehensive and fair library services to various communities. Women working in LIS should have a profound comprehension of cultural distinctions, values, and customs, and should be capable of effective communication across cultural barriers. By embracing diversity and advocating for inclusivity, they can establish library spaces that mirror and honour the diverse range of human experiences.

1.12 ADVOCACY SKILLS

Women professionals in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) must possess essential advocacy skills in order to effectively promote the significance of libraries and advocate for the rights of library users. Whether it involves lobbying policymakers, creating awareness within the community, or garnering support for library initiatives, women in LIS play a crucial role as advocates for intellectual freedom, information accessibility, and the greater benefit of the public. By amplifying their voices and championing their causes, they contribute to the advancement of libraries' mission and their impact on society⁹.

1.13 COLLABORATION SKILLS

Collaboration skills are crucial for female professionals in the Library and Information Science (LIS) sector to effectively collaborate with colleagues, partners, and stakeholders from different departments and organizations. Women working in LIS must be able to work productively with diverse teams and individuals, whether it be on inter-disciplinary research projects or community outreach efforts. By cultivating a culture of collaboration and partnership, they can utilize collective expertise and resources to achieve shared

goals and address common challenges.

1.14 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

It is crucial for female LIS professionals to possess project management skills in order to strategize, implement, and assess library initiatives and programs. Whether it is overseeing extensive digitization endeavours or organizing modest outreach events, women in LIS should possess the ability to efficiently handle projects, ensuring their timely completion, adherence to budget, and fulfilment of requirements. By utilizing project management methodologies and tools, they can optimize workflows, allocate resources effectively, and achieve favourable results¹⁰.

1.15 TIME MANAGEMENT

It is essential for female LIS professionals to possess time management skills in order to effectively balance conflicting priorities and meet deadlines. Whether it is handling reference desk responsibilities or engaging in collection development tasks, women in LIS need to prioritize their tasks, efficiently manage their time, and sustain productivity. Through the implementation of time management techniques like prioritization, scheduling, and delegation, they can enhance their workflow and successfully accomplish their career objectives¹¹.

1.16 RESEARCH SKILLS

It is crucial for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) to possess research skills in order to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and make valuable contributions to scholarly inquiry. Women working in LIS should be proficient in conducting literature reviews, analysing data, and effectively conducting research. They should also possess the ability to synthesize findings and communicate results in a clear and accurate manner. By staying updated on current research trends and methodologies, women in LIS can actively contribute to the progress of knowledge and practice within the profession¹².

1.17 CUSTOMER SERVICE ORIENTATION

It is imperative for women in the Library and Information Science profession to prioritize customer services in order to address the diverse requirements and preferences of library users. Whether engaging in reference interviews or handling circulation transactions, female professionals in LIS should aim to offer warm, efficient, and personalized assistance to patrons. By actively listening to user inquiries, anticipating their needs, and going above

and beyond to aid them, they can establish a positive library experience that encourage patron loyalty and satisfaction.

1.18 ETHICAL AWARENESS

It is crucial for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) to possess a strong sense of ethical awareness in order to uphold the paramount standards of professional behaviour and integrity. Women working in LIS should be guided by ethical principles and values in various aspects of their work, ranging from safeguarding user privacy to advocating for intellectual freedom. By adhering to established ethical codes and seeking guidance when faced with ethical dilemmas, these professionals can ensure that they maintain the trust and confidence of library users and stakeholders¹³.

1.19 TECHNOLOGICAL APTITUDE

Proficiency in technology is crucial for female professionals in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) to effectively utilize digital tools and technologies. Women working in LIS should possess the skills to utilize technology for information organization, management, and distribution. Keeping up-to-date with new technologies and industry trends enables them to maximize the benefits of technology in enhancing library services, optimizing processes, and enhancing user satisfaction¹⁴.

1.20 CONTINUING EDUCATION

It is crucial for female LIS professionals to engage in ongoing education in order to remain well-informed about the latest trends, technologies, and best practices in the field. Whether it be attending conferences or enrolling in online courses, women in LIS should prioritize lifelong learning and professional growth. By continuously expanding their knowledge and honing their skills, they can effectively adapt to evolving job demands, progress in their careers, and make valuable contributions to the LIS profession.

2 CONCLUSION

The empowerment of women in the field of Library and Information Science (LIS) depends on the cultivation and application of a diverse range of skills and competencies. These competencies, including information literacy, technological proficiency, leadership, and ethical awareness, which are fundamental in shaping the professional practice of women in LIS and advancing the field as a whole. By embracing these skills, women in LIS can effectively navigate the complexities of the modern information landscape, drive innovation, and advocate for the value of libraries as essential institutions in society.

Furthermore, the significance of these competencies extends beyond individual career success. They contribute to the collective advancement of the LIS profession in totality as a whole. Through collaboration, advocacy, and leadership, women in LIS can bring about a positive change within their organizations and communities. This fosters inclusivity, equity, and access to information for all.

Moreover, as agents of change and guardians of knowledge, women in LIS have a unique opportunity to shape the future of libraries and information organizations. By leveraging their skills and competencies to address emerging challenges, embrace technological advancements, and champion diversity and social justice, women in LIS can ensure that libraries remain vivacious, relevant, and indispensable in an ever-changing world.

In conclusion, the empowerment of women in LIS is not only critical for professional development but also serves as a catalyst for social change and progress. By investing in the development of these essential skills and competencies, women in LIS can harness their collective potential to create a more inclusive, equitable, and knowledge-rich society for future generations.

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