

Conferences and Seminars

International Conference for Library and Information Science Educators in the Asia Pacific Region 11-12 June, 2001. International Islamic University Malaysia

The Department of Library and Information Science, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and Librarians Association of Malaysia (PPM) joined hands together to organize the first ever international conference for library and information science educators in the Asia Pacific Region. It was held on 11–12 June 2001 at Hilton Hotel, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia. The two-day conference along with an exhibition was inaugurated by Dato' Mahadzir Mohd. Khir, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education Malaysia. During the inaugural session, welcome address was delivered by Associate Professor Syed Salim Agha, Chief Librarian of IIUM and introductory remarks were made by Puan Rashidah Begum Fazal Mohamed, representative of IFLA.

In his inaugural address, Dato' Mahadzir Mohd. Khir said that as the conference was the first of its kind, it might provide an opportunity to bring together experts and educators of the field which will facilitate a fruitful interaction on library and information science education. Some 100 educators and information professionals attended the conference. The first session of the conference was chaired by Puan Zawiyah Baba, President of PPM. Four papers were presented, the central theme of which was "Core Competencies: Curriculum Development, Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes." The papers were presented by Associate Professor Dr. Suliman al-Hawamdeh and Associate Professor Dr. Schubert Foo from the Nanyang Technological University of Singapore, Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Bakeri Abu Bakar and Assistant Professor Dr. Yushiana Mansor from the International Islamic University Malaysia, Professor Dr. Gary Gorman and Professor Dr. Brian Corbitt from the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand and Professor Dr. Hsueh-hua Chen from the National Taiwan University, Taiwan.

In their paper on "Information Professionals in the Information Age: Vital Skills and Competencies," Dr. Hawamdeh and Dr. Foo stated that "the ability of the information specialists to change and adapt to the fast changing society is very important if information professionals want to remain relevant." They concluded that information professionals need to transform themselves from document managers and gatekeepers to knowledge managers.

In his paper on "Determining IT Competencies for Malaysian Information Professionals: A National Study," Dr. Ahmad Bakari emphasized the importance of information technology (IT) competencies for information professionals in Malaysia. He concluded, out of the thirteen key competencies identified namely, IT basics, word processing, electronic mail, internet and intranet, graphics, presentation and publishing, spreadsheet, project management, design, development and administration of database, system maintenance, design and development of application in web environment, system analysis and programming, only system maintenance was found to be unimportant.

Prof. Gorman and Prof. Corbitt in the paper on "Core Competencies in Information Management Education" pointed out that there has been much less discussion of core competencies in information management. They suggested a set of core competencies for information managers to enable them to deal with both the process and system elements associated with information.

The final speaker for the session, Professor Chen, in her paper on "Educating Knowledge Management Professionals in the Era of Knowledge Economy," emphasized the importance of managing knowledge efficiently and effectively in the era of knowledge economy. She also related her experiences in developing a knowledge management curriculum programme at the National Taiwan University.

The second session on "Employers/societal Expectations of Information and Knowledge Professionals" was chaired by Associate Professor Dr. Josephine Sison, Dean Institute of Library Science, University of the Philippines where four papers were presented. The papers were prepared by Mr. Khalid Mahmood, University of the Punjab, Pakistan, Associate Professor Dr. Abbas Horri, Tehran University, Iran, Mr. Philip Hider and Ms. Rohaya Mohammed, Singapore Integrated Library Automation Services and Temasek

Polytechnic, Singapore and Professor. Sulisty-Basuki, Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia.

In his paper on "Comparison Between Needed Competencies of Academic Libraries and LIS Curricula in Pakistan," Mr. Khalid Mahmood outlined the most important competencies needed by academic librarians. He found that these competencies were not essentially reflected in the curricula of library schools in Pakistan. He suggested several measures to overcome the deficiencies. Dr. Abbas studied the same issue as what Mr. Khalid did in Pakistan. He compared the curricula of library schools in Iran with competencies needed by Iranian libraries and information centers. He concluded in his paper on "Correlation of Market Place Priorities and Educational Priorities in the Field of Library and Information Science in Iran" that priority ranks of competencies between curricula and market place were different. He suggested that library schools curricula in Iran be revised.

In their paper on "Ensuring Cataloguing Students Meet the Mark," Mr. Hider and Ms. Rohaya asserted that an essential component of cataloguing was preparation of the catalogue record in which both quality and quantity were given due consideration.

Looking at the longer-term impact of AFTA on library education in Indonesia, Prof. Dr. Sulisty-Basuki emphasized the urgent need for library schools in Indonesia to revise and strengthen their curricula. He stressed three areas of competencies that required strengthening, i.e. in the areas of information and communication technology, library and information science and English language.

The third session on "Sustenance of the Library and Information Science Professionals—Students, Teachers and the Environment" was chaired by Prof. Dr. Szarina Abdullah, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Universiti Teknologi MARA. There were three papers presented at this session. The papers were presented by Associate Prof. Dr. Christopher Khoo Soo Guan and Assistant Prof. Dr. Chennupati K. Ramaiah, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Associate Prof. Dr. Josephine Sison, University of the Philippines and Dr. Narumol Ruksasuk, Suranaree University, Thailand.

