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Digitalization of Library Resources in Pakistan: A Case of Academic Libraries

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Digitalization of Library Resources in Pakistan: A Case of Academic Libraries

Abstract: *This study has been designed to examine the digitalization of resources in academic libraries in Pakistan. The world continues its flow of digitalization through the internet such as people starting jobs online, online selling and purchasing businesses, online shares, and investment during the time of Coronavirus. Hence, the digitalization of libraries has no exemption. A purposive sampling technique has been employed to select 16 participants (8 students and 8 library professionals) from the academic library of the University of Gujrat. Further, an interview guide has been developed to conduct case studies. The data collection process takes place within ten working days. Similarly, the data has been presented as a thematic analysis and discussion has been made accordingly to conclude. The study findings conclude that academic libraries digitalize their resources for the smooth running of academic activities for the library patrons including AV aids, e-books, e-journals, online databases, online library services, e-resources, internal facilities, online discussion forums, online queries, and provisional material online.*

Keywords: AV Material, Online Database, Online Library Services, E-Resources, Online Queries

Introduction

During the time of the Coronavirus, the world continues its flow of digitalization through the internet such as people starting jobs online, online selling and purchasing businesses, and online shares and investment (Akar, 2021; Assessor, 2020; Shoaib & Abdullah, 2021; Tejedor, Cervi, Pérez-Escoda, & Jumbo, 2020b; Zalite & Zvirbule, 2020). In this regard, the digitalization of libraries has no exemption. Many organizations also convert to digital mode all over the world (Santos, 2020; Shoaib, Iqbal, & Tahira, 2021). In Pakistan, many institutes also shift to digital mode and provide facilities online to people during the pandemic (Rafiq, Batool, Ali, & Ullah, 2021; Shoaib, Ali, & Akbar, 2021). One of the most popular shifts of the libraries into digital mode was a great step and have a significant impotence on students, teachers, and researchers (Abdullah & Shoaib, 2021; Sahu, 2020; Shoaib & Abdullah, 2020). Higher Education Commission (HEC) and academic libraries took up the step of digitalization of libraries in Pakistan and this step was a great initiative to provide library facilities to the students, teachers, and researchers (J. Ahmad, Shoaib, & Shaukat, 2021). This initiative

encourages the students' researchers and the teachers to expand their research for educational purposes (Shoaib, Ali, & Akbar, 2021). The digitalization of libraries has numerous benefits like as easy access to books (Odriozola-González, Planchuelo-Gómez, Irurtia, & de Luis-García, 2020; Pattanshetti & Pattanshetti, 2020; Shoaib, Fatima, & Jamil, 2021), research articles, and newspapers, improving learning skills (N. Ali, Shoaib, & Abdullah, 2022; Hassounah, Raheel, & Alhefzi, 2020), availability, and cost-effectiveness, improved searchability of researchers (Goddard, 2020), students, and teachers, and also having many other benefits (Dhawan, 2020). Hence, this study has been designed to examine the digitalization of resources in academic libraries in Pakistan.

Cited Literature

The digitalization of libraries creates a convenient environment for students, researchers, and teachers, especially for special students who face disability (M. Y. Ali & Gatiti, 2020; Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020; Anwar, Shoaib, & Mustafa, 2022). They easily access the academic library to find books, articles, and journals (Baloran, 2020; Bao, 2020; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Abdullah, 2022). This step reduces the time and the cost for the special students as well as other students. Also, the digitalization of the library enhances the research and the student's advanced search functionality (Chesser, Drassen Ham, & Keene Woods, 2020; Crawford et al., 2020; Shoaib, Tariq, Shahzadi, & Ali, 2022), making the system easier to find books with author names quickly and in relevant places (Dhawan, 2020; Hassounah et al., 2020; Karalis & Raikou, 2020).

