Challenges Faced by Library Professionals Regarding Adoption and Uses of KOHA: A Study of Dr. Mahmud Husain Library University of Karachi, Pakistan

Kulsoom Azhar
University of Karachi, Pakistan, kulsoomku.edu@gmail.com

Rafat Parveen Siddiqui
rafatrazzaq@yahoo.com

Challenges Faced by Library Professionals Regarding Adoption and Uses of KOHA: A Study of Dr. Mahmud Husain Library
University of Karachi, Pakistan

Kulsoom Azhar

M.Phil scholar, Department of Library & Information Sciences

University of Karachi

kulsoomaz@gmail.com

Dr. Rafat Perveen Siddiqui

Assistant Professor,

Department of Library & Information Sciences

University of Karachi

Abstract

This study investigated the challenges faced by Library professionals regarding adoption and uses of Koha in Dr. Mahmud Husain library. This paper aims to describe current status of library software being used in DMHL (University of Karachi) and highlights the issues and challenges that are being faced by professionals regarding implementation of Koha.

A survey has been conducted among the professional staff of the library to collect the required data. Survey was consisting of interviews of professionals with written questionnaire.

Findings shows the majority of professionals are satisfied to implement Koha but some major issues like lack of latest equipment, lack of supervision, maintenance cost, lack of technical help lack of funds are needed to address immediately to improve system and service.

The article will guide decision makers in the planning of library automation and also can develop the understanding regarding Koha among professionals.

Keywords: Challenges in uses of Koha, ILS, Dr.Mahmud Husain Library, University of Karachi,Library professionals, Library software, Library automation.

1. Introduction

The focus of this research will be on the issues encountered by library professionals at the Dr. Mahmud Husain library in implementing Koha. Koha is the best open source library automation

software in the world, many libraries in Pakistan use it since it is free and open source and it is adopted by over 3000 academics, public and special libraries worldwide. Its growth and development are controlled by caring community of libraries and users from all around the world who work together to fulfill the project`s technological goals and objectives.

Koha is a comprehensive library management system (ILS). The license is free, and you have the freedom to change the product to meet your specific needs. Academic, public, school, and specific libraries in Africa Europe, the Mideast, eastern Europe, southern Asia, south Asian east indies, Latin America, Central and south America, and Oceania all use Koha, and its development in guided by a growing group of libraries collaboratively to achieve their desired goal. It is recently done basically by a global team of developers, providers and library technical experts. The consumer, in particular, has the option of installingnew versions or not, as well as participating in new innovations by financing or carrying them out themselves.(https://koha-community.org/)

Dr. Mahmud Husain Library is the library of University of Karachi. It is not only one of the largest library of the country but also has a long and strong contribution to research, education, and librarianship in Pakistan.

The Library has around 350,000 books in its collection, as well as the equivalent number of publications of scientific research periodicals. The library has also been designated a UNO depositary center. The library houses a unique collection of rare books and manuscripts dating back to the 16th century, as well as the personal book holdings of 46 scholars, writers, and distinguished academicians. The most important of them is Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah`s personal collection, which is housed in the unique antique book cabinets that came with the collection. The library also has original images, letters, and posters from the civil rights movement. (https://uok.edu.pk>librray)

Library has many sections like Stack, circulation, book bank, oriental history reading room, microfilm & Audio/Visual, acquisition, technical hub, Quaid e Azam section, computer lab, manuscript and rare book section, social science reading room, science reading room, reference reading room, current and old periodical sections, UNO depositary section. Significantly library not only provides reference & information services, reading room facilities and circulation services, but also helps students in searching of books, research journals, literature abstracts,

indexes and other forms of informative material. Due to the vast collection professionals choose the software Koha instead of previous software Kitabdar. . If resources can be provided by the Management, Koha can be implemented in other sections of library. For example, if we place a Central system in each reading room, it'll help user to find his/her book instead of searching manually. Koha will also be beneficial in Circulation. We can keep complete record of our members in it. Additionally, Patron can also see their issuance history. They will also receive reminders via email. In addition, Th professional staff strongly wishes to implement KOHA in all sections of the library and this research aims to find out what difficulties librarians have to face when utilizing Koha.

