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INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF DISTANCE AND REGULAR UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA-PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The main theme of this study is to investigate the information needs and seeking behavior of distance and regular Library and Information undergraduate students studying at different public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan. Quantitative research method was used to carry out this research study. Adopted questionnaire was used as data collection tool. A total of 299 questionnaires were distributed among the respondents and 213 questionnaires were received. It was depicted that lectures and course books were the prime needed information of both groups for their academic qualifications. The prime needed information of both groups was found as "Information on course of study", followed by Scholarships for onward education, job opportunities, postgraduate education and career development. It is recommended that with provision of course related information; some efforts should be made for provision of extra services like career development, job facilitation, scholarships searching and information for further education.

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental requirements for every mankind are: air, water, edibles, residence and suiting while information is the other fundamental need. Wiener (1950) in his book, The Human Use of Human Beings has stated "to live effectively is to live with adequate information". Most of the research scholars have studied the value of information.

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Information in human life has more importance as compare to other basic needs of life (Mmanuoma, Haco-Obasi, Chioma, Edem, & Anthony, 2019). Information need is the required information by a single person or group of persons for personal job, co-curricular activities and other sort of different tasks. It normally comes to existence when someone feels gap between the known and unknown information (Okonoko, Njideka, & Mazah, 2015). According to Wilson (1988), "a gap in a person's information, when experienced at the mindfulness level as an inquiry, offers ascend to a finding the response. In the event that the need is dire, the pursuit might be sought after with persistence until the desire is satisfied". Information Seeking Behavior (ISB) is a broader term. According to Hayden (1999), since 1950s in research literature, the term Information Seeking Behavior has been in used. The procedure, method, process and technique used for sorting out of requisite information are known as information seeking behavior. It varies from person to person as per information requirements. Therefore ISB exist when a person or group of persons are able to identify the needed information as well its aim and different types of information resources (Kannappanavar & Hugar, 2019). Anwar (2007) has narrated that "Active or purposeful information seeking resulting from the needs of students to participate in class discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences or to write final year research paper".

Most of the academic institutions of the world are providing both formal as well distance education with advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Distance education program is associated with the completion of course work through distance education courses using new technologies for delivering instructions to distance learning students (Allen & Seaman, 2017). While formal education is the one which runs from lower level i.e Primary schooling to higher level i.e university on

the bases of pre-planned structured system being institutionalized, divided in grades and organized hierarchically, sanctioned by the state and running full time.

Delimitation of the study

There are a total of forty two universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa-Pakistan. This study is delimited to public sector universities providing Library and Information Science(LIS) education to the undergraduate students. Out of 30, four universities are offering undergraduate LIS education to the students in regular and distance mode. These include: University of Peshawar, Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak, Sarhad University of Science and Technology Pehawar and Regional directorate (Peshawar) of Allama Iqbal Open University Peshawar.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Main purpose of this study is to investigate the information needs and seeking behavior of undergraduate master level LIS students at various universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa both in regular and distance mode.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kuhlthau (1993) defined need for information as evolving from a indistinct focus of something, a scarcity of information and which means in addition to uncertainty that culminates in locating data & information that contributes to recovery of information. The phase of information needs begins with someone's limited clarity on the topic. In other words, information need is initiated when someone feels gap between known and unknown information. However, the process of information need starts with thorough and explicit research declaration which arise the acquired information. (Borgman, 2000). Thani and Hashim (2011) investigated to discover graduate students' genuine information need and information was gathered via survey comprising of shut finished

inquiries. An absolute number of 400 surveys were circulated of which 354 (89%) respondents finished the poll. The investigation's outcomes indicated that most of the alumni look for required information on the spot for filling in their insight gap.

