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Investigating library operational issues being faced by medical university librarians in Islamabad.

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Abstract

Medical libraries are continual sources of knowledge and information. Without this knowledge and information, there will be no researcher, teacher, and doctor. Libraries cannot share knowledge with knowledge seekers alone. In this scenario, the role of the librarian becomes very influential. A librarian is an information services provider. The providence of these services is dependent on the facilities which are required by librarians. Realizing the importance of this issue the researcher has carried out research to investigate issues faced by librarians while operating medical library services. This study was related to quantitative research methodology; therefore, the researcher adopted quantitative research methodology for this research work. The presented issue in this study was solved through collecting data, with the help of using different techniques associated with data collection techniques, description of collected data, analyzing collected data and then

finding the solution to the problem after a detailed analysis of data. In this study, the university libraries located in Islamabad were the population of the study to collect data regarding library operational issues in medical university libraries in Islamabad.

The findings of the study show that medical librarians are facing numerous issues. These issues are impending medical librarians to operate library services in effective and appropriate ways. So, this research work suggests that the budget of libraries should be increased, medical librarians should be trained to meet their challenges, and medical resources and digital resources ought to be augmented in the respective universities in Islamabad. The aforementioned strategies can be useful for medical libraries and can enable librarians to operate their library services in more influential and effective ways in terms of information providers.

Keywords:

Medical library, librarians, operational issues, medical university, Islamabad.

Paper type: Research Paper

1. Introduction

The profession of library and information science provides the best information services to its users. Predominantly, the library professionals have been performing duties concerning attaining and organizing the information and learning sources in print, digital and other formats, as per the explicit demands of users and the mission of their concerned institution (Haq et al, 2020). The duties of librarians, in the delivery of information and knowledge to their customers or users, have been shifted to electronic format. This electronic and digital environment has made the duties of librarians very complicated and problematic (Rafiq & Amin, 2016).

Haq & Ullah (2014) argue that medical librarianship is an awesome department of the library and information-oriented department and one of the essential additives of healthcare organizations. The medical librarians serve the salient network of medical libraries. A medical librarian has to be well-privy to the present-day scientific information and knowledge and updated approximately the technological tendencies for the teaching/gaining knowledge of the process, studies and maximum importantly, affected person care. The reason may be completed with the aid of using the well-

stocked and well-ready library with print and digital gaining knowledge of sources in conjunction with supportive technology in addition to skilled medical librarians.

Medical librarians of Pakistan have been providing valuable services in the medical libraries to meet the educational, research and patient care requirements of their users. Moreover, they have also been providing valuable literature in the field of medical librarianship to increase the standard of medical library services (Haq & Ullah 2014 b).

The history of medical education in Pakistan is linked with the establishment of King Edward Medical College, when it came into being in 1860, Lahore. Haider (1981) argued that Pakistan got its independence in 1947 and it inherited two medical colleges. Currently, the number of medical colleges rose to 118, (45 in public and 73 in private sectors), along with 59 dental colleges, 17 in public and 42 in private sectors

1.1 Objectives of the study

This study had the following research objectives;

1.   Exploring library operational issues faced by medical university librarians in Islamabad

2.   Suggesting strategies for improving library services for medical university students

1.2 Research Questions

1.   What kinds of library operational issues are being faced by medical university librarians in Islamabad?

2.   What kinds of strategies ought to be employed to improve library services for medical university students?

2. Literature Review

The system of medical education is getting developed rapidly over the years. This development has made the profession of medical librarianship more innovative and complicated. The librarians need to be skilled enough to get rapid and proficient access to current information sources, to keep themselves informed with emerging techniques, latest theories, advanced procedures and most significant with the pertinent reading materials. A systematic and well-organized library is able to

meet the demands of users. In the field of medical education, a library and librarians play a very significant role. The library is like a heart in the medical teaching profession. It is a great blessing for knowledge seekers and book lovers (Haq, 2021).

