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Attracting Prospective Students to Master's Program: A Dilemma for Library and Information Science Education

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Abstract. This paper examines the issue and challenges of enticing promising students in library and information science (LIS) education in Pakistan. It also identifies the practical strategies in this regard by exploring the perceptions of faculty members. A questionnaire sent to heads of departments and semi-structured interviews with faculty were employed to collect data. The findings of the study identify social, physical, procedural, and behavioral hindrances to attracting brilliant students. The study revealed a need for fundamental changes by expanding intellectual jurisdiction, restructuring academic offerings, redesigning curriculum contents and revamping social image of the profession and professionals. The findings of the study may lead to better understanding of the phenomenon in Pakistan and other countries with a similar context.

Keywords: LIS education; Pakistan; LIS students; Curriculum; LIS profession; Future students' intake; Challenges of LIS programs

Introduction

Attracting students to LIS programs have been a very challenging task since the early days of library training and education. The issue can be traced from historic report by Williamson (1926) who recommended that to make library training more attractive for students, scholarship and fellowship incentives should be provided. Generally, the profession has been considered as less preferred and second career choice of late deciders (Ageymang, 2019; Rubin, 2016; Bosseau, & Martin, 1995). Why the profession has been less attractive is the question explored by many expert and they came up with a number of reasons including low a level of awareness about the profession,

nature of work, and needed qualification among general public, less lucrative jobs, low salary package, low social image and prestige of the profession in the society (Harris & Wilkinson, 2003; Moniarou-Papaconstantinou, Tsatsaroni, Katsis & Koulaidis, 2010; Simon & Taylor, 2011; Warraich, Malik & Ameen, 2016). On the other hand, a number of studies explicitly ask LIS students about their career aspirations and motivations for undertaking a degree. The findings of these studies suggested that future of this profession rests largely on the success of attracting better people into the profession (Ard, Clemmons, Morgan, Sessions, Spencer, Tidwell, & West, 2006; Hallam & Partridge, 2005; Lo, Dukic, Chiu, Ikeuchi, Liu, Lu, 2015; Lo, Chiu, Dukic, Cho, Liu, 2016; Simon & Taylor, 2011; Taylor, Perry, Barton, & Spencer, 2010). How to attract better people into profession is another big question. The present study is an attempt to explore this phenomenon from developing country's perspective and to devise workable strategies in this regard.

Since inception in 1887, LIS as a profession and discipline has been constantly evolving, expanding, and encompassing changes across the globe. A number of factors are responsible for bringing this change in LIS landscape, out of which the information revolution is playing a catalytic role. With the introduction of new information sources and formats, dynamic delivery channels, embedding of sophisticated ICTs, digitization etc. has led to the changing dimensions. These developments have brought about a paradigm shift converting the profession from 'Library Economy' to 'Information' and making the job of enticing good students more compelling and challenging. LIS programs are expected to produce a new breed of information professionals who are dynamic and receptive to constant change. Thus LIS schools must devise viable means of attracting the best students; developing them as the best cream of professionals that will ensure the survival and advancement of LIS as a profession and as a field of study.

This is not as simple as it looks. Attracting good students' intake with diverse background requires a paradigm shift in terms of program philosophy and structure. Internationally, the educational programs are shifting their focus from specific agencies (e.g. libraries, archives) and physical collection to a more holistic perspective of information and its use in society. The schools are encompassing broader information landscape where libraries are just a part of the whole. A review of academic programs in the developed countries presents a very interesting picture of shifting focuses and diversity in terms of school names, nomenclature and areas of specializations. There is an increasing trend of dropping the "L" and focusing on "I" word from school names and preferring to be called as School of Information Science/ Studies/ Management or simply "iSchool".

They tend to offer a wide range of specialization including library and information science, knowledge management, archives and records management, information systems, health informatics, school media resource management to name a few. Admission requirements for such programs mentioned on school websites also indicates that students with diverse educational and employment background from computer science, business and industry, education, library etc. are encouraged to get enrolled. This transformation is considered a survival strategy to strengthen and improve the position of the discipline in the contemporary information environment (Dione, 2014; Pettigrew & Durrance, 2001; Smith, Hallam & Gosh, 2012).