Also, this step makes the academic libraries interdisciplinary studies and makes a system of the worldwide institution (Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020; Nassr, Aborujilah, Aldossary, & Aldossary, 2020; Shoaib, Rasool, Anwar, & Ali, 2023). It is also a platform for sharing ideas and knowledge and also leads toward learning and innovation skills (J. Ahmad, Ahmad, Shoaib, & Shaukat, 2021). The academic libraries that have been converted into digital mode are providing the facilities of libraries for the students, researchers, and teachers in the digital context as; AV material, e-books (Santos, 2020; Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2020; Tejedor, Cervi, Pérez-Escoda, & Jumbo, 2020a), e-journals, online databases (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021; Tejedor et al., 2020b), online library services, e-resources (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021), internal facilities, online discussion forum (Goddard, 2020; Shoaib, Ali, & Naseer, 2021), online queries, and provisional material online (Karalis & Raikou, 2020;

Mariam, Anwar, & Shoaib, 2022; Mishra et al., 2020; Odriozola-González et al., 2020; Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022).

The Data and Methods

This study has been conducted using a qualitative approach and data have been collected from eight students and eight library professionals of the academic library at the University of Gujrat, Pakistan. The inclusion criteria to select the participants have been based on the usage of online library resources and working to digitalize the material at the academic library. A purposive sampling technique has been employed. Further, an interview guide has been developed to conduct case studies from 16 participants as mentioned above. The data collection process takes place within ten working days. Similarly, the data has been presented as a thematic analysis and discussion has been made accordingly to conclude.

Results and Discussion

The following themes have been extracted from the case studies;

Theme 1: AV Material

Theme 2: E-Books

Theme 3: E-Journals

Theme 4: Online Database

Theme 5: Online Library Services

Theme 6: E-Resources

Theme 7: Internal Facilities

Theme 8: Online Discussion Forum

Theme 9: Online Queries

Theme 10: Provisional Material Online

The details and discussion have been provided as the followings;

Theme 1: AV Material: The digitalization of libraries is providing audio, and video material in the form of presentations, lectures, documentaries, oral history recordings, movies and audio recordings, music and art recording, broadcasting and archival footage, and virtual reality

experiences. Audio and video material plays a vital role for the special students as well as the education department. Audio and video material vary among different digital libraries based on their resources, their collection, and their developmental strategies. Through the audio and video material students, researchers and instructors can easily access their specific topics such as they can lean through virtual reality experience, music and art performance, and broadcasting material (A. Ahmad, Ahmad, & Shoaib, 2016; Chesser et al., 2020; Shoaib & Rafique, 2015). These materials are easily accessible and can be available for learning on demand or by request to the libraries. This step of a digital library is very significant and effective for all users, especially for disabled persons that can't move and blind persons that can't see. Disabled persons must use this facility of digital libraries to enhance their learning and their skills (Wijayasundara, 2021).

Theme 2: E-Books: E-Books are known as electronic books and these are the main assets of digital libraries and have also been used all over the world. These electronic books are in the form of PDF (Portable Document Format) and AZW (Amazon's proprietary format), and also digital libraries can provide e-books in many formats. The E-book has many advanced features such as adjustable font size, screen reading function, and text speech function. E-books are very comfortable for disabled persons. E-books can be easily borrowed online for a specific time and also digital libraries have licenses and copyrights for their E-book. E-books can be easily accessible and readable through Mobiles, Computers, Laptops, and Tablets. The reader can also easily download these books through the internet and also purchase them online and carried. E-books are also available in the digital libraries (Wang & Lund, 2020).

E-books have been covering a wide range of subjects such as sciences, social sciences, literature, academic texts, reference material, and self-helping books. The advanced search facilities of digital libraries work like a filter that has been based on the topic, language, author, and availability of the E-book.

Theme 3: E-Journals: E-Journals are similar to E-books because these are also in the form of electronic displays. The format of the E-journals is in PDF and AZW. These are easily accessible on different topics such as current affairs and history as well as these have a wide range of peer-reviewed content (Wijayasundara, 2021). E-journals have been providing full-text searching and also searching by keywords, author's title, or the specific field. Digital libraries provide E-journals as remote access so that you can access the E-journals through the internet from anywhere and also these are available quickly with easy access (Bao, 2020). E-

journals also offer a wide range of academic disciplines such as sciences, social sciences, art and music, humanity, engineering, medicine, and technology. E-journals retrieve past and new research articles, historical research and retrieve a research track in the specific field.