Although progress is slow-moving, the library profession is improving in Pakistan. There are a few unfavorable, social, economic, organizational, and technological factors now influencing libraries and librarianship. According to the literature review, the primary impediments to the development of the profession are a lack of funding, poor collection control, a lack of ICT skills, a lack of implementation of library requirements, shortcomings of library associations, a lack of library cooperation, futile planning, a lack of library marketing and marketing in competitive environments, and a lack of professional development (Ashiq et al, 2021)

Hussain & Idrees (2021) carried out the census-based survey, and data were collected from the 119 public libraries by employing a structured questionnaire. The collected data were examined employing SPSS software while both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to examine the data and result interpretation. These researchers found that the major problems were lack of training opportunities, limited human resources, insufficient IT & LIS professional staff, limited electronic resources, interrupted power supply, limited information resources, lack of commitment from the upper management and lack of financial resources. They also noticed that public libraries in Baluchistan were facing more problems as compared to the libraries of other provinces.

Hussain &Idrees (2020) investigated the resources and services of the public libraries located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and experienced that all the libraries had librarians or library professional staff. Mostly, the libraries had sufficient stock of books, journals, printed material, magazines, and newspapers. All the libraries in which research was carried out offered services of circulation, reference and open shelf access, whereas the majority of libraries gave photocopying, current awareness, user coordination, selective diffusion of information and perusing services. It was suggested that the existing facilities must be upgraded and be extended in all public libraries.

Rana & Bhatti (2020) investigated the practice of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the collection management of government libraries located in Punjab, Pakistan. It was concluded that there was a shortage of resources like printed material and professional librarians. They found that there were libraries that were not having IT staff and ICT

resources in sufficient condition. There were libraries that were having problems in executing libraries like lack of sufficient power supply, and funds.

3. Research Method

The study has adopted a descriptive survey questionnaire design. A questionnaire with close-ended questions was designed for data collection. The sample of the study is comprised of librarians and managers from 15 medical universities located in the capital city of Pakistan, Islamabad. The study adopted a total enumeration sampling technique, to study all respondents. The questionnaires were used as an instrument for gathering data, and the data gathered were analyzed with descriptive statistical tools. Specifically, percentages, frequency, count, and SPSS software were employed in data analysis.

4. Data Analysis

SPSS software has been utilized for the analysis of collected data. Descriptive statistics has been applied to analyze the data and reached results. Tables and graphs have been used to display the data along with related interpretations.
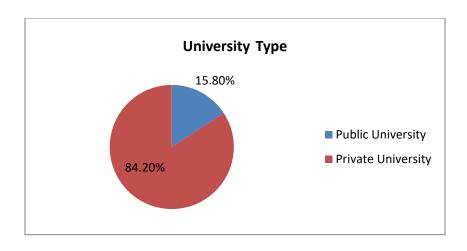
4.1 Demographic Information

This part of the chapter is comprised of information about the demographics of the respondents. It includes information regarding respondents 'designation, Education, gender, and age.

4.1.1 Type of University

To know about the type of the participating university libraries, the respondents were inquired about the type of university in which they are working. The analysis of data shows that majority of the respondents n= 3 (15.8%) was from public sector universities and n=13 (84.2 %) respondents were working in the private sector universities. The given figure indicates that more than half of the respondents were from the private sector university libraries.
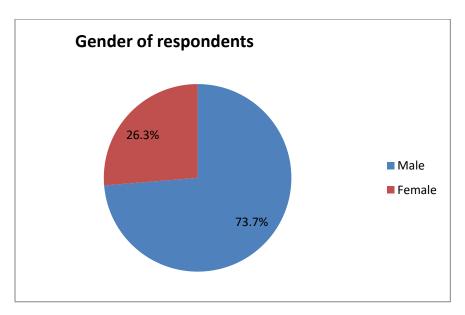
See Figure 4.1 university type of Respondents

University Type

15.80%

84.20%

■ Public University
■ Private University

4.1.2 Gender of Respondents

Respondents were asked to mention their gender by selecting male and female option. Figure 4.2 shows that respondents n=14 (73.7 %) were male and respondents n= 5(26.3%) were female. The figure shows that majority of respondents were male.