Jumani and Bhatti (2012) in their investigation on "Utilization of libraries in open and distance learning framework barriers to the utilization of Allama Iqbal Open University libraries by mentors and students" took response from "4606" teachers and students. The after effects of the investigation showed that the two sorts of respondents, both nearby and DLS, confronted different issues like unseemly library timing, separation among library and their habitation, inaccessibility of the most recent diary, unavailability of needed material and the most recent books and lack of staff of library. They recommended that library timings be expanded, most recent books and diaries be made accessible just as PC and internet providers. They wished for bury library advance and asset imparting administrations to other scholastic libraries. Khan (2012) reviewed the information needs and looking for conduct of Law Faculty individuals from the University of Peshawar and its partnered law schools. The principle instrument was a poll which was conveyed among the respondents. The survey depended on segment information just as the respondents' library utilization and their needs of particular information. The examination indicated that the entire population of the investigation was 86 in which 6 (7%) were female and 80 (93%) were male. Most of the respondents (85%) depended on reading material as the principle information hotspot for looking of information. Numerous respondents additionally demonstrated that they needed information for planning of addresses.

Callinan (2005) Conducted investigation on the "Information seeking behavior of undergrad biology students; a comparative analysis of first year and final year students in University of Dublin". The poll-based review strategy was utilized to comprehend

and think about the information collection behavior of the two populations. Data was gathered from the two sets of populations. First year students had a reaction pace of 60.8% (73/120) and though the reaction pace of definite year students was 38% (23/60). Results demonstrated that the two students' bunches had various recognitions, practices and hindrances that happened when looking for scholastic information. Callinan found in their investigation that absence of mindfulness in students of various years; they didn't utilize online communication and library electronic information sources. Ikoja and Janneke. (2006) found that an unusual place denominator of those fashions is the attempt to explain facts looking for strategies and conduct in fashionable terms. As such, maximum fashionable Information looking for conduct fashions appears to take consciousness of the reality that a consumer in requirement of facts may also use a range of facts sources, services, systems, or may touch people in an attempt to remedy a problem. However, reference is seldom made to using a 1/3 person, together with a librarian, secretary or non-public assistant for problem solving. This oversight suggests a push aside for versions and context in facts looking for. In order for fashions to be theoretically legitimate and almost applicable, they requirement to transport far from reading the elitist facts of customers making facts choices of their workplace, and begin doing big studies into human being's each day facts behavior. Qureshi, Zafar and Khan (2008) reviewed the information needs and ISB towards information searching by the students of universities in Pakistan and concluded that instructive and social foundation, the climate and the participatory idea of the students were of the primary components which achieved explicit data looking for information collection behavior in the students.

Sookhtanlo and Mohammadi (2009) directed their exploration on "Information seeking behavior of B.Sc. & M.Sc. Agricultural Extension and Education students; a

comparative study". The poll was given to 290 out of 650 students. The outcomes indicated a contrast between the data looking for capacity of the two sets of population. The students having a place with the M.Sc. program showed a further developed degree of ISB. Furthermore, it was discovered that the M.Sc. students were more mindful and proficient in utilizing web assets, and were better at getting data library sources and the web. Oladokun (2010) studied "Information seeking behavior of the Off-Campus students at the University of Botswana: an instance of two satellite communities". Students were chosen through irregular testing strategy. Data was gathered from "100" students out of "274", outcomes of the investigation indicated that the majority of participants (71%) favored printed configuration of data as opposed to electronic, sound and video designs. Different discoveries demonstrated that (90%) of students believed the instructor to be the main data hotspot for procuring data, (71%) followed their associates, (58%) students utilized reference and course readings, (half) utilized library assets, (43%) assemble data from TV and radio, (25%) looked through the web, (16%) got data by means of call, (10%) through email and (1.3%) utilized different hotspots for the above talked about reason.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The researcher used survey method for the collection of relevant data, and collected the personal credentials of all the related population regarding their academic qualification and needed information as well ISB. Covey (2002) remarked that the survey method is an adequate and efficacious method which can be employed to gather information about individuals' information seeking behaviors, attitudes, emotional state and their respective believes. Another benefit of employing the survey methodology is that results of the survey method can be applied to a broader range of subjects.

The study was consisted of the following steps:

1. Review was conducted in the first phase of the study, on the basis of which the researcher was able to collect the valuable perception related to the subject at hand as well highlighted the gaps.

