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ABSTRACT

Objective:

The purpose of the study was to explore the major problems of Library Professionals working in the academic libraries of public sector universities regarding participation in Professional Development Courses (PDCs).

Methodology:

Public sector Universities affiliated with Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, located in Lahore, Pakistan were the target population. The Census sampling technique was adopted to accomplish the objectives of the conducted study. 67 respondents participated in the study. A quantitative research technique was used in the study. A self-created questionnaire was used to collect the data.

Key Findings:

The findings of the study revealed that a good number of respondents were willing to participate in development activities. But, due to numerous hurdles included shortage of library staff, poor allocation of budget for development activities and non-interesting attitude of organizational administration towards the professional development of Library professionals were the major barriers towards professional development activities.

Rationale and Significance:

Past literature indicated that no study was conducted covering the objective of barriers in professional development. No researcher made the proper investigation in the local scenario. It was highly desired to explore the barriers in participating in professional development activities in the local context.

Implication:

This study would contribute to the professional literature. It will also assist policy makers to take initiatives for the capacity building of library professionals.

Keywords:

Professional development; Continuing professional development; Barriers in PDCs

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION:

With the passage of time, every profession of the world is changing. So, to keep awareness about the updated knowledge, information, skills, and expertise about the profession must be upgraded according to the changes. Continue professional development programs are an effort to enhance the technical and technological skills, knowledge, and experience and it is gained through formal and informal education. In recent years the role of library professionals has become gradually difficult due to the changes in Information Technologies (IT). The quality of staff is affected by various factors. It includes personal attributes such as intelligence, aptitude, and commitment (Block and Kelly, 2001).

The term professional development is defined as "further study undertaken during employment by a person trained and educated in a profession, sometimes at the initiative of the employer but also through voluntary attendance at conferences, workshops, seminars, or enrollment in postgraduate courses, particularly important in professions that have a rapidly changing knowledge base" (Reitz, 2004).

The skilled and high-quality staff can convert the lowliest library into excellent libraries due to the nature of operational services. Courses enable the library professionals to be aware of new possibilities and empowered by updating the old skills with the new ones. Academic libraries are playing an essential role in supporting the research goals and curriculum of the universities and without skilled library professionals, it challenges the institutions in delivering higher education. Ajeemsha and Msdhusudhan (2014) highlighted that the quality of academic libraries relies on the quality of services in academic libraries. Learning is a lifelong process and continuous activity. At present time library staff depends on information technology to provide effective services. The need for staff development activities in academic libraries does not be over-emphasized. Cobblah (2015), in the research, mentioned that training is outdated after school education, hence, the need to frequently update their professional knowledge, skills, and expertise.

Presently in Pakistan, librarianship is suffering from various challenges of numerous types like hiring and lack of staffing, budgeting issues, technological issues, managerial issues, etc. It was noted that there is a bit lack of professional courses for the librarians to enhance their abilities and skills. Except for some prominent organizations, many libraries were not interested in the courses regarding professional development to train the library professionals of their respective libraries. There was also a problem that few organizations and associations did not follow the contents due to the non-availability of a competent and skilled trainer.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following research question was designed in light of LIS literature.

- What are the problems being faced by Library professionals for participating in Professional Development Courses (PDCs)?

- Which are the practical solutions to implement PDCs in university libraries?

REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE:

Library user's expectations are rapidly changing and due to these reasons, the role the librarians have converted into various designations like information professionals. In this scenario, the role of the librarians is very complex and he is trying to fulfill these expectations and learn new techniques to keep in touch with the latest technologies. As Broady-Preston (2009) explores the concepts about formal education and development programs due to changing scenarios of information. The researcher used the qualitative research approach followed by the paper analysis of selected literature. The researcher explored the professional literature about the education, training professional development of the librarians. The findings of this study revealed that there are several barriers like level of qualification, practices, and development programs. Serval factors affect the professional development courses like budget, lack of planning, low education, and library infrastructure.

Maesaroh and Genoni, (2010) explained problems in development practices for librarians working in the academic libraries of Indonesia. A survey research technique was used to collect the data from the librarians. The research found that on-the-job training, professional development, and allocation of budget for development courses would be the top priorities. It further revealed some other problems including under-developed infrastructure, a lower standard of library education, staff development plan, and poor allocation of budget. Institution problems are a major reason for participating in professional development activities. The duration of the courses and personal and family issues of the librarians are also a reason.