See figure 4.2 gender of respondents

Gender of respondents

26.3%

73.7%

■ Male
■ Female

4.1.3 Age of Respondents

According to the information given by the respondents in questionnaires n= 1 (5.3%) respondent was between age 20-25, respondents n= 6 (31.6%) were between age 26-30,

respondents n=2 (10.5%) was between age 31-35, respondents n= 6 (31.6%) were between age of 36-40, and respondents n=4(21.3%) was belonging to the age between 41 and 51. The figures describe hat respondents with age between 26 and 36-40 were in majority. The total number of respondents was of n=19 (100.0%)
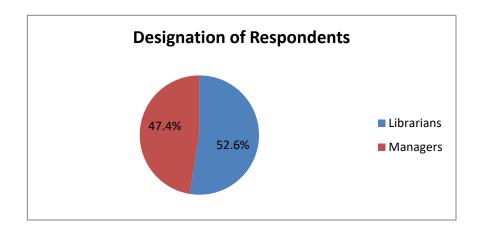
See figure 4.3 Age of Respondents

4.1.4 Designation of Respondents

The figure 4.4 shows that designations of respondents were of two types Librarians and managers. The respondents n= 10 (52.6%) were working as librarians in the universities, and respondents n= 9 (47.7 %) were managers working in the universities. The figure shows that majority of respondents were librarians.
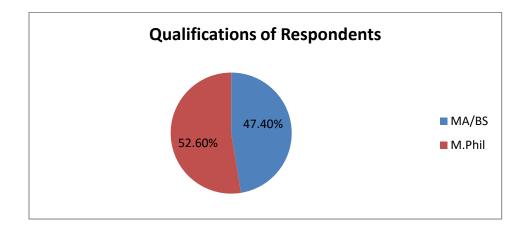
See figure 4.4 Designation of Respondents

Designation of Respondents

- Librarians 52.6%
- Managers 47.4%

4.1.5 Qualifications of Respondents

The figure 4.5 shows that Education or qualification of respondents was of two types MA/BS and M. Phil. The respondents n= 9 (47.4%) were having qualification of MA/BS, and respondents n=10 (52.6 %) were having qualification M. Phil. The figure shows that majority of respondents wer

4.5 figure Qualifications of Respondents

Qualifications of Respondents

- MA/BS 47.40%
- M.Phil 52.60%

4.6 What are Library Operational Issues Faced by Medical University Librarians in Islamabad?

In this question, the respondents were asked to give their opinion regarding operational issues faced by medical university librarians in Islamabad. In response to the question, the librarians lack modern digital equipment (m=3.58) the respondents agreed that librarians lack digital equipment. The respondents agreed that budget issues remained at the top of the challenges for medical librarians (m=2.47), they agreed that temporary technological issues are also part of the issues relating to medical librarians (m=2.16), the hackers may, because of lack of control on information intrude (m=2.95), an internet connection is also a big problem for librarians (m=2.32).

Table 4.6 shows that the librarians lack of modern digital equipment (m=3.58) is the major issue in operating medical libraries being faced by the librarians. The second considerable issue in operating a medical library is that the hackers may, because of lack of control on information intrude (m=2.95) the third issue relating to the operating a medical library is budget issues remain the top of the challenges for medical librarians (m=2.47), the fourth prominent issue is an internet connection (m=2.32), and the fifth issue is regarded temporary technological (m=2.16).

4.6 Table. Library Operational Issues Faced by Medical University Librarians in

Islamabad

Sr. NO	Statement	Mean	Std Dev.
1	The librarians lack modern digital equipments	3.58	1.121
2	Budget issues remained the top challenge for librarians at the medical libraries	2.47	.964

3	contemporary technological issues in operating libraries	2.16	.375
4	Lack of control over information, hackers may intrude	2.95	1.39
5	Internet connection is also much discussed issue in operating libraries	2.32	.749

Scale used: Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, strongly Disagree=1

4.7 Suggesting Strategies for Improving Library Services for Medical University Libraries

In this question, the respondents were asked to give their opinion regarding suggesting strategies for improving library services for medical university students. The respondents on this statement were agreed that the users should be given the opportunity to get improved insight into user search patterns and requirements (m=3.58), the respondents were agreed that the flow of library space design should be increased (m=3.58), the respondents were agreed that the factors that affect library services should be controlled (m=3.58), the participants were agreed on the statement that authorities should improve the library awareness services (m=3.42), the respondents were agreed to the statement that the library should increase usage collection and database for the users (m=3.16), the librarians should boost unknown valuable resources (m=2.47), the participants were also agreed that library funding should be increased so as library services can be improved (m=2.05)