Pettigrew and Durrance (2001) identified following six trends of LIS schools, programs and curricula in North America:

1. addressing broad-based information environments and information problems;
2. continue to incorporate perspectives from other disciplines, but a distinct core is predominantly user-centered;
3. increasing the investment and infusion of information technology into their curricula;
4. experimenting with the structure of specialization within the curricula;
5. offering instruction in different formats to provide students with more flexibility;
6. expanding their curricula by offering related degrees at the undergraduate, master's, and doctoral levels.

All the above mentioned trends clearly denotes that schools are striving for their niche in this information era by making academic offerings diverse, flexible, relevant and attractive for the students. But how successful they are in attracting better students and in which kind of specializations or streams, is still needed to be explored fully. However, attempts have been made to explore the factors that motivate the students to get enrolled in information profession along with their preferences, expectations and satisfaction level with their master's programs (Cherry, Duff & Singh, 2007; Cherry, Duff, Singh & Freund, 2013; Duff, Cherry, & Singh, 2007; Khoo, 2005; Simon, & Taylor, 2011; Tanackoviæ, Žilić, Kurbanoglu & Unal, 2018).

Duff, Cherry, and Singh (2007) conducting a study to explore the perceptions of 231 students admitted in Master of Information Study at the University of Toronto. The master program has three streams: Archives, LIS and Information Systems. The study reported a number of interesting differences among the streams related to gender distribution, academic choices, motivators for getting enrolled in the program, career aspirations and salary expectations. Archives and LIS

streams students were predominantly female, who entered the program to either "following their dream" or "considering the career appealing" wanted to seek new employment in the public sector at non-management positions. Their salary expectations were also significantly low from male dominant Information Systems students who cited pragmatic reasons for entering the program: (seeking a graduate degree, career advancement, seeking employment). With respect to future career aspirations, they were more interested in seeking advancement in a current job or further education upon completion of the degree and wanted to see themselves working in the business sector, taking on executive positions and owning their own businesses with high salary or income expectations. These results show that strong differences exist in the backgrounds, motivations and aspirations of students in the various streams, over and above the different subject matter they have chosen to study. It is likely that these differences are expressed in different attitudes and expectations with respect to curriculum and services in their graduate education as well.

LIS in the developing countries is still hinged on the traditional concept of physical institutions and containers while facing pressure of global trends due to networked society. Several studies have revealed a number of LIS education issues including inept students' intake in developing regions. (Ameen, 2007; Chikonzo, Bothma, Kusekwa & Mushowani, 2014; Islam Chowdhury, 2006; Ocholla & Shongwe, 2013; Yadav & Gohain, 2015, Warraich, Malik & Ameen, 2016).

Nine universities in Pakistan have consistently offered Master's program in LIS. A significant increase in the enrollments has also been noted in published literature due to the emergence of new programs in private sector and commencement of evening programs in public sector universities. It is reported that LIS schools had to embrace usually a weak intake of leftovers that were unable to get admission anywhere (Ameen, 2007; Ahmad & Mahmood, 2011; Warraich, Malik & Ameen, 2016). In another study, Ameen and Warraich (2014) declared getting good students a hard job as the subject is not a first choice of the students with high grades. However no, further investigation has been made to know the profile and characteristics of the candidates who apply in LIS program and what schools should do to attract brilliant students. The present study is a first attempt in this regard.

Research Objectives

The following are the research objectives of this study:

1. To know the current number of students' enrolment and available facilities in the master's programs of LIS schools in Pakistan.
2. To identify the personal, academic and socio-economic trends of students' intake
3. To explore the challenges of attracting better students intake in the master's programs of LIS schools in Pakistan

Methods and Procedures

Data were collected by combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire survey from nine universities where LIS departments were well established and regularly offering academic programs with a 100% response rate. A questionnaire was designed with the following sections: department name, name of degree, student enrollment in master's program of LIS schools, admission requirements, and scholarship available to the students. The questionnaires were then mailed to heads of LIS departments to get organizational response. The qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews from 17 faculty members from a pool of professors, associate professors, and assistant professors purposively selected to obtain their real perspective on various challenges related to the students' intake. An interview guide was developed covering the trends and challenges of students' enrollment, and strategies to attract prospective students' intake.

