

## **Research on Library Leadership and Traits of Leadership among Library Directors in Dubai**

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***“Change is the Nature of Life, but Challenge is the Future of Life  
So Challenge the Change and Never Change the Challenge”***

### **Abstract**

Leadership is one of the key competencies for librarians in managing the academic and research libraries for better productivity, visibility and development of functional and innovative libraries. The study reviews the existing literature on library leadership and competencies required to become strategic library leaders have been discussed based on various leadership models proposed by management gurus. It also highlights the research study to determine the traits for leadership effectiveness among librarians in Dubai and results are reported.

Pioneers in the field and stress upon to build congenial atmosphere in the library for better performance of libraries working in team spirit.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Library Management, Human Resource Management

### **Introduction**

Library and Information Science Professionals of today have to face the challenge of looking toward the future and ensuring that the libraries in which they work will be

able to meet the needs of the digital age and to provide services needed by both today's and tomorrow's clientele. Libraries support the parent institution's teaching, learning, and research mission irrespective of its being academic or corporate or R & D setup. The expertise and skills needed by the Librarians also calls for continuous updation to possess expertise and skills to work in the complex, multifaceted and modern digital library. These skills includes besides sound knowledge of theory and practice of librarianship are Communication, technology skills, ability to change, learn and grow, collaboration, team work, assessment, marketing, leadership and innovation.

The Library is a valuable Resource Centre for learning and experience helping the users to find information, gather knowledge and create content for access and posterity. Tremendous impact of ICT and users information consciousness towards access to timely information, calls for value added services in libraries. As a result, there is an increasing demand for accountability, with focus on quality customer services, performance measurement, bench marking and continuous improvement to develop innovation for survival and growth of the library profession. Making lifelong learning skills a reality and promoting creativity and innovation are two major priorities.

In the Library and Information Science discipline, 'Library Management' is one of the subjects in the Masters Degree of Library and Information Science which is now termed as '*Management of Library and Information Centers*' aims to build theoretical skills of management of various resources in the library setup. Unlike other departments in an academic and research environment, the nature of Library work is an inter-related and integrated and every activity of services in the library involves team work and not as isolation like teaching a subject to the students and this calls for management skills of strong leadership among the library managers or head of the library. Winston and Dunkley (2002) re-conceptualized the importance of the competencies that librarian leaders will need in the future.

### **Research on Library Leadership**

The specific studies especially on library leadership in Indian context is not much communicated except a few articles and there is a need for in-depth studies. Some of the studies reported in the Indian context pertaining to Library leadership are summarized below.

Jange and Arunachalaphy (2015) explored the significance of Library Leadership in India. Deepti (2013) has analyzed Knowledge, Techniques and Skills of LIS professionals for Information Analysis, Consolidation, Repackaging and Dissemination in the Digitized Era covering library professionals in universities of Karnataka. The Information Society has brought about developments in the way information is created, consolidated and accessed. ICT has produced larger volumes of information, new ways of packaging information and new tools for managing information. These developments require leadership skills of librarians and other information workers to meet the demands of the global economy for information resources and services. The rapid developments in computer technology as well as

economic changes have made it clear that the familiar role of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Librarian as information intermediaries must undergo immense change, if Librarians are to avoid being displaced by a variety of content providers. Leadership Skills for professional competencies, management, networking and teamwork are the need of the hour (Ramesh Babu, 2012). Jange (2012) attempted to identify and explore the significance of Leadership roles among Library and Information Science professionals that can be leveraged as a strategic asset to attract staff, create favourable assessments. Prakash and Patil (2011) discussed the leadership skills in the changing management perspectives of libraries and Jagtap and Kapade (2011) highlighted the values of leadership in academic and research libraries. The societal, organizational, and competitive changes affecting academic libraries point to the need for effective leadership and the identification of an important component of such a statement of leadership competencies (Krishan Gopal, 2006).

### **Core Library Leadership Models and Skills**

The Competencies of Successful Leader emphasized by various stalwarts in library profession and here the efforts are made to know the various leadership models for the benefit of librarians to understand, measure and evaluate the strength of leadership and strive to possess the competencies in the light of the existing leadership models.