2. The research objective was then identified and framed.

3. Viable research methodology was selected in order to fulfill the purpose of this research.

4. Keeping in mind, the requirements of information collection an adapted questionnaire of Usman (2012) Ph.D. Scholar was used,

5. Validity of the questionnaire was determined.

6. The questionnaire was distributed amongst the respondents.

7. The questionnaire was then collected and information analyzed in order to ascertain its validity and usability.

9. Information was analyzed and tabulated into various formats by employing coding responses. An appropriate statistical package of computation was employed to check and interpret the information and results of this study.

The population of the study is two-fold nature i.e Master Level regular and distance learning LIS students enrolled in the four selected Universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There are Forty-two (42) public and private sector universities / DAIs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. (Higher Education Commission, 2021). Only four universities in KP are furnishing the master program in LIS. From the scrutiny of data obtained from various universities oh KP, the total strength of LIS students is 299. Out of 299, 85 are distance learning students while the rest are acquiring LIS education as regular students. Questionnaires were distributed among 299 distance and regular LIS students. A total of 213 questionnaires were received.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTERPRETATION

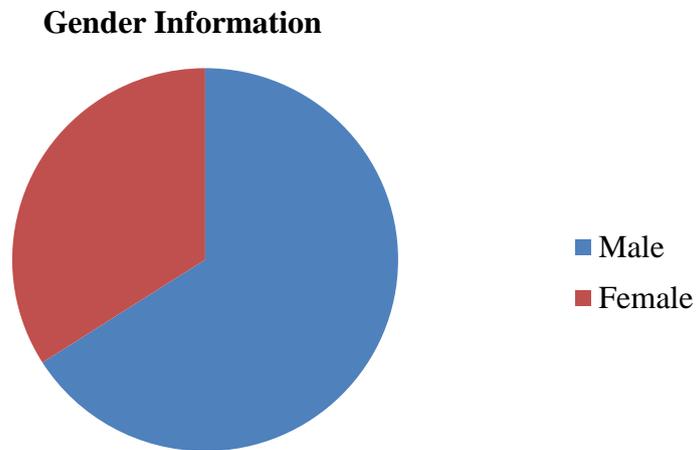The gender-wise analysis of data reflected that majority of the students are male.

Gender Information

Figure: 4.1 Gender information of student

The respondents were asked about the university in which they are enrolled**.** The analysis of data indicates that majority of the respondents 83(39%) are from University of Peshawar (UOP) and most of the respondents are enrolled in Allam Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and Sahad University of Science and IT (SUIT) 48 (22.5 %). Just 16% of the respondents are from Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKUK).

The respondents were asked about their mode of study to know about their status of enrollment as regular or distance learner students. It was depicted that majority of the respondents 140(65%) are studying as regular student and remaining 73 (35 %) of the respondents are studying as distance learner student.

Educational and Informational Needs

It was inquired by the respondents to identify their main kind of credentials mostly required by them for academic qualification and relevant activities

Table 1: *Respondents most required source of information (N-213)*

		1	2	3	4	5	χ^2	P-Value
Lectures	Regular (%)	5	2	3	12	78	27.51	.000
	Distance (%)	0	7	3	23	67		
Course books	Regular (%)	3	3	12	25	57	10.02	.004
	Distance (%)	0	6	6	26	62		
Others books	Regular (%)	1	22	23	29	25	6.61	.158
	Distance (%)	0	18	19	27	36		
Previous Lectures notes	Regular (%)	7	18	15	19	41	56.13	.000
	Distance (%)	0	28	36	18	18		

Scale: 1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Occasionally, 4- Frequently, 5- Always

The results show in Table-4.6 indicates that majority of the LIS students rated "Lectures" 78% regular and 67% distance were marked as a main kind of information "Always" required for their study. Followed by "Course Books" 57% of regular and 62% of distance, "Others books" 25% of regular and 36% of distance, "Previous Lectures notes" 41% of regular and 18% of distance, and "Others" 24% of regular 17% of distance students always required respectively. The results of analysis showed that the "Lectures" were the main kind of information always required for both types of students for their study. The result also indicates that significance level of "other books are higher than required P-value 0.005, so the other books are not the main source of information for distance and regular students.