Thomas, Satpathi and Satpathi, (2010) demonstrated the challenges of the academic librarians and the role of associations related to the updating of the library profession. Mix methods technique was applied to collect the data via interviews and questionnaires. The findings showed that academic librarians should adopt new techniques and skills of technology development for the welfare of library users. Mathew, Baby, and Sreerekha

(2011) claimed the problems of academic librarians in the University of Kerala to participate in professional development programs. The researchers used the quantitative research technique followed by the questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed that age, experience, and education are the common characteristics that affected the development programs. It also showed that a maximum number of library practitioners gained higher educational degrees and obtained IT courses for the suitable positions in the libraries and they had a positive attitude regarding attending the development trainings and workshops. Academic institutions and academic libraries are facing many problems but the most prominent is the financial issue. Poor allocation of the budget affects the whole library operations. For these courses, development committees play an important role in the skills, knowledge, and technical competencies of the library staff.

Sambo, Igiamoh, and Hamsetu (2014) commented that the professional development activities enabled professionals to face the challenges in academic libraries. The quantitative technique followed by the questionnaire to collect the data from librarians of the academic libraries of Nigeria. The findings of this study showed that lack of development committees, motivation from staff, and poor allocation of budget are the primary issues. This study recommended that an adequate budget would be allocated for the development program and development committees would be established within the organization.

Pakistan Library Association (PLA) is the leading professional organization for the library professionals of Pakistan. It is an active organization of librarians who solve the problems of librarianship and perform services for the development of the profession in Pakistan. Pakistan Library Association (PLA) organizes various professional development courses that address the live issues in librarianship. As Khan and Bhatti (2014) discussed the challenges and issues to librarianship in Pakistan and the role of PLA to provoke these challenges in developing librarianship in Pakistan. This study identified the problems of Pakistan Library Association (PLA) members. This particular study was undertaken having used a quantitative technique followed by the questionnaire from the members of the PLA working in the different colleges and universities in Pakistan and outside Pakistan. The

findings of this study revealed that PLA needed an active role in the development of librarianship in Pakistan. The problems associated with professional development are weak infrastructure, poor allocation of finance for libraries, digitization of libraries, and formation of library standards. Electronic learning (e-learning) is a big challenge for librarians. There is still confusion in the use of electronic sources in developing countries. Although it has a benefit that everything is available with a single click but many library professionals have no knowledge that how to operate these online sources and tools. As

Anasi and Ali (2014) highlighted the perceptions of the librarians working in the academic libraries to explore the benefits and major challenges of accepting e-learning for professional development activities. The conclusion of their study showed that electronic learning had opened new ways for professional learning. The researchers further explored that e-learning had some challenges especially inadequate power supply and inadequate knowledge of how to run the e-learning tools. Asante and Alemna (2015) explored the need for development courses in Polytechnic libraries of Ghana. A mixed-methods technique was used. The findings revealed that libraries did not have development policies. Information & Communication Technology (ICT) skills are required by the librarians of the Polytechnic libraries. The productivity of the library operations would be enhanced by the motivating of staff towards development courses. The researcher gave some recommendations like development policies, orientation for the library staff, and trainings in Information Technology (IT) would increase and run the library operations of Library Management System (LMS) for the librarians working in the Polytechnic libraries to meet the technological challenges.

Poor planning in staff development creates many problems but most importantly is that it destroys the library operations as well as the goals of the organization. Ill-relevant methods for conducting development activities decrease the efficiency and productivity of the library. Many things are included in the barriers of staff development including the written development policy, non-qualified staff, favoritism in the staff by the higher authority and fewer training facilities are included. As Otsonu, et. al (2017) investigated the problems in professional development in the libraries of Benue state, Nigeria. The

quantitative technique was followed by a questionnaire to collect the data from librarians. The findings revealed that there are serval methods for staff development including a rotation at the job, coaching methods, and lectures for staff development activities. This study also explored the barriers in development courses in include lack of budget and lack of sponsored and management's discrimination against the library staff. Several professional development activities exist in the profession of library science like workshops; seminars and conferences are the most common. But one challenge is overlapping in many researches like budget allocation for development activities and lack of development policy for staff development.