- **Drotter's Leadership Pipeline**

Ram Charan, Stephen Drotter, and James Noel developed the Leadership Pipeline Model that encompasses six key transitions which help the organizations like library to develop good leaders. They are



**Source:** <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/leadership-pipeline-model.htm>

- **Ammons-Stephens - Core Leadership Competency Model**

Ammons-Stephens et al., (2009: 68-71) designed a Core Leadership Competency Model which includes four central leadership competencies for library leadership i.e.

- cognitive ability,
- vision,
- interpersonal effectiveness and
- managerial effectiveness,

It is difficult to have consensus as to what a leader should contain. This is because "Librarians have listed debated, revised, and negotiated lists of competencies for 125 years, since the beginnings of formal education for librarianship" (Helmick & Swigger, 2006). Existing literature have encompassed various traits or skills that make a good leader to manage the library effectively Christopher Soo-Guan Khoo (2005) has analyzed literature in the Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) from 2000 to 2005 and enlisted competencies required for library professionals.

Jordan, Mary Wilkins (2011) has provided a list of skills required for an effective leadership are:

- |                                 |                            |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ○ Vision                        | ○ Creativity               |
| ○ Flexibility                   | ○ Self-awareness           |
| ○ Communication skills          | ○ Ambition                 |
| ○ Teamwork                      | ○ Previous experience      |
| ○ Interpersonal skills          | ○ Conflict resolution      |
| ○ Employee centered             | ○ Tenacity                 |
| ○ Risk taking                   | ○ Planning                 |
| ○ Customer service              | ○ Personal energy          |
| ○ Multicultural awareness       | ○ Accountability           |
| ○ Problem solving               | ○ Delegation               |
| ○ Motivating others             | ○ Self-confidence          |
| ○ Commitment to the profession: | ○ Emotional intelligence   |
| ○ Integrity                     | ○ Mentoring                |
| ○ Enthusiasm                    | ○ Demonstrating leadership |
| ○ Modeling values               | ○ Resource management      |
| ○ Intelligence and              | ○ Time management          |
| ○ Diplomacy                     | ○ Sense of humor           |
|                                 | ○ Credibility              |

Traits of Leadership among Library Directors in Dubai comprising of six traits i.e. Need for achievement, Intelligence, Decisiveness, Self-Confidence, Initiative and Supervisory ability.

The Librarians or Head of Library working in Universities or institutions of higher learning in Dubai covering 30 institute librarians were surveyed to determine the traits of leadership effectiveness by applying Ghiselli's six traits for leadership

effectiveness. Each Librarian was asked to rate 1 (low) to 10 scales (high) and its results are reported in following table.

<b>Leadership Traits</b>	<b>Total Scores Obtained (N=32)</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Application of Ghiselli's Traits</b>
1. Need for achievement	292	<b>9.125</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
2. Intelligence	277	<b>8.65</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Good</b>
3. Decisiveness	271	<b>8.46</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Good</b>
4. Self-confidence	294	<b>9.18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Very Good</b>
5. Initiative	272	<b>8.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Good</b>
6. Supervisory ability	293	<b>9.156</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Very Good</b>

As per Ghiselli's six traits for leadership effectiveness, in case the average score obtained between 9 and 10 is very good; 7-8 is good and 1 to 6 is needs improvement. Thus, leadership traits possessed by results found that Librarians or Head of Library working in Universities or institutions of higher learning in Dubai are very good as far as leadership traits Need for achievement, Self-confidence and Supervisory ability and where as the traits – Intelligence, Decisiveness and Initiative are found to good. Thus overall Ghiselli's six traits for leadership effectiveness applied to librarians in Dubai have rated better score indicating possession of good leadership traits.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, Library leadership is the need of the hour but this is still a very primitive stage in Indian academic librarianship. The reasons that signifies the importance of Leadership especially in Academic Library functioning or even the department of Library and Information Science. Library is a service oriented profession and has to work in team rather than in isolation. Unity and team building in the academic libraries among the professionals is not much seen with certain exceptions, resulting hampering of library services. Library leadership though part of curriculum of 'Library management' but is not a specialized area and this needs to be emphasized more. It is often said that leaders are born not created. But what so ever, the reason as to why lot of hue and cry of leadership is for better productivity, visibility and strengthening of libraries and this can be achieved only with the strong leadership of head librarian who shows the way, excels and leads the team with utmost diligence and act of benevolence to meet the customer expectations with consensus among library team.

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