Face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted from the faculty members of eight LIS departments with their prior consent. Three respondents were from the University of Peshawar, while five from the University of the Punjab were interviewed. At least two respondents were included from each of the three departments at the University of Karachi, University of Baluchistan and Islamia University of Bahawalpur. One faculty member from each of the remaining three departments—Allama Iqbal Open University, the University of Sargodha, and Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology—was contacted. Faculty members from one department never responded despite multiple requests. Initially, faculty members were contacted through telephone to get their consent and set a time for the interview. After that, an invitation letter with an interview guide was sent via e-mail to those who agreed to participate. The participants were provided with a choice to speak in English or Urdu or bilingually (both English and Urdu) to avoid language barriers from becoming a distraction. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Qualitative data were analyzed using the thematic analysis approach to identify common themes. After reading the interview guide and each interview transcript several times, a list of codes or code sheet was

developed. The codes developed from the interview guide, and the first few interviews worked as a baseline for the remaining interview transcripts. Additional codes that emerged inductively from the data were added as needed. The quantitative and qualitative findings were merged, and they are presented in the following section.

Findings

This section describes the findings of quantitative and qualitative data.

Students' Status in Departments and Programs

Data regarding students' enrollment shows (Table 1) that the master's program is a predominant one in the country with a huge number of students' enrollment. Cumulatively, 1107 students were enrolled at the time of data collection in all the nine departments. The range of students in an individual department varied from 55 to 500. The largest number of enrollments of 500 was found at AIOU master's program followed by IUB with 117. During the interview, a faculty member from AIOU explained that their master's program was a distance learning program and usually tutors were assigned in every region of the country. When further asked about the number of regions, students and assigned tutors, he replied that the master's program was offered at almost 12 regions of the country with one tutor, normally assigned for fifty students. The admission seats were not specified, rather based on the number of applicants, hence, enrollments varied from year to year. However, almost more than 500 students would usually get admission every year.

Table 1

Students' Strength Breakdown by Departments and Programs

Name of University	Name of Department	Name of Degree	Number of Students
UOB	LIS	Master of Library and Information Science (LIS)	117
PU	Information Management	Master of Information Management	76
UOP	LIS	Master of LIS	75
IUB	LIS	Master of LIS	80
AIOU	LIS	Master of LIS	500
UOS	LIS	Master of LIS	70
KU	LIS	Master of LIS	55

USJ	LIS & Archive Studies	Master of LIS & Archive Studies	64
SUIT	LIS	Master of LIS	70
			Total**:** 1107

Note: UOB (University of Balochistan); PU (University of the Punjab); UOP (University of Peshawar); IUB (Islamia University of Bahawalpur); AIOU (Allama Iqbal Open University); UOS (University of Sargodha); KU (University of Karachi); USJ (University of Sindh, Jamshoro); SUIT (Sarhad University of Sciences & Information Technology).

A comparison of student's enrollments and available faculty members made by Malik (2019) depicts a poor teacher student ratio in some departments; exceeding 1: 60 in one and while other two of 1: 50 and 1:40 each. In a recent article Malik and Ameen (2020) discussed the physical and infrastructural resources available for the students in the departments. They mentioned that all the departments had Internet facility for the students while seven departments had Wi-Fi in their classrooms as well. The same number also had their own library besides the facility of universities' central or main library. All the nine departments had white board and multimedia facility in their classrooms however; the availability of sound system and temperature control existed in five and four departments, respectively. Their study revealed the need of adding facilities to make the classrooms environment conducive for learning.