Theme 4: Online Database: Online database is a very critical part of Digital libraries that provides the main power to the digital libraries for their running. Online databases provide online access and differentiate and manage, control, and updated the discipline, bibliography, images, audio and video, science, social sciences, students, teachers, researchers, etc.

Online databases like the online warehouse are where you can find and access everything easily by authentication. In authentication online database identifies the user's name and password and then gives access to the user. The database may include genealogical records, legal documents, archival materials, technical standards, linguistic resources, statistical data, and more. The online database provides the user's a powerful search and retrieves the relevant information. The user can subscribe and purchase the authentication to access the library's facilities online and easily and also this is available (Chesser et al., 2020). The online database also uses statistical methods that give information to the user about the rating, popularity, and usage pattern of the digital library. This function makes the digital library upgraded for decision-making and resource allocation to the user and also this system keeps the record at the best for all users and the faculty of the digital libraries (Crawford et al., 2020).

Theme 5: Online Library Services: Through the digitalization of the libraries the physical libraries have been converted into online mode. The user can access the online services through the internet from anywhere all over the world. Digital libraries provide a wide range of facilities these facilities have been designed to enhance the education and learning process (Nuere & de Miguel, 2020).

Digital libraries are providing the following facilities such as; "online databases", "e-books", "e-journals", "e-newspapers", "online catalogs", "virtual reality", "online lectures", "online presentations", "documentaries", "audio and video material", "digital archives of historical documents", "photos", "online tutorial" and many other facilities. These services are now offered in digital academic libraries. The online library services promote self-learning behaviors among students, teachers, and researchers without any location and time concentration (Odili, Adetona, & Eneh, 2020). The user can online request books, journals, and other services of the libraries. In some cases, if the services are not available online then the

user can request the library, so they can provide them services with the partner libraries or provide hardcopies of the document physically (Pattanshetti & Pattanshetti, 2020).

Theme 6: E-Resources: E-resources stands for electronic resources which means digital contents and material that can only be accessible by the internet. The library's E-resources include E-books that are available in the electric version and also it provides E-journals that can easily open on mobile phones, laptops, and tablets. These books and journals are in various disciplines such as medical, engineering, music, art, and many other disciplines (Sahu, 2020). E-resources allow the user to access their relevant needs which includes “e-books”, “e-journals”, “database”, “multimedia content”, “research papers” and “report”.

In the e-resources, the multimedia content also covers a huge range of the services such as audio-video lectures, audio recordings, images, maps, and presentations with free tutorials these facilities are playing a very pivotal role in the learning of the students, researchers and the teachers and also these are enhancing the skills, experiences and the knowledge of the beneficiaries of E-resources. One of the main and important roles of E-resources is to provide reference material such as research papers, handbooks, directories, and dictionaries. The digital library quickly provides these facilities with an accurate and authentic source of information (Shoaib, 2021).

Theme 7: Internal Facilities: Digital libraries are providing internal facilities to their users and support them in their learning skills, enhancing their knowledge, and improving their experiences in their academic education (Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2021). The internal facilities are; a "User account" that provides the user to save their searches, their reading content, their bookmark and manage their account and borrow the material (Shoaib, Ahmad, Ali, & Abdullah, 2021).

On the second point, the internal facilities are the "personalization" in which user can customize their account settings, receive personal recommendations, and receive notifications on new publications and relevant content (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021). Also, the internal facilities provide their users with a virtual reading room where users can access the digital material (Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021). It also provides "citation management" through which the user can make a bibliography easily and save the content and search easily for their research papers (Shoaib & Ullah, 2021b). It also provides these facilities such as; “Interlibrary Loan Management”, “Collaboration and Sharing Tools”, “Accessibility Features”, “accessibility features to accommodate users with disabilities accessibility features

to accommodate users with disabilities”, “Metadata Management”, “Request and Reservation Systems”.

