The trends of library science choice among students in the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (State Islamic University of North Sumatera)

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The Library Science Study Program in Indonesia is developing in line with the current advances in information technology. This educational field has been around for quite a long time. However, it is so diverse that it differs from one university to the other. The field of library science produces "Librarians." Unfortunately, the profession does not have a high demand compared to others. However, the opening of this educational field at the Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara (UINSU) has sparked the interest of prospective students in the Library Science study program. These have further increased over the years. Therefore, this research aimed to examine the data regarding factors that encourage students to choose the Library Science study program at the UINSU. Meanwhile, the focused data analysis technique in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used. The results showed that four factors influence students' choice of the Library Science program, which include; parents, relatives, friends, and themselves. Career-wise, most students study Library Science so that they can work as lecturers in the field. Furthermore, the students face certain obstacles which include; facilities and language. Therefore, the study program conducts curriculum updates to adapt to new developments in science. This is achieved by applying information technology and organizing training programs in languages.

Keywords: Library science; Librarian; Library career

Introduction

The internet has developed at a high rate, and this is one of the main reasons for the emergence of Information Explosion phenomena. However, this has created a problem because it has become more difficult to differentiate valid information from hoaxes amidst the myriads of information available. It is just as Cassel & Hiremath[1] said that the information in the internet era is like a big wave, and every individual has to be good at surfing it. Therefore, many educational institutions, such as universities, have realized the importance of information in the internet era. This is key to achieving one of the goals of higher institutions which is; improving educational standards with a particular focus on those entering the workforce[2]. Furthermore, the era of information technology has also caused a paradigm shift in the field of library science. They are no longer seen as just information providers but also as information access providers. This paradigm shift requires that Librarians also function as literacy information providers, competent enough to use the latest technological developments. This can be likened to the "high tech & high touch" concept which established that high technological development must be balanced with high competence[1].

Library Science emerged in 1923 at the University of Chicago as a pioneer in the education of librarians. Afterwards, it gave birth to information science along with the University of Philadelphia in 1959[3]. The public perception of the Library Science study program is still considered very low. Purwanti in Khairunnisa[4] emphasized this fact in research which revealed that the community holds the librarian profession in low regard. Sadly, this remains an alarming trend in Indonesia. They continue to see the profession as secondary and unimportant[5]. The work carried out by librarians is considered unattractive and less challenging. Therefore, the demand for the librarian profession, by the public, is very low.

Conversely, Janelys Cox[6] noted that students abroad readily choose Library Science as their course of study.

Review of literature

Several relevant studies have been carried out by other researchers, including a few which are cited below.

A research was conducted to ascertain why students choose the Library Science Department at the Universitas Sumatera Utara (USU). The research,

conducted by Siahaan[7], showed that a large percentage of students choosing the department were encouraged to do so by parents or siblings. Additionally, students were motivated to choose the study program because it offers a broad range of job opportunities. Another reason is the fact that it increases their chances of being admitted to USU because the passing grade is low; therefore, the competition was very minimal.

Mulyatini & Handayani[2] also carried out research entitled "Factors that influence the decision to choose a study program." It was concluded that the choice of a study program is influenced by 18 variables categorized into five different factors. Using quantitative approach, the research described the five factors. The first of them is called the physical factor, which consists of six variables, including; availability of scholarships, lecturers, friends, alumni success, obtaining employment, and positive results. The second factor is called the job guarantee factor. The third factor is called, the tuition factor, which consists of four variables; education costs, payment terms, family, and parents' income. The fourth factor consists of curriculum and syllabus, as well as image variables; it is called the perception factor. The fifth factor consists of accreditation status and tuition fees variables, and it is called the promotion factor.

Another research was carried out by Setiawan[8]. It was titled, "Perception of New Students on the Information and Library Sciences Study Program Against Employment in the Field of Information Science and Library Studies (Descriptive Study of IIP Unair Students to Support Academic Activities)". The results showed that students consider the Library Science study program as a second choice. This is carried out just in case they don't get their first choice. Moreover, the selection of Library Science study programs is also as a result of encouragement from parents. The research aimed at distinguishing perceptions between new and old students about librarian careers. It, therefore, confirmed that parents have the most influence on the choices of the majority of Library Science students.