Main information needs

The respondents were asked about to express their needs for mostly required information.

Table 2: *Main information needs by On-campus and Off-campus students (N-213)*

		N (%)	R (%)	O (%)	F (%)	A (%)	χ^2	P
Related to course of study	On-campus	3	4	5	25	63	18.79	.001
	Off-campus	4	7	17	16	56		
Job opportunities	On-campus	9	7	14	37	33	47.252	.000
	Off-campus	1	7	35	17	40		
Career development	On-campus	8	8	13	29	42	58.116	.000
	Off-campus	1	10	42	29	18		
Scholarship and onward education	On-campus	14	6	16	26	38	79.009	.000
	Off-campus	1	22	42	19	16		
For further education after post graduate program	On-campus	10	10	20	30	30	33.989	.000
	Off-campus	6	20	37	17	20		

Scale: 1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Occasionally, 4- Frequently, 5- Always

The analysis of the data showed that majority of respondents, i.e. 63% of regular and 56% of distance students indicate "Information on subject relating to course of study" was their main information needs for which they "Always" required information. As well "Information on scholarship for further education" marked by 38% of regular and 16% of distance students, as Always. The statement "Information on job opportunities" is marked as always by 33% of regular and 40% of distance students. The statements "Information on career development" 42% of regular and 18% of distance, and for "Information on further education after post graduate program" 30 % of regular and 20% of distance, indicates in bottom for which they always required information

respectively. The results of analysis also indicate that P-value for all of the items is less than .005 which reveals that all of the statements are statistically significant for observed items. At last the "Information on subject relating to course of study" was the main information need of regular and distance learners for which they always required information.

Preferred Language for seeking information

The following Table highlights the comparison of regular and distance learning LIS students regarding language they prefer in seeking information.

Table 3:*Preferred Language of regular and distance students for seeking information (N-213)*

	Regular	Distance	Total	χ^2	P
English	118	44	162	15.191	.000
Urdu	21	29	50		
Others	01	00	01		
Total	140	73	213		

The result indicated that mostly students 162(76%) opted English while 50(23.5%) students give preference to Urdu language and 1 (0.5%) students used other language for seeking information. Outcomes of the independent sample Chi-square test shows that both mode of students preferred English language.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings and discussion of this study is summarized below:

Data revealed that lectures and course books were the prime needed information of both groups for their academic qualifications. The results of this study indicate that mostly

students rely on lectures and preferably on course books as compare to other sources of information, yet students used other sources of information too like, previous notes, general books and some other sources required by them. It is clear that lectures are not only important for regular students but distance students also rely on lectures for completing their education related activities.

The statistics referred to the prime needed information of both groups were "Information on course of study", followed by Scholarships for onward education, job opportunities, postgraduate education and career development. Therefore, all of these areas present various information needs for the students. The respondents were asked to pinpoint their intentions towards information seeking. They were given a number of options to indicate their choice. The results indicated that most of them opted for "Preparation of exams", and "Completing assignment", "Updating knowledge", "Solving problem at hand" and only some students for "Entertainment" respectively.

Respondents were inquired about language to be preferred while seeking information and were given options to indicate one choice. The data analysis result showed that the majority of respondents opted for English while some of them opted for Urdu language.

Outcomes of the study clearly indicated that most of On-campus students rely on lectures and did not face any problem regarding lectures due the nature of their regular programs but distance learners have problems for taking lectures at their respective institutions. The best possible option to probe such difficulties of the off-campus students is to start online classes as practices during Covid-19 pandemic that they may be in position to gain their required information. The study expressed that both the groups have mostly needed information about their academic qualification, career development and information about job opportunities. It is also recommended that with

provision of course related information; some efforts should be made for provision of extra services like career development, job facilitation, scholarships searching and information for further education.

Further Research Direction

-A qualitative study may be conducted to compare the information needs and ISB of regular and off-campus students of Library & Information Science.

-The factors influencing the LIS students in seeking information at district level.

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