Theme 8: Online Discussion Forum: Online discussion forum in digital libraries provides a collective and interactive space where users can interact with each other digitally and can exchange knowledge with each other on their interesting topics or related field. The user can also join the meetings and seminars with the help of an online discussion forum (Shoaib & Ullah, 2021a). The online discussion forum provides the facilities to engage the students, researchers, and teachers within the digital library environment (Ullah & Shoaib, 2021). The users can use this platform to create meetings with others, discussion channels on specific topics, academic meetings, research purposes, address community issues and find relevant resources through the online discussion forum (Mariam et al., 2022).

The researchers, students, and experts can join the meeting online and can make discussion about different research methodology, exchanges their knowledge with others, and also the students make a question-and-answer session with their subject experts (Shoaib & Ullah, 2019). Now this platform has become a collaborative meetings room in which you can create your private discussion sessions, seminars, and debates with the public, interact with peer-subject, make collaborative opportunities among researchers and students, conference and discussion sessions all over the world, and also this makes the libraries eco-friendly in the sense of digitalization (Shoaib, Latif, & Usmani, 2013). The users can share books, journals, newspapers, research papers, articles, and many other library resources. This is also available in the academic digitalization of libraries (Anwar, Shoaib, & Javed, 2013).

Theme 9: Online Queries: Online queries are an integral part of the digital libraries that respond to the user's request and need quickly and timely (Shoaib, Bilal, Iqbal, Hassan, & Sher, 2012). For online queries, you can freely ask for help online at the helpdesk which quickly responds to your problem through email. It is an effective and time-saving step for digital libraries. Moreover, in online queries, you can live to chat with their subject experts and frequently ask the questions and problems of your subjects. Your expert responds to you through live chat and guides you with authentic and effective information. Online queries are directly attached to your email that is assigned by the library so you can easily be addressed in a convenient way you can share your attachments and other documents with the library staff.

One of the most important functions of digital libraries is to provide social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Research Gate, Facebook, and Twitter to utilize online queries where you

can directly share your opinion and ask questions to the library staff and you can get responses from the library staff. The social media platform provides a more informal way to interact with users.

Theme 10: Provisional Material Online: Provisional material is an effective step of digital libraries that makes the online content provisionally. Provisional material is including unpublished papers, academic research, thesis, and the gray literature. Through the provisional material, the user can share their unpublished research papers with their peer subject expert and with other persons. This creates the support of the researcher to find error and correct the mistake in the research paper that other finds and highlighted. Digital libraries provide pre-print facilities. It means digital libraries share new content and papers with the public and the audience before printing and uploading and getting feedback from the public (Shoaib, Khan, & Khan, 2011).

The digital libraries also provide the "working papers" platform where the students can upload their research papers that have not been published and make the accessible way of interested readers. This also uses for the draft version of the articles where the researcher can find the space to share their article for pre-review of a research paper before the final publication (Shoaib, Khan, & Abid, 2011; Shoaib, Khan, & Ashraf, 2011). The digital library also provides the facility of "Gray Literature" that are not published through academic channels this includes academic reports, dissertations, technical papers, thesis, and non-peer-reviewed papers. Through this facility, the researchers, students, and teachers easily share valuable content with others in a fast way.

Conclusion

The overall conclusion of the study points out that the digitalization of academic library material has no exemption during and after continues. Digital libraries provide the facilities for conference papers. These papers are often presented at academic conferences but they are not been published such as "reports and the thesis". Digital libraries provide a convenient and valuable way to research new and advanced research fields. This facility is also available and is fulfilling many researchers. The study findings conclude that academic libraries digitalize their resources for the smooth running of academic activities for the library patrons including AV aids, e-books, e-journals, online databases, online library services, e-resources, internal facilities, online discussion forums, online queries, and provisional material online.

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