Methodology

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore information about the experiences and opinions of respondents. The data collected through this method include the experience of respondents in choosing the Library Science study program at UINSU, Medan. It also includes opinions and expectations of respondents regarding future careers and their expectations of study programs. The data collection techniques employed in this research were survey and Focused Group Discussion (FGD).

Results And Discussion

The results from the analyzed data showed that there are four driving factors influencing students' choice of the library science study program at UINSU Medan. They include;

Personal desire. Majority of students comprising of a total of 67 respondents (36.2%) chose library science study programs based on personal desire. Their motivation came from individual perceptions formed from information about library science gotten from different sources. One of such information is the belief that library science is a relatively rare study program. Therefore, this encouraged the perception that it has a wide range of job opportunities. Furthermore, this perception was motivated by the experiences of students who have worked closely with people in the library and information world. The existence of a library science study program at UINSU is a major attraction for students.

This attraction was because UINSU is a state Islamic university. Moreover, the library science study program was just recently incorporated by the school; therefore, the probability of graduating successfully was increased. In addition, UINSU offers religious-specific materials in the learning curriculum that could be used to enhance religious knowledge.

Parent factor. The survey data results showed that the parent factor is one of the biggest driving factors influencing students' choice of library science study program at UINSU Medan. The majority of parents encouraged students to choose library science study programs at UINSU. These sets of parents had educator backgrounds. Many considerations have made parents decide to encourage their children to study in the library science study program at UINSU, Medan. For an educator, the consideration arose from experience seeing the condition of the library in the school where such individual taught which was felt to be a concern. The consideration was also due to the information obtained from the school library manager. That information showed the inability of individuals (library managers) in managing school libraries. It also showed that the department lack personnel who hold bachelor's degrees. The need for library managers (librarians) is high; therefore, it increases the chances of being accepted into the workforce. In

addition, UINSU Medan has religious materials specific to the learning curriculum. This served as the major reason why parents want their children to enter into the Library Science Study Program at UINSU Medan. Another consideration from parents is the perception that college is one of the best ways to achieve success. Parents are not only focused on the choice of study programs to be undertaken by their children, but also on the universities. They would rather their children attended state universities because they are relatively cheaper compared to private universities.

Relatives/Family Factor. Relatives or families that encourage students to choose Library Science Study Program at UINSU, Medan, do so based on experiences and relationships. One respondent reported that a relative who worked in the BKN agency informed of opportunities that will be available in the future. Furthermore, the number of library science scholars is still minimal, especially in the province of North Sumatra. Therefore, library science graduates will be needed by every institution in the future. This encourages students and parents to have the desire to enrol in the library science study program at UINSU, Medan. Furthermore, Relative/family factors are in the form of direct experience in the institution. Those who have worked in library institutions inform students of the challenges and opportunities of library science graduates in the future. In addition to giving input, the relatives also often invited the student to help them work in the library for several weeks. The student feels absorbed and interested when working in the library world as well as realizes the ins and outs of the library. In addition, the student knows the income of civil servants in library sciences and that it is enough to support themselves and their families. This becomes the driving force for the student to choose library science study programs. The selection of UINSU as the institution of choice is because its library science program was new and was still receiving first-generation students. This means that the chances of getting admitted are increased. Besides, there was encouragement from a relative who got an offer to manage the school library where such individual worked after completing the studies.