2. Statement of the Problem

This study was designed to explore the current status of software used in Dr. Mahmud Husain Library University of Karachi and find out the issues including budget situation, technical support and training facilities. Why professionals could not able to automate the library yet hence they have been intending to automate the library early 2005 & the reason of changing toward Koha.

3. Objectives

The purpose of this study is to look at the perceptions of LIS professionals throughout the implementation and the use of Koha ILS in the Dr. Mahmud Husain library. To the end, the following objectives were set.
1. To identify the hurdles and issues that library professionals face while implementing Koha.
2. To investigate the reasons for the adoption of Koha ILS.
3. To determine the level of satisfaction with Koha`s implementation and use.
4. To find out the suggestions to deal with problems or issues.

4. Scope and limitation of the Study

This study is restricted only to evolution of the challenges faced by library professionals (LIS) regarding adoption and uses of Koha in DMHL, that challenges faced after installation of Koha and find out the reason of changing toward Koha .it does not follow the execution of the software in any library.

5. Literature Review

ILS like other platforms, play an important role in helping libraries manages their operations faster and effectively. An ILS has contributed in the fulfillment of all traditional activities in a library in a timely and accurate manner, as well as the reduction of back logs, efficient record maintenance, and the creation of needed reports. (Bills, 2000).

In Pakistan libraries began automating their services in the 1980 or later. Kitabdar developed by silicon system Ltd. and based on PASCAL programming language, supplied both an English and Urdu version of the software, and was the first software to do so. (Mahmood, 1996)

On the other hand, libraries in Pakistan were experiencing a variety of issues when it came to automating their operations. Libraries did not obtain sufficient funding to purchase hardware and software due to the country`s economic situation. There was no dedicated funding for libraries to develop and sustain automation initiatives. (Haider, 1998; Mahmood, 1996; Mairaj & El-Hadi, 2012; Riaz, 1993).

The most difficult challenge for library automation is fund. The limited resources are the most significant barrier to any innovation in poor countries. Most companies and institutions cannot afford the early costs of setting up a computer system. In general, a stronger financial resources needed for purchasing hardware,software and other necessities to run every successful and operating operation.For a successful automation process, the responsibility of library automation committee is to consider the cost of library automation and development costs. In yearly plan theyshould add the automation and development plans. (Mishra, Thakur & Singh, 2015).

The absence of library software, consultancy firms, qualified human resources, non-availability of training facilities, retrospectively conversion, non-cooperation from upper management, insufficient planning, and staff opposition were among the primary issues raised by LIS specialists. (Ansari & Zia, 2010; Idrees, 1995; Mairaj & El-Hadi, 2012; Ramzan, 2004).

Despite the fact that libraries used a variety of automation tools, they still required adequate software to meet their expectations. Some international software was also accessible, but it did not fulfil the needs of the locals. Moreover, few libraries could afford the high cost of foreign software and the yearly support provided by the host corporation. Another difficulty was software piracy, which made suppliers unwilling to sell their services in Pakistan (Idrees, 1995; Mahmood, 1996; Mairaj & hadi, 2012; Shafi-Ullah, 2009).

According to a research done by Omeluzoret al (2012).On the use of Koha at Babcock University Library in Nigeria, 64.7 % of respondents cited a lack of staff as the most significant problem they faced in using Koha. The report also mentioned the unstable power supply as a problem.

 As per Kumar and Jasimudeen (2012).Many libraries that did not have the local ability to maintain open-source software, such as Koha, had to hire technical help for service including installation, data migration, and maintenance software.

According to research conducted by Chaputula and Kanyundo (2019). on the use of Koha in library automation across Malawi`s higher education institutions, 81.3% of libraries have implemented Koha. Poor information and communications technologies infrastructure, irregular internet connectivity, and lack of funds were among the major problems.