Admission Requirements

Generally, the admission criteria are based on the merit of candidates' previous academic grades with variations in the departments. Students with fourteen years of education in any discipline background can get admission in the master's programs of the country. It was a composite program of two years in seven departments while in two universities (KU and USJ), it was a terminal program. After completing first year, BLIS (Bachelor in LIS at KU) and PGLIS (Post-Graduate in LIS at USJ) degrees were awarded. A master's degree was awarded after completing the second year. The above mentioned situation denotes a lack of uniformity and standardization in programs' and degrees' name and admission requirements.

Scholarships Available to Students

It was asked to mention the number and type of scholarships available to the students. The data revealed that two types of formal scholarships were available in seven departments: merit based and need based. Merit scholarships were available for those students who had earned good grades. Need based were for the poor students. Some departments had also mentioned other types of scholarships like IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons) and PEEF (Punjab Educational Endowment

Fund) available to their students. Sometimes informal sources such as department alumni or a trust would also offer financial help to the students. Nevertheless, merit based and need based scholarships were the prime categories officially available help to students.

<div align="center">Trends of Students' Intake</div>

This section presents the analysis of qualitatively data collected on the trends and challenges of attracting better students to the program. Figure 1 shows the trends of students' intake, identified by the participants followed by the interpretation.

Dominance of Female Students

The participants indicated a high ratio of female students (almost 70%) in majority of the mater's programs. However, in two LIS departments at UOB and UOP greater number of male students was reported. Some of the interviewees expressed their concern about the female's seriousness regarding pursuing the profession rigorously after completing degree. A participant noted, "In local culture, sometimes they are not allowed to do a job" (R 13). However, "Due to open merit system, they usually occupied the most of the available seats and got admissions just to have a degree" (R7). After graduating they would not practically contribute into the development of the profession.
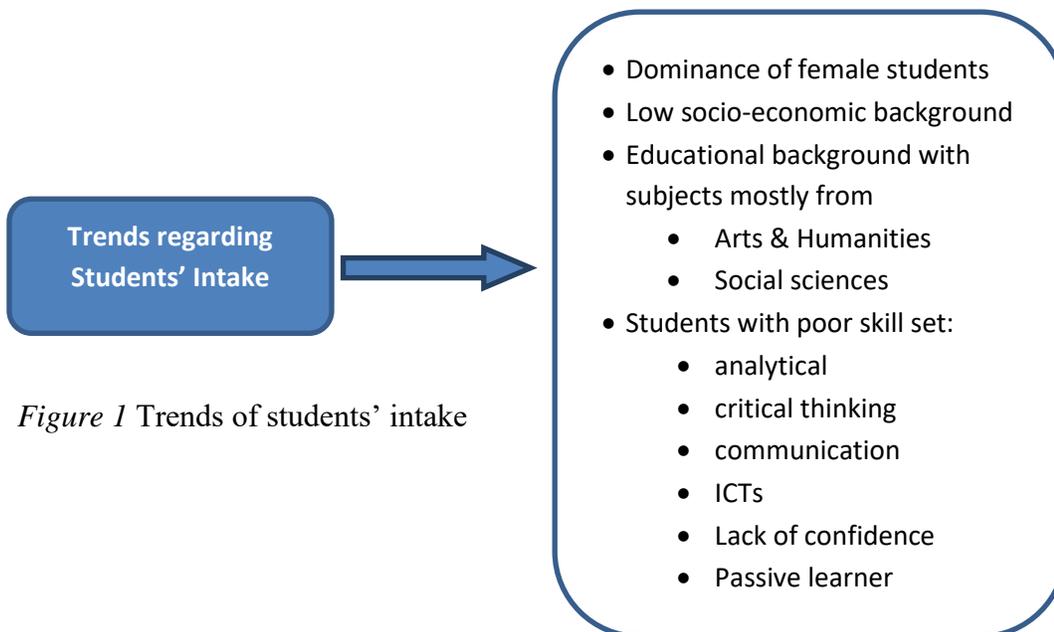