Owusu (2017) explored the challenges in professional development courses available in the Polytechnic library's staff in Ghana. A quantitative approach followed by the survey method was used and library professionals and professional staff were selected as sample. The findings displayed that staff were familiar with professional development and believed that this increased the knowledge of the library practitioners. This study showed that the library professionals attended numerous types of the development programs like workshops, conferences, and seminars. He further explored the staff development activities had many challenges like financial and budgetary problems. Cobblah and Walt (2018) investigated relationship of staff development with job performance in the universities of Ghana. Results of the study revealed that there was a positive relation between staff development activities with job performance. Different types of professional programs played a vital role in the development of skills among staff. In service training was highly essential for the job professionals for enhancing skills sets and to implement creative projects for leading the organizations efficiently and more effectively. Staff members needed to avail professional learning opportunities for grooming personality and polish professional skills to perform job-operations nicely. It was also found that professional development activities improved library services as emerging technological tools were applied having grabbed required competencies after participation in PDCs. One worth mentioning finding of the research was related to special job incentives as promotions, salary-increase and other such factors also improved job performance. Alone PDCs could

not bring efficiency in work performance. Special incentives were needed too for improving job performance.

Chantal et. al (2019) stated that satisfactory services may not be provided to the students without quality courses. Professional courses play a great role for the transformation of the society. Needs of the users differ in the educational institutes so library professionals need to organize information resources and services keeping in view the ever-changing needs and demands so that a supportive role might be performed for the uplift of the institute and users might be satisfied with the delivery of quick services through the adoption of emerging technologies. Online courses needed to be formulated to facilitate the students, research scholars and faculty members of the colleges and universities. Libraries needed to play the role of community engagement centers to facilitate the society. Self determination theory needs to be applied to get fruitful results in the educational institutions. Library professionals should be motivated to bring a positive change in work and attitude so that users might be served efficiently.

Alenzuela, Cantel, and Pelena (2020) mentioned that skills for the library professionals are highly needed to transform the traditional services in librarianship. Librarians face several challenges with passage of the time. They needed to align their learning and expertise to serve the diverse users. Innovative services may not be performed without developing required skills of librarianship according to the needs of the time. Librarians should keep on developing professional competencies to carry out innovative services and redesign information resources so that users might access required material without visiting the libraries physically.

METHODOLOGY:

Design:

The goal was achieved by using the quantitative research technique as quantitative research is a suitable way to test the theories and examining the relationship. A survey research method was used to conduct and meet the objectives.

Population:

The population is described as all the people and items with the same characteristics which a researcher wants to study. The population might be a geographical, social, or another unit. (Creswell, 2012). The population of the study was consisting of the librarians of the academic libraries located in Lahore and recognized by the higher education commission. The respondents of study have a master's degree in library and information science and working in the libraries of their respective universities.

Sampling:

The Census sampling technique was used as all library professionals working in public sector universities were the population of the study. 67 library professionals were the respondents of the study.

Questionnaire:

The tool of the questionnaire was formed to meet the required objectives of the study. The tool was passed through the process of reliability as well validity. The questionnaire was mailed to working library professionals of GCU, Lahore, PU Lahore, and ITU, Lahore. The Likert scale was used in the data collection tool. Kumar (2014), the Likert scale has equal attitudinal value and is important in terms of reflecting an attitude towards the issue in question. The structure of the questionnaire is consisting of different questions about barriers in professional development courses.

Pilot testing of the data collection tool:

The questionnaire was passed through the process of pilot testing. It ensures the validity of the tool. The questionnaire was sent to the library professionals of the academic libraries of Lahore. As responses were received, coding of data was done and was entered in SPSS and test of Cronbach's alpha. The results of Cronbach's alpha were 0.935.
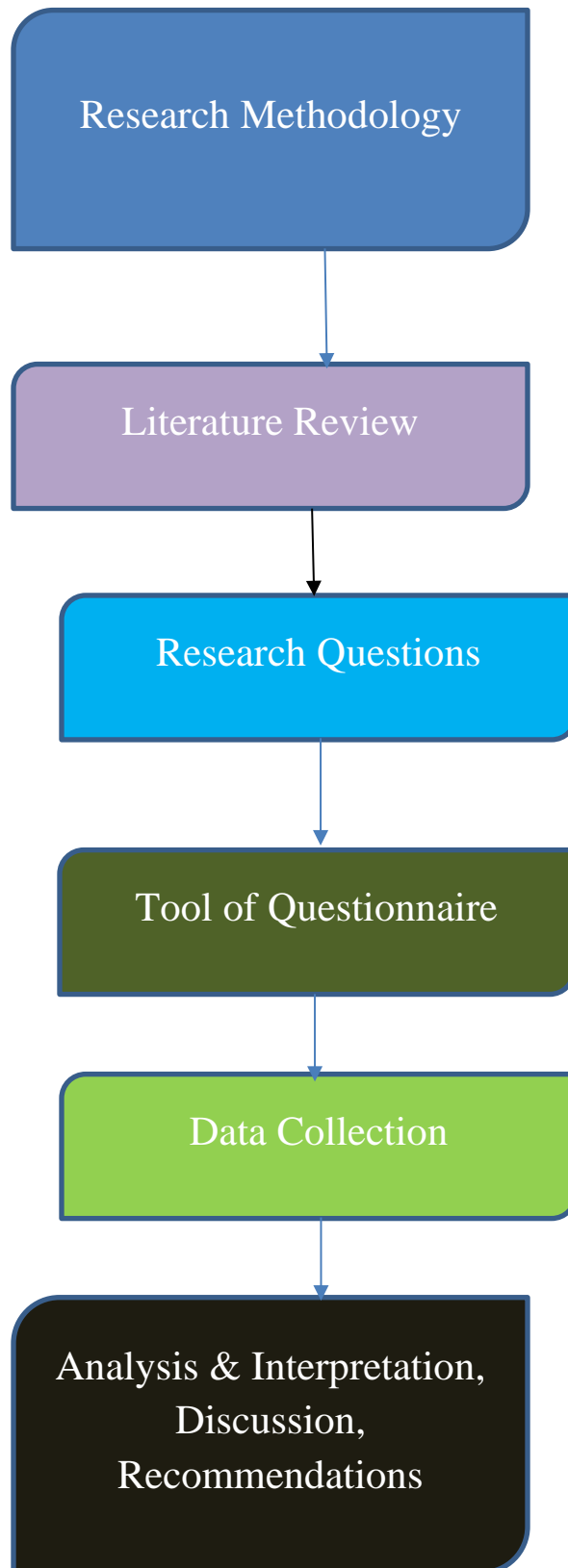
Data collection process

The researchers prepared a list of respondents consisting of the library professionals and distributed a questionnaire along with a cover letter through personal visits. A telephonic appointment before a personal visit was taken from the participant as per his/her convenience. The researcher tried to collect data personally by visiting. The participants gave back the questionnaire after few times by hand. The response rate was 100%. Follow-up calls are also made for the quick response of the questionnaires.

Data analysis:

After collecting and cleaning of data, researchers analyzed the data by using a Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. Afterward completion of the data collection, quantitative data were analyzed and tabulated for interpretation. Statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). For an appropriate explanation of data, some other statistical features such as forms and graphs were drawn to elaborate the results properly. Different methods of descriptive statistics like mean, mode, and median were used. Various simple statistical procedures are used in the data analyses.

Following Figure 1.0 shows research methodology that was followed to conduct the study:

Figure 1.0

Research Methodology

Research Methodology

Literature Review

Research Questions

Tool of Questionnaire

Data Collection

Analysis & Interpretation, Discussion, Recommendations

ANALYSIS OF THE GATHERED DATA AND INTERPRETATION:

Participants' Gender

Sixty-seven (67) library professionals contributed to this research out of 69. The acquired results show that majority of the participants were males who were 39 (58.2%) in number. Twenty-eight (41.8%) respondents were females. The frequency distribution of the respondent's gender is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Frequency distribution of respondents' gender   *N=67*

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	39	58.2%
Female	28	41.8%
Total	67	100.0%

Respondents' Ages

Librarians were asked to mark their age groups. Ages ranged from 21 to above fifty. Acquired results show that twelve (17.91%) respondents were between 21 to 30. Thirty-five (52.2%) respondents were aged between the ranges of 31 to 40. Seventeen (25.37%) respondents were between 41 to 50 while three (4.48%) were more than 50 years.

