

Library and Information Science and the Concept of Paradigm in the Philosophy of Tomas Kuhn

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Abstract

Purpose: The present work aimed to find out if the concept of paradigm in Tomas Kuhn's Philosophy has any equivalents in the area of Library and Information Science (LIS).

Methodology: After a comprehensive study of the book "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions", especially the concept of paradigm in it, the LIS related theories are critically investigated and recommendations on the necessity of having a paradigmatic attitude towards this area are offered.

Findings: Kuhn considers paradigm as the main axis of consensus in a scientific society. Then one could not mix the meaning of paradigm with such words of "school", "approach", "theory", "pre-understanding", and alike. The presence of "conflicting intellectual schools" in a scientific area could not be taken as equal to "the existence of different paradigm", because by the Kuhn, the conflicting paradigms belong to the pre-paradigmatic situation. Accordingly, many of the theories given about the concept of paradigm in the area of LIS have gone far away from what Kuhn meant of it. Also, the debates on the meaning of LIS suffer from this fact that they have overlooked the consensus making feature of paradigm and lacking of it in LIS.

Originality/Value: The value of this research is in helping to deepening in the fundamentals of LIS and especially the concept of paradigm with the regard to the LIS related problems.

Keywords: Philosophy of Science, Tomas Kuhn, paradigm, Norm science, Revolutionary science.