Figure 1 Trends of students' intake

Educational Background of the Students

Educational background is considered one of the important indicators in determining the students' aptitude towards learning and progress in particular subject area. Keeping this in view, the

educational background of the students was probed form the faculty. Faculty members are usually involved in admission process to check the eligibility and merit of the applicants. The interview data revealed that a large majority of the students came from either "arts or humanities" or "social sciences" group with languages and religions as major subjects. The faculty found such students generally less intellectual and thus opted easy and marks securing subjects to have good grades. "They [students] choose a combination of languages to secure good grades. A few of them successfully do. Generally their analytical and critical skills are very poor" (R7). Another respondent claimed that, "Most of them are just crammers without creativity. They particularly lacked in IT knowledge and skills" (R13).

"There are so many disciplines in social sciences but usually the students who applied for admissions in our master and BS programs come from low rated disciplines" (R7). They specifically explained that even in humanities and social sciences students with good grades opted other disciplines rather LIS. "Students who secured good marks usually prefer for other disciplines like business, economics, and mass communication" (R13). Only a few students with diverse educational background from pure or applied sciences, IT and commerce showed interest to get admission in LIS master's program.

Overall, the interviewees expressed that LIS schools had to embrace usually a weak intake of leftovers that were unable to get admission anywhere. They mentioned that LIS was not a by choice or desired profession of majority of the students who got admission in the programs. The students were usually poor in analytical, critical and communication skills. They lacked confidence. They were passive learners with low level of IT skills and knowledge. Teaching of advance course contents to these students was also considered as a challenging task. Furthermore, the respondents found it difficult to train them with modern IT skills and techniques. The situation can be assessed from the following statements of the faculty members: "The students who are unable to get admission in any other department come to us" (R11).

"Only leftovers come to us" (R17).

"Library science is not the first or preferred choice of the students who secured good marks" (R4).

Reasons of Weak Intake

During conversation, reasons of poor intake were also disclosed by the respondents. They believed that it was difficult to attract good intake in presence of the following factors:

- Low social image of the profession
- Lack of lucrative jobs and good salary packages
- Education system of the country does not support or promote use of libraries
- Lack of library sources & services in schools & colleges
- Lack of government interest in promoting education & libraries

The first major reason mentioned by the respondents was low social image of the profession and weak personalities of the librarians that discourage promising student to adopt the profession. Librarianship was considered as clerical job category by the general public. Socio-economic condition of librarians due to low salary packages was another major reason of getting weak intake.

"Low social image and prestige is the basic reason of failure in attracting good intake. Even well-educated families take librarian jobs as clerical jobs" (R13).

"Students usually go for such fields where they have more job opportunities with good salary package" (R17).

A number of respondents (n=11) single out the overall poor and deteriorating educational system of the country as a major reason, declaring it a cramming system which did not support and promote the use of libraries. It was also mentioned that students in schools would just follow the textbooks, while, involved in political and other non-academic activities at the college level. "Worse condition of education system in the country obviously affects our intake" (R16). Absence of and/or poor library resources and services in school, college and public libraries were the other mentioned reason. "Our education system is producing just clerks not intellectuals. There is no concept of library in schools and colleges. Books are kept in closed shelves in store room" (R11).

A few interviewees (n=5) also criticized the lack of political leadership's attention and interest in education and libraries sector. They considered it a big reason that ultimately affected the students' intake as well.

A couple of respondents from remote and underdeveloped areas pointed out low literacy rate and non-availability of educational facilities as the major reasons of getting low quality intake. "There are only a few schools, colleges and universities in the area of 99572 km for the population of 100.6 million" (R4). He further added, "This year, the number of applicants for admission was less than that of available seats. So, we have no choice to choose."

During discussion the interviewees were asked if they had observed any change in the enrollment pattern of the students during the last three to five years. The majority of them (n=14)

simply stated that no visible change was observed, especially in the students' educational background and gender distribution. However, they observed a recent trend where comparatively younger and fresh students were seeking entrance into the departments. They explained that in the past usually mature students who were looking for a career change or job up-gradation sought admission. "Now we are getting younger students' intake into our master program" (R6).