Table 2

Frequency distribution of respondents' Age   *N=67*

Age Group	Frequency	Percent
21-30	12	17.9%
31-40	35	52.2%
41-50	17	25.4%
More Than 50	3	4.5%
Total	67	100.0%

Barriers to Adopt Professional Development Courses

The librarians were asked to give an opinion regarding barriers being faced by them to participate in professional development courses. They were given different statements which revealed their perception about barriers in participating in professional development courses.

Poor Allocation of Budget for Development Programmes

The librarians were requested to reveal opinions regarding poor allocation of budget for development programs. 5 (7.5%) disagreed with the statement, 13 (19.4%) were neutral, 42 (62.7%) agreed while 7 (10.4%) were strongly agreed.

Table 3

*Poor Allocation of Budget for Development Programmes N=67*

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	5	7.5%
Neutral	13	19.4%
Agree	42	62.7%
Strongly Agree	7	10.4%
Total	67	100.0%

Note: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

Inadequate Education Provided by Library Schools

The librarians were requested to show opinions about the education provided by library schools. 1 (1.5%) was strongly disagreed, 14 (20.9%) were disagreed, 15 (22.4%) were neutral, 31 (46.3%) agreed while 6 (9.0%) were strongly agreed.

Figure: 2

Inadequate education provided by library schools

strongly disagree	
Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

8.96%
20.90%
46.27%
22.39%
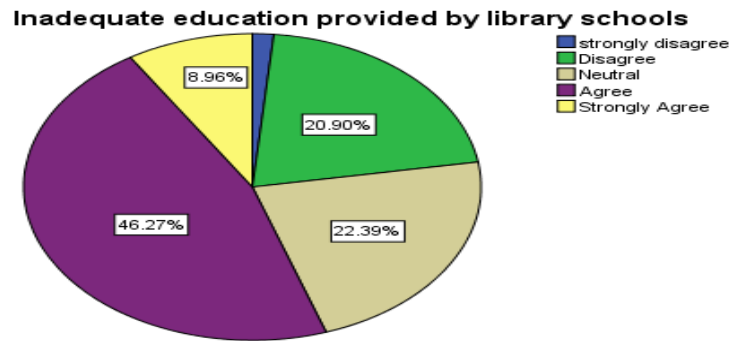
Trainings are Expensive

The respondents were requested to show their opinion about whether trainings are very expensive. 13 (19.4%) disagreed, 16 (23.9%) were neutral, 32 (47.8%) agreed while 6 (9.0%) were strongly agreed. No one strongly disagreed.

Figure: 3

trainings are very expensive

Disagree	
Neutral	
Agree	
Strongly Agree	

8.96%
19.40%
47.76%
23.88%
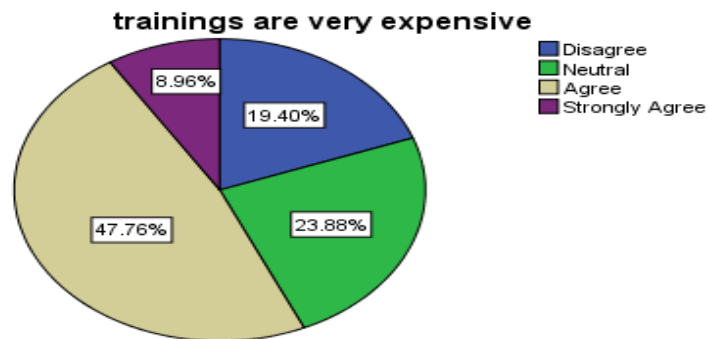
Lack of Time due to Official Work Load

The respondents were asked to show opinions regarding the short time available to participate in professional development courses due to the official workload. 2 (3.0%) strongly disagreed, 10 (14.9%) disagreed, 10 (14.9%) were neutral, 36 (53.7%) agreed while 9 (13.4%) strongly agreed. The received mean is 3.60 whereas the standard deviation of the same is 1.001.