In this part of the questionnaire, the respondents were agreed on the statements with the same mean (m=3.58), the users should be given the opportunity to get improved insight into user search patterns and requirements, and the flow of library space design should be increased, and factors that affect library services should be controlled, the second number agreed statement was to improve the library awareness services, the third agreed statement was that the library should increase usage collection and database, the fifth agreed statement was that the medical library should increase usage collection and database, the authorities should boost unknown valuable

resources, and Library funding should be increased so as library services can be improved were sixth and seventh number agreed statements respectively.

Table 4.9 Strategies for Improving Library Services for Medical University Libraries

Sr. NO	Statement	Mean	Std Dev.
1	Library should increase usage collection and database	3.16	.765
2	Boost unknown valuable resources	2.47	.772
3	Improve the library awareness services	3.42	.838
4	opportunity to get improved insight user search patterns and requirements	3.58	1.387
5	Flow of library space design should be increased.	3.58	1.387
6	Factors that affect library services should be controlled	3.58	1.387
7	Library funding should be increased so as library services can be improved	2.05	.524

Scale used: Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, strongly Disagree=1

5. Result

RQ. 1. What kinds of library operational issues are being faced by medical university librarians in Islamabad?

The findings of the study show that the librarians are facing numerous issues which are creating hurdles in the professional proceedings, and development process of librarians. These challenges not only affect the performance of the librarians and managers but also affect the whole process of disseminating information among knowledge seekers.

1. The most recognizable and important issue that librarians are facing is that they lack modern digital equipment is the major issue in operating medical libraries being faced by the librarians.

2. The second considerable issue in the operating medical library is that the hackers may, because of lack of control over information intrude.

3. The third issue relating to the operating medical library is the budget issue remained at the top of the challenges for medical librarians.

4. The fourth prominent issue is the internet connection.

5. The Fifth issue is related to the lack of technological resources.

6. Lack of trained librarians.

7. Insufficient space for library resources.

8. Users are not aware of library benefits, resource availability, and library services usage.

RQ.2 what kinds of strategies ought to be employed for the improvement of library services in medical universities?

No institution is perfectly well managed and well organized therefore every educational management, institution, or university library needs improvements. To find better and innovative ways to improve intuitions or libraries, the research process is conducted. Because research work helps to find solutions to the problems, therefore research work is very essential. So, this research work has found the following strategies through which medical libraries can be made more influential in terms of information providers.

1. The space of the library's design ought to be increased to meet the requirements of researchers, users, and teachers.

2. All the teachers, researchers and knowledge seekers can perform well when they would have a good stock of information.

3. Funding for libraries, updated information, books, journals, and research materials should be available in sufficient capacity.

4. Users should be given the opportunity to get improved insight, user search patterns, and requirements.

5. Flow of library space design should be increased, and factors that affect library services should be controlled.

6. Librarians ought to improve the library awareness services for users.

7. Medical libraries at universities library should increase usage collection and database.

8. The participants agreed that the medical libraries should increase usage of academic resources, the authorities should boost unknown valuable resources, and library funding should be augmented so that library services could be improved and could quench the thirst of the knowledge seekers.

9. Librarians should get professional training to boost their capabilities.

10. Digital resources ought to be increased in medical libraries.

5.1 Conclusion

The findings of the study show that medical librarians are facing numerous issues. These issues are impending medical librarians to operate library services in an effective and appropriate way. These issues are also creating hurdles in the professional proceedings, and development process of librarians. These challenges not only shake the performance of the librarians and managers but also affect the whole process of disseminating information among knowledge seekers. No institution is perfectly well managed and well organized, therefore every management, institution, or university library needs improvements. To find better and innovative ways to improve intuitions or libraries, the research process is conducted. Because research work helps to find solutions to the problems, therefore research work is very essential. So, this research work suggests that the budget of libraries should be increased, medical librarians should be trained to meet their challenges, and medical resources, and digital resources ought to be augmented in the respective universities in Islamabad. The aforementioned strategies can be useful for medical

libraries and can enable librarians to operate their library services more influential in terms of information providers.

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