Friends' factor. The input of friends is one of the major factors influencing students' choice of library science study programs at UINSU. The survey results revealed that friends' factor is not a major influencer of students' choice to study library science. The FGD data showed that the majority of friends were also not aware of the relevance of library science study programs. Some of them even laugh, failing to see the job opportunities available to them when they become scholars in the field. Their perception is that a librarian only works to compile and maintain books. The support from friends for students choosing library science study programs was because library science study programs have a low passing grade. Therefore, there is a wide window of opportunity. Notably, the support was not because they consider library science study programs to be good. Instead, it was because they can easily gain admission into State Universities. The reasons why students choose library science programs are as follows:

The survey results above show that 137 respondents (74.5%) said that the main reason for choosing a Library Science study program was due to good employment opportunities. From the FGD data, it was discovered that the majority of those students believed that the library science study program has a lot of job opportunities for graduates. It also revealed that graduate library scientists are few. This information was largely gotten from experienced family members and relatives who had worked in the library world.

Furthermore, as many as 25 respondents (13.5%) admitted that choosing library science study programs was just a coincidence. From the FGD data, it was discovered that the reason for this "coincidence" was because the students were confused. They wanted a secondary choice of the study program with a high chance of getting admitted. The majority of students who answered with this reason were students who made library science in the third and/or last choice of State University entrance examinations. The reason for choosing library science in the third or final choice is based on the fact that the passing grade was low. Therefore, they have a fairly larger opportunity of passing.

There were 17 respondents (9.2%) who said that their main reason for choosing library science study programs was simply to be able to study at State

The Main Reason For Choosing The Library Science Study Program	Percentage (%)
Extensive job opportunities	74,6
Just a coincidence	13,6
In order to study at State University	9,2
To achieve ambitions	2,7

Universities. Some students chose the UINSU, Medan library science study program just to be able to continue their studies in the state higher education institution. This was as a result of the inability of parents to pay high tuition. That is to say, the choice of study program was unimportant as long as it was in a state university. Furthermore, to facilitate easy entry into the state university, the chosen study program has to have a low passing grade or only a few interested ones. Another reason is to avoid ridicule from family/friends that may occur if they don't pass into the state high school. This prevailing attitude reduces the importance of choosing the right study program in a college. In addition, some relatives/friends still reason that studying in private institutions is for the less intelligent, and this perception was formed long ago. Some parents reason this way to avoid the high cost of private institutions. They also believe that large state universities are considered to produce the best graduates. Therefore, this increases the likelihood of quickly getting a job.

Interestingly enough, there were five respondents (2.7%) who mentioned ambition as the main reason for choosing a Library Science study program. They see Library science as a means of providing the ability to navigate the job market. This was because they already knew the nitty-gritty of the world of libraries. They know the opportunities open to librarians, especially in the future. Thus, this gave birth to the desire to choose library science as a means of achieving their ideals. They want to pursue a profession as librarians. Furthermore, they also want to pursue work in other professions related to information such as information consultants, controller documents, information brokers, and so on.

The FGD data showed that the majority of students who felt happy and more confident about the library science department chosen was because they wanted to learn more about library science. Their mindset of choosing a library science study program was only limited to trial and error. However, after wrestling with studying on the lecture bench, their mindsets slowly began to change. They realized that the material that has been studied is not as difficult as imagined. Furthermore, they slowly began to feel more confident about the future of graduates of library science study programs. They realized that the ability possessed by library science graduates is needed in an information age such as this and the future. They also realized that the use of information

technology which is dominating all fields of work would greatly require actors and information providers such as library science graduates to fulfil information needs. In addition, the student's mindset began to see that the job opportunities are not limited to just that of a librarian. He could also explore related fields such as information consultants, information managers, document controllers, and so on. Their initial perception that library science only taught how to compile a book had changed after perusing the material taught at the library science study program. The learning curriculum that has been undertaken has made students believe that their competencies can be accepted in the world of work that is full of competition.

The survey results on the perceptions of students about Library Science study programs also showed that 142 respondents (76.8%) believed that Library Science was science with good employment opportunities. From the FGD data, it was discovered that the majority of students initially never knew what a library was, how to study library science majors, and what kind of work they'd do after graduating. The perception that library science has good job opportunities going forward was not internal, but external. The factor of parents, family and relatives is a source of information that shapes students' perceptions that library science has good job opportunities. This perception was due to the experience of the closest people to them who have plunged directly into the world of libraries. These were the ones who later said that "learning library knowledge is good and that there are only a few library science graduates; therefore, employment opportunities abound."