Table 4

Lack of Time due to Official Work Load   N=67

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	3.0%
Disagree	10	14.9%
Neutral	10	14.9%
Agree	36	53.7%
Strongly Agree	9	13.4%
Total	67	100.0%

Note: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

Lack of Time due to Extensive Research Work

The respondents were asked to show opinions about the lack of time due to extensive research work. 1 (1.5%) was strongly disagreed, 14 (20.9%) disagreed, 11 (16.4%) were neutral, 29 (43.3%) were agreed while 12 (17.9%) were strongly agreed. The received mean is 3.55 whereas the standard deviation of the same is 1.063.

Table 5

Lack of Time due to Extensive Research Work   N=67

| Statement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.5%
Disagree	14	20.9%
Neutral	11	16.4%
Agree	29	43.3%
Strongly Agree	12	17.9%
Total	67	100.0%

Note: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

Shortage of Staff

The respondents were asked to reveal opinion about the shortage of staff in the library. 1 (1.5%) was strongly disagreed, 12 (17.9%) were disagreed, 6 (9.0%) were neutral, 37 (55.2%) agreed while 11 (16.4%) were strongly agreed.

Figure: 4

Shortage of library staff
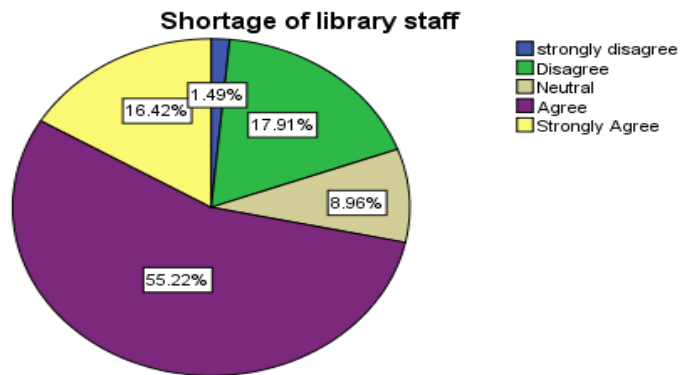
Lack of Time for Training

The librarians were asked to show opinions about the lack of time for participating in training activities. 1 (1.5%) strongly disagreed, 13 (19.4%) disagreed, 13 (19.4%) were neutral, 28 (41.8%) agreed while 12 (17.9%) strongly agreed. The received mean is 3.55 whereas the standard deviation of the same is 1.049.

Table 6

Lack of Time for Training   *N=67*

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	1	1.5%
Disagree	13	19.4%
Neutral	13	19.4%
Agree	28	41.8%
Strongly Agree	12	17.9%
Total	67	100.0%

Note: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

University Authorities do not Facilitate the Library Professionals

The respondents were asked to reveal their opinion about the lack of supportive behavior by the university authorities. 14 (20.9%) disagreed the statement, 12 (17.9%) were neutral, 24 (35.8%) agreed while 17 (25.4%) were strongly agreed. The received mean is 3.66 whereas the standard deviation of the same is 1.081.

Table 7

University Authorities do not Facilitate the Library Professionals N=67

Statement	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	14	20.9%
Neutral	12	17.9%
Agree	24	35.8%
Strongly Agree	17	25.4%
Total	67	100.0%

Note: 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3= Neutral, 2=Disagree, 1=Strongly Disagree

Descriptive Statistics of Barriers for Adoption of PDC:

Following table 8 shows that budget plays a major role in the implementation of Professional Development Courses (PDC) in universities with a mean of 3.76. Restricted policies in organizations also play a crucial role in the adoption of PDC with a mean of 3.72. The majority of the respondents mentioned that the shortage of library staff is a great hurdle in the application of PDC. Most of the library professionals also gave the opinion that university authorities did not facilitate the initiation of PDC. Other worth mentioning barriers include lack of time due to official work-load, lack of required information about training courses, lack of time to receive training, shortage of time on account of extensive research-based activities, lack of dedication from the organizers of the courses, inadequate qualified candidates, expensive training activities and inadequate education provided by Library Schools.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics of Barriers for the Adoption of PDC N=67