6. Methodology

The study will examine the challenges faced by library professionals regarding adoption and uses of Koha to Dr. Mahmud Husain Library, University of Karachi. The quantitative research

method is used in study. Survey method is proceeded to collect data. Data is administered by interview schedule and analyzed by using open ended and close ended questions. Questionnaire as a tool for data collection and it contain 16 questions in total to present the absolute data.,the study was descriptive survey involving 10 library professionals of DHML (Dr. Mahmud Husain Library) who are the in-charges of various sections. A designed questionnaire was used to collect data. The data will be analyzing through frequency distribution tables in a way to present the results of the study.

7. Finding Discussions:

The results of the study are given below in tables.

Table 1.

Demographic

Variables	Item	No. of respondent	%
Gender	Male	01	10%
	Female	09	90%
Age	20-24	00	00%
	25-34	03	30%
	35-44	04	04%
	45-56	03	03%
Qualification	MLIS	10	100%
	M.Phil.	00	00%
	PhD	00	00%

Table 1. demonstrated that the majority of the respondents were female 09 (90 %) and remaining 10% are male, of whom 09 (90%) possessed a master`s degree in library and information science (MLIS). The dispersion of the respondents by age showed that the respondents 03 (30%) were in age group of 25-34 years, followed by 04 (40%) in the age group of 35-44 years and 03 (30%) were in the age group of 44-56 years. The result shows that 90% professionals in DMHL were females.

Table 2.

Reasons of moving from Kitabdar to Koha.

Not user friendly	02	20%
Not suitable for large library	05	50%
Need of an hour	03	03%
Total	10	100%

Table 2. The findings indicate the 20% statements received the previous software was not user friendly, 50% respondents agreed that the previous software was not suitable or feasible for large library and 30% response were said Koha is a need of an hour. Overall result shows that 100% respondents wanted Koha for theirlibrary due to its user friendly, feasibility and its popularity among LIS professionals.

Table 3.

Satisfaction level about Koha.

Satisfied	05	50%
Very satisfied	04	40%
Dissatisfied	01	10%
Total	10	100%

Table 3. Shows that 50% respondent were satisfied in using Koha where as 40% were very satisfied and just 10% was not satisfied. This table revealed high level of satisfaction among the professionals.

Table 4.

System crashing and having difficulties recovering it.

Yes	07	70%
No	03	30%
Total	10	100%

Table 4. Reveals that 70% were agreed that system crashing and having difficulties recovering it and 30% were said no it has no difficulties in recovering.

Table 5.

Lack of a trained person.

Yes	08	80%
No	02	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 5. Shows majority of participants think Library has difficulties using Koha due to a lack of trained person and just 20% said no it's not anissue. At this stage they need professional development training to re-polished their skills. Perhaps there are just not enough funds to cover training costs.

Table 6.

Koha has high maintenance.

Yes	06	60%
No	04	40%
Total	10	100%

Table 6. Indicates 60% respondents said due to high and hidden maintenance Koha has not been smoothly able to use yet but 40% said no it`s not an issue in using Koha.

Table 7.

Koha is complex & unfriendly.

Yes	02	20%
No	08	80%
Total	10	100%

Table 7 shows that 20% participants said it is complex or unfriendly therefore majority of participantsi.e. 80% said it is not complex or unfriendly.

Table 8.

Difficult using modules found in Koha.

Agree	00	00%
Neutral	04	40%
Disagree	06	60%
Total	10	100%

Table 8 indicates that 00% was agree that Koha`s modules are difficult to use therefore 40% responses were neutral and the 60% disagreed with the statement.

Table 9.

Lack of supervision.