Competition from within and Other Disciplines

All programs offered in a university have to compete favorably in attracting prospective candidates. The respondents shared that they were facing the challenge of competition from other academic disciplines such as computer science, communication studies and management programs within their respective universities. Besides that, an increased competition with in the discipline is becoming obvious with the emergence of new LIS programs in public and private sectors. So, with this twofold competition, attracting good student was a really challenging job for LIS schools.

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Prospects to Attract Better Intake

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The respondents also proposed following remedial steps and strategies for attracting better intake in future.
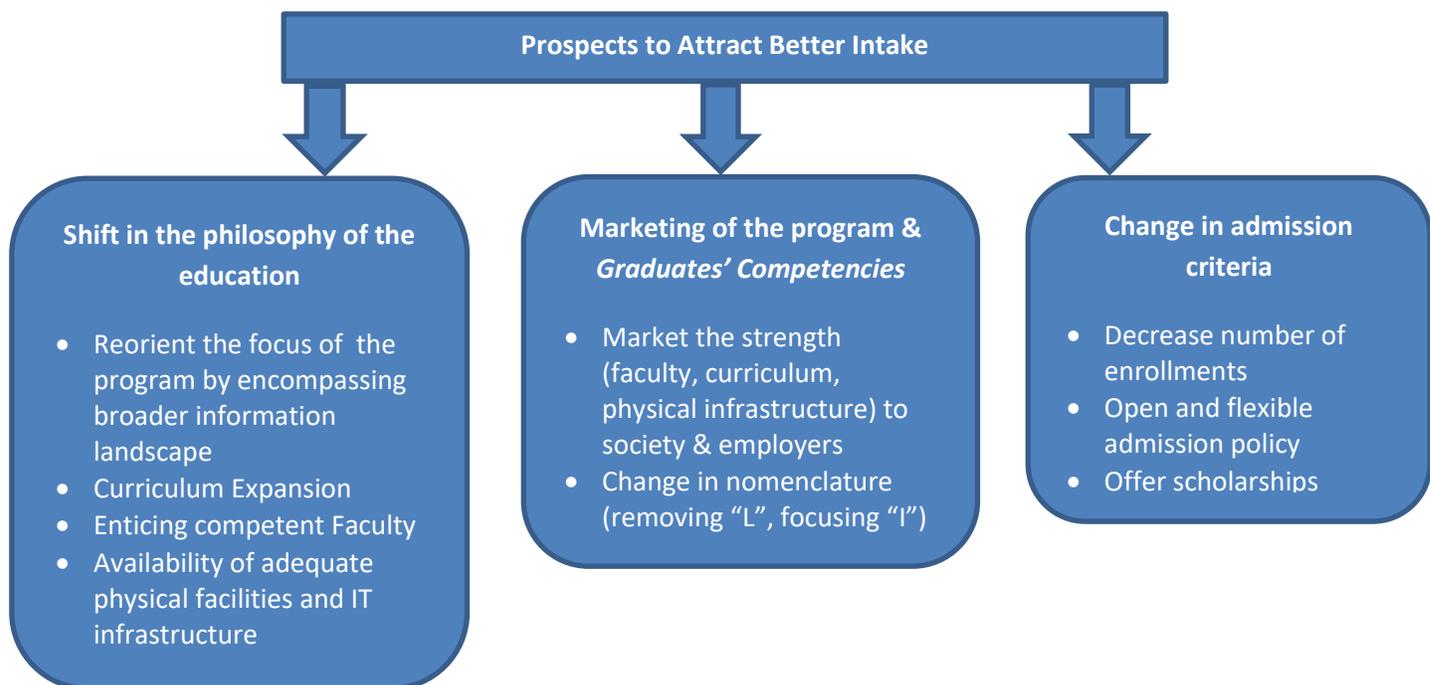