Problems to Participate in PDCs	Mean	Std. Deviation
Poor allocation of budget for development programs	3.76	.740
Restricted Policies in organizations	3.72	.867
Shortage of library staff	3.67	1.006
University authority does not facilitate the library professionals	3.66	1.081
Lack of time due to official workload	3.60	1.001
lack of information about training courses	3.58	.972
Lack of training time	3.55	1.049
lack of time due to extensive research work	3.55	1.063
lack of dedication from the organizers of the development courses	3.48	.943
Inadequate qualified candidates	3.46	.943
trainings are very expensive	3.46	.910
Inadequate education provided by library schools	3.40	.970

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

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the academic libraries is to support the curriculum and enhance institutional research as described by Chaudhry 2001. Professional development courses are an effort to refresh knowledge, skills, and abilities. Mahmood (2002), stated that every profession in the world has changed day by day particularly the field of information which affects the libraries along with other professions. These researchers also add the advantages of the development programs which are the most important is to perform library operations (Maesaroh & Genoni 2010).

Libraries in Pakistan are facing problems and the same case is with professional development programs of the library professionals. Library administration is not allocating its budget to professional developments. Some problems are associated with trainings like expensive trainings, lack of training time. It is observed during the study that organizations are not willing to support their librarians regarding PDC due to shortage of library staff, budgeting issues, and restricted policies of the universities. Lack of personal interest and extensive workload/assignments are the hurdles associated with the librarians.

In the local scenario, Majid 2010 claimed that gained knowledge from the library schools had gone out of date after five years due to numerous advancements and changes in technology and techniques. In the present scenario, the development programs for library professionals are very essential for developing current skills regarding library operations particularly technical skills and technological skills.

Several barriers are associated with professional development that include poor allocation of budget for development programs, staffing issues, lack of development policies, etc. Maesaroh & Genoni 2010 stated that numerous factors affect the librarians in participating in professional development courses and these factors are budget, staffing, high workload, personal interest, lack of training time, and little know-how about the development programs.

In most of the libraries of Pakistan, library professionals are not provided learning opportunities. Majority of the libraries in Pakistan do not have any proper training unit to polish professional skills of the library professionals. Consequently, librarians remain unable to grab required skills according to fast coming changes in the academic environment. Emerging technologies are not applied in the libraries on account of the lack of awareness, motivation and required set of expertise. Users are not facilitated through the latest tools of technology. Library services are not transformed to support online teaching courses.

Adoption of Professional Development Courses (PDCs) may prove dynamic in the implementation of fruitful services for the users. Training activities increase efficacy of the

library professionals. In-service learning opportunities prove vital in the provision of user centered services through smart techniques. Professional learning may bring a positive change in the working attitude of library practitioners.

In light of acquired data, analysis, and interpretations, it is revealed that a large number of professionals are well aware of term professional development and young library professionals are very keen to participate in development programs and they spend almost 20 hours for development in a month. A large number of respondents revealed that they are satisfied with the development programs conducted by the library associations. Respondents are agreed that development activities enable the librarians to polish their existing skills, learn new skills like research skills, managerial skills, communication skills, etc.

By removing the barriers in participating in professional development programs, more library professionals will attract towards professional development. By allocation of budget, staffing issues and incentives will generate more positive results in the future.

Following figure 5.0 reveals major problems which are faced by library professionals to participate in Professional Development Courses (PDCs):