In regards to the future, the majority of students wish to advance their library science career. They plan to achieve this by continuing their studies in the master's program. This resolve is based on the interest accrued from studying library science program through several semesters. It is also due to the experience and inspiration of several lecturers who teach at UINSU's library science study program. In addition, the reason for continuing to the master's degree is related to their desire to become a teacher or lecturer. Lecturing is regarded as honourable and noble work, with income above the average. Besides that, there is also support from capable parents who want their children to continue their Master Studies.

Based on the results above, the self-encouraging factor of students choosing the Library Science study

program themselves is quite a lot, and this is a positive fact. The students have first explored the knowledge and even garnered experience in the field of library science. Therefore, they convinced themselves to choose the Library Science study program. This self-encouraging factor is important, even though students in general still do not know what they are going to learn at the Library Science study program, they will do better if also given the opportunity of gaining experience in the library. The combination of self-encouragement, theories that are learned in class, and practicals in the field will open opportunities for improving the quality of study and work[6].

Before entering and choosing a Library Science study program, students have had the knowledge, perceptions, expectations, and self-concept of library science and the librarian profession. Limited access to library facilities makes students not confident in choosing the librarian profession as their future career. Even for some students, this study program is used as the last alternative or "instead of not going to college." A few students make the Library Science study program as their first alternative. This is based on the information they obtained from various sources, that the library science study program had unclear employment opportunities. Unfortunately, even some of the scholars in the field said they did not know what they would learn in this study program.

The self-motivation factor possessed by the majority of students when entering the Library Science study program influences their level of learning. This is called entry behaviour. In addition, 95% of research discovered that the entry behaviour of students became a key variable that had a positive impact and helped in the learning process[9]. Entry behaviour is a unique characteristic of students before entering a certain level of education. This entry behaviour includes aspects of knowledge, perception, and also expectations of learning. Furthermore, Affective entry behaviours are a combination of student interests, attitudes, and self-concept towards certain subjects or units of study. However, the research shows that a low self-concept of learning does not automatically relate to the low achievement of learning in lectures.

The majority of students argue that employment opportunities for graduates still abound. In addition, graduate library science study programs are still fairly minimal. It shows that the employment opportunity is the final goal that students want to achieve after completing their study program. The theory states that the goal factors can also be a driving force for students to establish study programs[10]. According to the theory put forward by Locke, the goal is to encourage someone to behave and act certain to achieve their goals. It is to motivate people to develop strategies that will enable them to act in accordance with the achievement of the level of goals. A student with a specific learning goal orientation will develop competence by mastering challenging situations. The research shows that the orientation of learning goals has a positive impact on behaviour. It also reveals that this is related to one's work and performance.

Encouragement from parents and the environment, including relatives, friends, and school, plays an important role for students in deciding which study program to take. Some studies proved the magnitude of the influence of parents in making these decisions[11–13]. They also revealed that the high success rate of a child is the result of parental encouragement[14].

Conclusion

The results from the analyzed data showed that there are four driving factors influencing students' choice of the Library Science Study Program at UIN North Sumatera Medan. These factors include; their desires, encouragement of parents, encouragement of relatives, and encouragement of friends. It also reveals that strong support from the family environment was due to the belief that a wide range of opportunities abound in the labour market. These are rational reasons which significantly determine the student's choice of Library Science study program.

The career expectation after graduating from Library Science study program is the opportunity to have a good job. That is based on the thought that Library science graduates are limited, while the needs are very large. Understandably, this is a serious concern for providers of Human Resources (HR) in the field of Library Science. They are the ones that have to make all efforts to ensure availability according to needs. Furthermore, these support the goal of students choosing a study program in the library to develop themselves in an original community environment. Therefore, this strengthens graduates to be part of the solution.

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