Agree	04	40%
Neutral	04	40%
Disagree	02	20%
Total	10	100%

According to table 9 found that 40% were agreed that one of issue is lack of supervision, 40% were neutral with the statement therefore 02% were disagree with the statement.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the biggest problems in the development of library automation in the central library of university of Karachi. Findings revealed that They had been using Kitabdar the major issues that were observed and highlighted first reason of moving toward Koha from Kitabdar, they found many issues on Kitabdar like working on that software was time taken, hanged the system frequently, and they said a major issue was that there was no option for editing and Kitabdar is not feasible for a large library later on they moved toward Koha since 2015. It is pertinent to mention here that after some time library could not able to run the set-up of Koha due to none and late payments of vendors then again in 2018 Koha wasrestored with the efforts of Department of Library& Information Sciences. However, their hard work could not pay off due to these hindrances.

Currently they are using old version i.e. 3.16. New software should have installed to be benefited from the capabilities of latest software releases. As Compare to other free open source software, Koha has more useful modules & without using these modules it is difficult to make the functions of library better but at present DMHL is using Koha for only cataloguing of materials, it`s other modules are not being used, they have to perform their most of the activities manually because of non-availability of funds for hardware and software, lack of technical support from the top management, absence of computer for each section, lack of resources and trainings, lack of vendor support, lack of expertise.

8. Conclusion

The findings conclude that due to identified barriers library is not able to purchase the new version or conduct the relevant trainings. Therefore, library is depending on the obsolete equipment and old version software so they are unable to meet the emerging needs of users. Library has insufficient budget that are very limited for books only. Other equipment like computers, printers, scanners etc is not considered even on repeated request. If some equipment provided, it`s operating and maintenance cost are not allocated or provided all are the reasons

behind the failure of the successful implementation of Koha.A care full consideration will be needed on the identifying problems.

Hopefully, this study will provide some insights for the professionals, scholars and the management for the practical solution of the improvement.

References

Ansari, M. N., & Zia,M.W. (2010). Automation of school libraries in Karachi., *Pakistan library and information Science journal*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 9-41

Bills, L. (2000). Technical services and integrated library system, Library *Hi Tech*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 144-150, doi: 10.1108/07378830010333509.

Chaputula, A., & Kanyundo, A. (2019). Use of Koha-integrated library system by higher education institutions in Malawi, *Digital Library Perspectives*, Vol. 35 No.3/4, pp. 117-141.

Haider, S.J. (1998). Library automation in Pakistan, *Library Review*, Vol.30 No. 1, pp.51-69.

Haider, S. J. (1998). Library Automation in Pakistan, intl. Inform. & Library Review (1998), 30, pp.51-69

Idrees, H. (1995). A study of automation in libraries of Lahore, Master`s thesis, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Kumar, V. and Jasimudeen, S. (2012). Adoption and user perceptions of Koha library management system in India.

Mahmood, K. (1996). Library software in Pakistan. *Library Review*, 45(6), 36-42.

Mairaj, M. I & El-Hadi, W.M (2012). Applications of information and communication tecehnologies, in libraries in Pakistan, *journal of Medical Library Association: Jmla*, Vol. 33 No. 4, pp. 17-23.

Mishra, A., Thakur, S., & Singh, T. (2015). Library automation: Issues, challenges and remedies. Times int j res (2015).

Omeluzor, S.U., Adara, O., Ezinwayi, M., & ObyUmahi, F. (2012). Implementation of Koha integrated library management software (ILMS): The Babcock university experience, *Canadian Social Science*, Vol. 8 No.4, 211-221.

Riaz (1993). Library automation problems in Pakistan. In F. Mohammad (Ed.), *Challenges in automating the library services.* pp.27-34.

Ramzan, M. (2004). Levels of information technology (IT) applications in Muslim world libraries. *The Electronic Library*, 22(3), 274-280.

Shafi-Ullah (2009). Library automation initiatives in developing countries: Case studies of public sector universities in Islamabad, Pakistan (Master thesis). Thames Valley University, London.

https://koha-community.org/Available athttps://uok.edu.pk>library.