Figure 5.0

Problems to Participate in PDCs
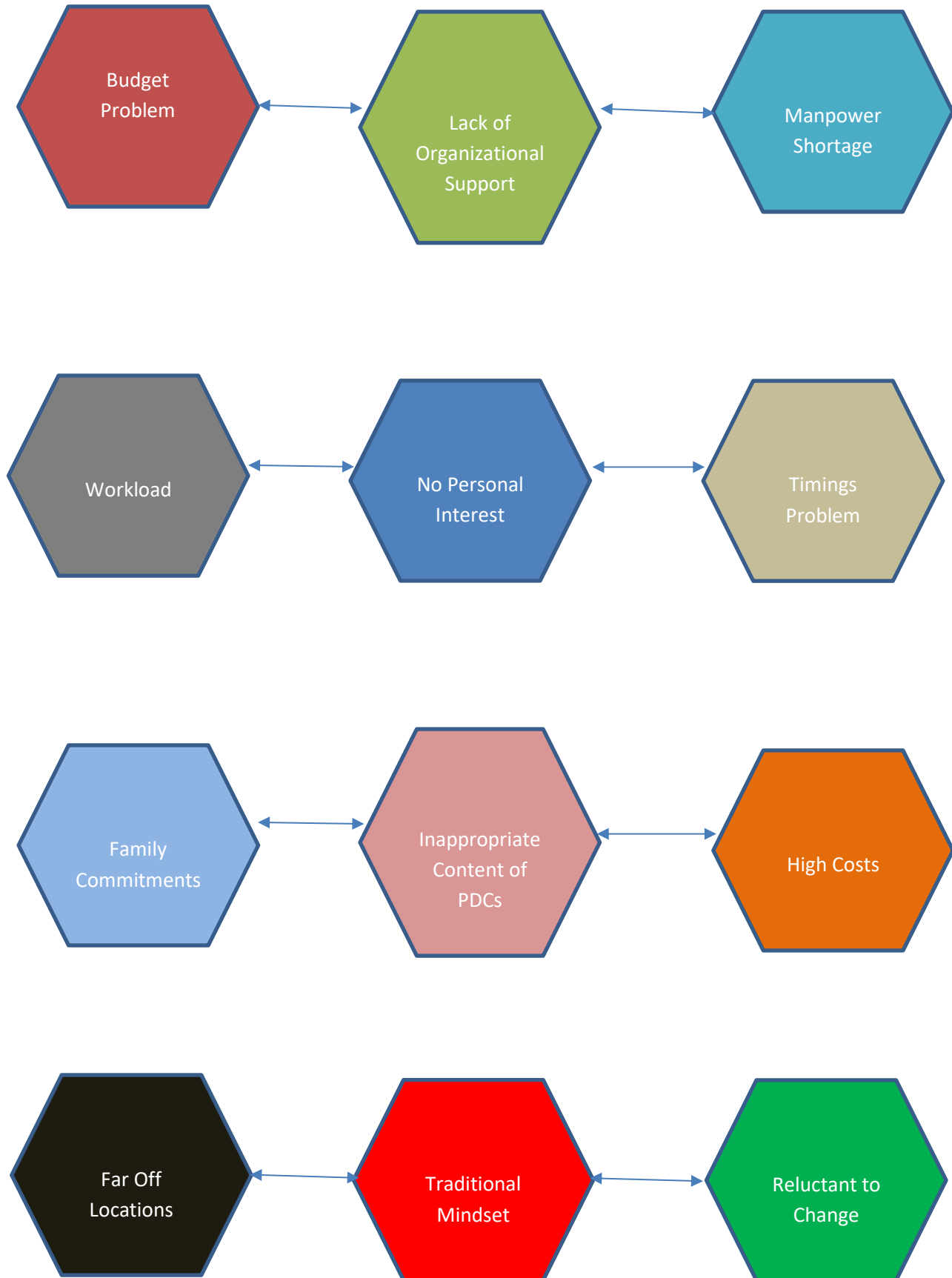
RECOMMENDATIONS

After deeply reviewing the findings of the study and to improve the situation related to professional development courses, the following recommendations are made and described briefly in the following:

1. Budget issues should be solved and sufficient and special allocation of the budget should be made available for professional development programs and activities.
2. Library administration should encourage their library professionals in participating in courses.
3. The charges for conferences, workshops, symposiums, and lectures should be convenient so that maximum participants may actively join these activities.
4. Professional development policies should be prepared at the national level for the better interest of academic libraries.
5. Library administration should send their active members with positive dedications rather than personal favoritism.
6. The issues of library staff's shortage should be solved which ultimate cause of better performance.
7. The library professionals should encourage self-learning rather than think of allocation on trainings.
8. The associations which are responsible to organize the development programs must facilitate their participants for maximum facilities.
9. Publicity of the development courses should be made on a large basis.
10. Maximum attention should be given to venues of the workshops, lectures, etc.
11. Transport allowance must be given to the participants by the academic libraries or organizations.

Following figure 6.0 offer solutions related to PDCs in university libraries of public sector:

Figure 6.0

Solutions for Participation in PDCs

Administrative Support

Special Budget for PDCs

Positive Role of Library Administration

Nominal Charges for PDCs

Solutions to Participate in PDCs

Personal Passion for Learning

Active Role of Associations

Provision of TA/DA

Innovative Mindset

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