Figure2. Strategies to attract better intake

Shift in the Philosophy of the Education

The change in the philosophy and focus of education was also considered indispensible by various respondents. They believed that the emergence of information and knowledge based economy offered an opportunity to expand the instinctual jurisdiction of the profession and to capture the job market beyond traditional libraries. Such attempts would also help to extend the scope and prestige of the profession and educational programs in academia and society. They thought that LIS schools have to shift their traditional focus from institutions (i.e. libraries) and its containers (i.e. books, journals) to information landscape. The interview participants urged to expand the horizons of the field to encompass the broader information landscape including areas such as records management, information and knowledge management, information systems, informatics, archival and museum studies. They were in favor of offering either specialization in these areas within the traditional MLIS program or full- fledges master programs as off-shots under the umbrella of information. However, the need of retaining traditional MLIS degrees was expressed by all the participants. "A trend of expanding professional perspectives is the key to the future but traditional library science is still a strong program in the country" (R12).

This paradigm shift obviously requires curriculum expansion, revision and redesigning of contents; enticing highly qualified, competent faculty with diversified educational background and availability of sophisticated physical and IT infrastructure. They predicted that such expansion in the intellectual jurisdiction and the professional domain would be helpful in attracting better intake. A number of respondents talked about various initiatives for rebranding the profession's image and identity. They thought that changing the nomenclature of the department would lead to a positive impact on the profession, helping in getting better intake. They also appreciated the initiative of changing nomenclature from "Library & Information Science" to "Information Management" by the department at PU. However, some faculty members thought that merely a name change would be a cosmetic one without incorporating modern course contents (already discussed). Two faculty members from the department of Information Management mentioned a positive impact of changed nomenclature on the enrollment pattern of the students' intake and hoped that in the future it would be more positive. A study by Miwa (2006) indicated that dropping "L" from programs names in China, Thailand and Taiwan resulted positively in an increased number of students with different educational background.

Some interviewees were of the view that if the departments continued to teach traditional courses they would continue getting weak learners. The curriculum expansion with inter and multidisciplinary approach for developing competitive and generic skills among graduates was considered as a workable idea. Inclusion of modern IT concepts such as web programming, software development, and application of information systems should be geared to equip graduates with competitive skills for securing jobs in future. A well-paid job market will enhance the social image and prestige of the profession and professionals. Such face up-lifting of the profession would prove beneficial in attracting promising candidates. A number of interviewees (n==11) were in favor of adopting a multidisciplinary approach to impart the graduates with generic and social skills by incorporate areas such as marketing, leadership, communication skills, personality development, time and task management, finance and budgeting. The respondents were of the view that the infusion of multidisciplinary approach would better prepare our graduates to compete in expanded job market that has shifted its focus from degrees to skill set.

Marketing of LIS Programs and Graduates' Competencies

The respondents felt the need of employing marketing strategies for attracting better intake. According to them their strength might include faculty, curriculum, infrastructure and physical facilities available that should be promoted particularly using virtual environment such as university websites, Facebook, twitter, blogs, web portals etc. It is a fact that students prefer to get admitted in their respective field of study. For example, a student with the basic academic credentials in science will want to be admitted into any of the science based program and the same applies to social sciences and humanities. Hence, the respondents argued that the packaging and repackaging of program could further affect a candidate's final decision and preference especially when it is properly promoted showing the variety of opportunities waiting in the job market. They were of the view that creating awareness among general public would be helpful in getting better intake.

Marketing was believed to serve two fold purposes simultaneously. It would create awareness about the strengths and value of our discipline among employers that would enhance the job market beyond traditional sectors. On the other hand, it would cast its positive impact on better students' intake as well when prospective candidates would know about the graduates who have achieved success within and outside the country. However, they also said that only marketing and publicity was not enough without imparting the needed competencies. It is evident from the

following comment: "If our graduates are skillful and competent they will have good salary package and social status. If it happens we will definitely have good intake" (R6).

Change in Admission Criteria

Almost all the interviews thought that there should be a change in the admission criteria for the program and should be based on sound principles relating to manpower requirements in the country. They strongly held an opinion that increased number of students would definitely boost the production that raised the demand vs. supply issue in the job market.