Dr. Khoo and Dr. Chennupati presented to the conference the framework of specialization for LIS education. In their paper on "Student's Selection of LIS Specializations and Implications for LIS Education," they identified four clusters of specialization pertinent to LIS education, namely, library service, digital library, information

technology and knowledge management. The other two papers focus on the experiences of developing and integrating new technologies for instructional purposes. Dr. Josephine described the system called University Virtual Learning Environment (UVLE), which is being developed by the University of the Philippines intended to provide an alternative approach to the traditional classroom mode of delivery for teaching and learning while Dr. Narumol described the web-based instruction model which was developed at Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand.

The fourth session on “Describing Library and Information Science Curriculum Approaches and Methods” was chaired by Prof. Dr. Brian Corbitt, School of Information Management, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. Four papers were presented at this session. The papers were presented by Prof. Dr. Sajjad ur Rehman, Kuwait University, Ms. Sue Myburgh, University of South Australia, Prof. Dr. Shalini R. Urs, University of Mysore, India, Mrs. Rashidah Begum Fazal Mohamed and Ms. Che Norma Bahri, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Prof. Sajjad in his paper on “Information Studies Curriculum Based on Competency Definition” presented the results of his study which surveyed 144 academics from the three regions of North America, East Asia and the Arabian Gulf countries and a select group of professionals from one of the three regions. The intent of the study was “to display the extent of uniformity in outlook as well as diversity in views among this group with regard to treatment of each module in the core and elective components of the coursework.” He found in the primary core ten competency segments and a supplementary core of eleven competency segments.

In her paper on “Theory with Praxis: A Rationale for Education for Information,” Ms. Myburgh argued that education for library and information science is not only technical but must include cognitive, social and situational processes.

Prof. Dr. Shalini in her paper “Developing Core Competencies for Managing Information in the Digital Age: Context, Convergence and Curricula,” believed that developing manpower through redefined and refocused curricula is an effective strategy for meeting the challenges of the digital age. She outlined the new curricula for developing manpower for the digital age.

Mrs. Rashidah and Ms. Norma in their paper on “The 2020 Academic Librarian: Meeting the Challenges of Change,” suggested that library schools should continue to teach the basics of library and

information science while at the same time expand and upgrade their curricula in keeping with the dynamism of ICT's and the needs of the country and society.

The fifth session on "Library and Information Science Curriculum: Reflection, Expectations and Realities" was chaired by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Schubert Foo, School of Computer Engineering, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. There were four papers presented at this session. The presenters were Madam Abrizah Abdullah and Madam Nor Edzan, University of Malaya, Assoc. Prof. Dato' Dr. Raja Abdullah Raja Ya'acob and Mr. Sohaimi Zakaria, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Mr. Kaba Abdoulaye, International Islamic University Malaysia and Mrs. Elizabeth Jordan, University of Queensland, Australia. In their paper on "LIS Input to Degree Programmes Offered at the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, University of Malaya" Madam Abrizah and Madam Nor Edzan described the present curricula for BIT (Information Science) and MLIS degree programmes offered at the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology, University of Malaya. They also presented the strengths and limitations of both the programmes.

Associate Prof. Dato' Dr. Raja Abdullah and Mr. Sohaimi in their paper on "Training for Emerging Information Professionals in Malaysia" drew the delegates attention to the imperativeness of producing qualified graduates that match the needs of the industry and creating new information programmes to comply with the new demands of the market.

Mr. Abdoulaye in his paper on "State of Library and Information Science Education in Malaysia" identified the strengths and weaknesses of the three master programmes in library and information science offered by the University of Malaya, the Universiti Teknologi MARA and the International Islamic University Malaysia. In keeping with the rapid advancement of information and communication technology, he suggested the programme structure of these LIS schools be revised to include distance learning modules as well.

The final paper for this session was presented by Mrs. Jordan. In her paper on "In-service Education for Cybrary skills in the Tertiary Environment" she described the training programmes offered by the University of Queensland library to educate the practising librarian and library manager with the knowledge and skills for the 21st century library environment.

The final session was chaired by Mrs. Rashidah Begum Fazal Mohamed, Chief Librarian, Universiti Sains Malaysia. Only two papers were presented at this session. They were presented by Assistant Prof. Dr. Shaheen Majid, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Associate Prof. Philip Calvert, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. In his paper on "Status of Continuing Professional Development Activities Undertaken by Library and Information Science Programmes in the ASEAN Region," Dr. Shaheen surveyed fifteen LIS schools from six ASEAN countries. He found that continuing professional development activities were mostly undertaken on an ad hoc basis and they were not part of the core responsibilities of the LIS schools.

Mr. Calvert in his paper on "A Successful Library Science Student Exchange Programme," commented on his experience with the student exchange programme between Nanyang Technological University of Singapore and Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand that allowed library science students to study for one semester at the partner institution. He believed exchanges benefit the institutions by offering diversity to the educational programmes. The two-day conference was officially closed by Professor Dr. Mohd. Kamal Hassan, Rector, International Islamic University Malaysia.

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International Conference on Religion and Mental Health

April 16-19, 2001, Iran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran

The first international conference on "Mental Health and Religion" was organised by the Tehran Psychiatric Institute, University of Medical Sciences, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The conference was also supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), Research Institute for Rehabilitation and Improvement of Women's Life and Red Crescent Society of The Islamic Republic of Iran.

The conference was inaugurated by a high-ranking Islamic scholar who emphasized the need for spirituality and religion to encounter the growing stresses of everyday life. He pointed out that religious rituals