"We have to decrease the number of enrolments and also raise our voice against the institutes that are not providing quality education" (R4). It was further added that surveys should be conducted to identify the required manpower needed in the market for the next five to seven years and admissions should be offered accordingly. Furthermore they also emphasized on the accreditation of LIS departments for maintaining quality and keeping number of schools and admission seats limited. The interviewees were in favor of open and flexible admission criteria. "We have to make it [admission criteria] more open and flexible. I mean only fresh graduates fourteen years of education is not enough. We should have seats for such candidates who have master or PHD in any other discipline" (R12).

Discussion and Conclusion

Quantitative and qualitative strands regarding students profile and characteristics reveal interesting trends. Master's program is a main stream program in the country with large number of student enrollment (1107) that is quite high if compared with the limited number of libraries and literacy rate in the country. The issue of oversupply of the graduates particularly in the master's programs is also creating job saturation as reported by Malik & Ameen (2020). Numerical dominance of female reported in the study is still prevalent in traditional LIS master's programs of both developed and developing countries also. A study conducted by Marshall, Wilson, Marshall & Harris, (2001) reflected 80% existence of female students in ALA- accredited master's programs of North America. Another study conducted in Australia also found high enrollment of female students in LIS programs (Partridge *et al,* 2011).

The trend of arts, humanities and social sciences students' intake is prevailing in LIS streams of developed countries as well. Warraich, Malik and Ameen (2016) reported that LIS departments have to embrace a weak input of leftovers with humanities and social sciences background. Ahmad

and Mahmood (2011) found that the majority of the candidates who got admission in the master's program had their graduation in arts subjects. This trend is similar with other developing countries of Asia and Africa (Aman & Sharama, 2005; Islam & Chowdhury, 2006; Ocholla & Bothma 2007; Ocholla & Schongwe, 2013).

Social, political and financial factors working behind the weak students 'intake have been persisting with varying degree both in developed and developing world from the years. The findings correspond with the study of Dione (2014) who discusses the damaging impact of sociological (i.e. low social image and prestige of the profession) and political issues (a lack of political will and vision from decision makers) on students intake in eight French speaking countries in West and Central Africa. Another study conducted to analyze the situations of LIS education system in Bangladesh by Islam & Chowdhury (2006) found the problems of less attractive jobs, low social status, lack of government interest to promote the profession as big impediments in enticing brilliant students. Warraich, Malik and Ameen (2016) also found that LIS is not a preferred profession of bright students due to a lack of lavish jobs and low social status. A notable positive change in the pattern of students' intake is the appearance of younger students particularly in the master's program of evening shift where the age limit is not applicable. Fresh students are more curious and mentally alert as compared to their elder counterparts (Singh & Wijetunge, 2006). Similar trend of younger students' intake in the master's programs during recent years was also reported in Australian LIS programs by Partridge *et al* (2011). A decrease number of enrollments according to job opportunities available in the country is a good approach to be followed. For this purpose, a national level survey of current and future manpower needs should be conducted. Accreditation of LIS academic programs is essential to guide in keeping the number of the departments, programs and seats limited according to manpower need in the country. Accreditation facilitates to regularize the profession, establish its worth, and help to ensure quality of academic programs and offerings. It will possibly help to raise the status of the profession and provide a social recognition and acceptance. The departments with accreditation status will hopefully attract more quality candidates for admission. A need to revise admission policy was felt by making it more open and flexible to attract students with diverse educational backgrounds. The idea of awarding scholarships to attract students with high grades seems less impressive as merit scholarships are already available in all the departments and still they are complaining of poor intake. However, marketing and rebranding of the professional image is quite practical idea to enhance social

visibility, to capture the job market with good salary packages and consequently to attract better intake. LIS departments have to put real efforts in reorienting the philosophy of LIS schools by restructuring academic offerings, redesigning the curriculum content and course structure; recruiting competent faculty and embedding state of the art infrastructure for teaching, learning, and research conducive environment. Change in nomenclature at the department of PU while removing "L" and focusing "I" can be taken as an indication of the expanding intellectual domain of the profession that hopefully effect the intake positively in the coming years.

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