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Riding the wave of information: library professionals' opinion towards information literacy (IL) program in academic libraries of Pakistan

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Riding the wave of information: library professionals' opinion towards information literacy (IL) program in academic libraries of Pakistan

Abstract

The present study investigated status, strategies to promote the IL programs, contribution of social media, and challenges to provide IL programs in the academic libraries of Pakistan. A concurrent mixed-method technique was used and a structured questionnaire was designed to collect the data and in-depth interviews from 12 academic librarians of the capital cities of four provinces of Pakistan. A systematic sampling technique was used to collect the data from library professionals. The results reveal that academic libraries took imitative to launch IL programs at academic libraries of Pakistan but there is a need for improvement and revamp them. The findings show that library orientation and tours are considered the most useable methods. Digital literacy skills are deadly required to launch an effective IL program. Therefore, library professionals are required to enhance their ICT skills to deliver quality and effective IL programs. A number of gaps were also identified such as; absence of IL policy, lack of training and workshops, and the failure of library professionals to promote IL programs among the user community. In the present scenario, it is suggested that library professionals, library associations, and the Pakistani government should pay attention to formulating a national-level IL policy that will be implemented unanimously in all libraries.

Keywords: Information literacy, academic libraries, lifelong learning, social media, Pakistan.

Introduction

Information Literacy (IL) is a growing and recognized area of research in the field of library & Information Science. A large number of researches have been conducted on different aspects of IL by several authors. Different schools of thought considered that media literacy is also part of IL (Lee and So, 2014). Now Information communication technology (ICT) is also an integral part of it. Without the concept of ICT, the basic essence of IL is incomplete (Boekhorst and Britz, 2004).

Basically “IL is the ability to think critically and make balanced judgments about any information we find and use. It empowers us as citizens to develop informed views and to engage fully with society” (Secker, 2018, p.156). Therefore, a developed society requires the creation, management, assessment, and distribution of information IL programs/instruction are much established in developed nations where

faculty collaboration with a librarian are stronger and they are engaged to design, implement and evaluate IL programs (Singh, 2005; Rafiq et al., 2020; Humbhi, 2020).

American Library Association (2000) standards for higher education interpreted three basic areas for university libraries which can be related with IL (1) a well-designed curriculum along with course contents, teaching methodology, and its evaluation; (2) competent human resources, that is. Library professionals to teach the library users and (3) availability of teaching facilities, allocation of budget, and training and workshops for librarians. In real-time internet-based knowledge resources are getting attention and play a vital role to promote IL skills in academic institutions. Libraries are indulged in introducing, evaluating, and revamping IL courses. These trends are found in developed and developing countries (Perez-Stable et al., 2012 and Ahmad, F., Widen, G., & Huvila, I, 2020). Technological advancement influenced every field of life. ICT has a great impact on libraries and related services like IL. Without IL, the organization, retrieval, and evaluation of the information are not possible. Iton (2008) has observed that online IL courses are commonly used to train users. Library users are satisfied to participate in these instructional programs. The current scenario of increasing the use of internet-based knowledge resources plays a vital role in promoting IL skills in academic institutions. The user must be skilled in acquiring, selecting, and synthesizing the information for its proper usability (Shanhong, 2004; Sparks et al., 2016; Annet et al., 2007).

Academic libraries have adopted different methods to provide the IL instructions to their users by using different methods as library orientation, library tours, online training, and web-based lectures and IL courses to make them able to identify the authentic information from the authentic sources (Baro and Keboh, 2012, p.34; Guo & Huang, 2020; Owusu-Ansah, 2004).

At the international level, the academic libraries even introduced IL as a credit or short course. These courses could be conducted at the library or online by adopting digital equipment in the systems. IL course could be monitored and evaluated the activities (Saunders, 2009; Breivik and Gee, 2006; Onyancha et al., 2010; Rader, 2002, p.243; Rafique & Khan, 2018).

Problem Statement

Academic libraries are providing services traditionally or digitally on an equal basis. Developed countries designed IL programs according to their educational policy and integrated them with the curriculum. Moreover, a combination of ICT and social media is considered a powerful

tool for providing a quality IL program. On the other hand, underdeveloped and developing countries are facing several problems while launching the IL program into their institutions. The major challenges that library professionals are faced while providing IL programs such as lack of IL policy, lack of ICT resources, lack of interest of library professionals, non-availability of refresh courses, and lack of faculty and library professionals' collaboration (Owusu-Ansah, 2003; Ullah & Ameen, 2014; Jabeen et al., 2016 and Baro, 2011, Baro et al,2013, Menou, 2002; Ashoor, 2005,). The concept of IL programs at Pakistani academic libraries is new. The status of the IL program is still in its infancy stage in the academic libraries of the country (Ullah & Ameen, 2014). Few studies have been conducted on the different aspects of the IL program in Pakistan. The uniqueness of the present study is to investigate the current status, the role of social media, and challenges in the implementation of the IL program in academic libraries of Pakistan. Therefore, the present study has shed light on these areas which differentiate this study from previous studies in the field of library science in Pakistan. The results of the study will also be useful for library professionals, for LIS schools as well as for other stakeholders to understand the need for IL programs in the current age.

Literature Review

A large number of research studies have been published on IL policy, integration of faculty members with a librarian, curriculum design, and development of credit courses (Amstutz and Whitson, 1997; Cooney and Hiris, 2003; Kong, 2008; Probert, 2009). Lifelong learning is also a part of IL programs and library professionals play a vital role in the academic libraries (Gold and Grotti, 2013). IL programs gained attention globally (Aharony et al., 2020; Lwehabura and Stillwell, 2008; McGuinness, 2009; Jiyane and Onyancha, 2010; Pattar and Kanamadi, 2010; Julien et al., 2018; Polkinghorne and Julien, 2019; Zeeshan et al., 2020). Therefore, in a study Nimon (2001) expressed that over the past decade IL had been the major concern of the academic library professionals. They are trying to enable their users to become more self-directed with the help of IL instructions. Nkiko (2005) emphasized that IL/user education is a significant skill, which allows users to find their needed information. It enabled the user to take responsibility for their constant learning in the areas of their interest. Anyaoku et al. (2015) expressed that academic librarians in many countries have expanded their roles to be the advocators and teachers of IL rather than a librarian (Aharony and Bronstein,2014).

Jabeen et al. (2016) examined IL program practices, techniques, and problems in the academic and research libraries of Beijing, China. The results identified that still; IL program was in its early stage in those libraries. Library orientations and tours were used

effectively for IL instructions rather than face-to-face instructions. Whereas, Anunobi and Ukwoma (2016) determined the IL trends, challenges, and opportunities in the university libraries of Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the libraries were in the initial stages of offering an IL program. Aharony et al. (2020) investigated IL instructional practices in Israeli academic libraries. The online survey method was used for data collection purposes. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents were in favor that IL programs are the core responsibility of library professionals. The one-on-one IL instruction method was most commonly adopted by the library professionals in Israeli academic libraries rather than other methods.

Lwehabura & Stilwell (2008) indicated that university libraries were not providing sufficient IL instructions due to the inadequate resources, lack of IL policy, lack of training for library staff, and poor collaboration between librarians and faculty. Furthermore, Baro & Zuokemefa (2011) also expressed challenges that were faced by the university libraries while launching the IL program such as lack of users interest, lack of human resources for handling the IL program, inadequate facilities, and the lack of IL assessment (Emmanuel & Tarela, 2012; Baro et al., 2013).

Scenario note on IL programs in Pakistan

From the Pakistans' perspective, the concept of the IL program was quite new in 2008 the University of Punjab integrated the IL program into its curriculum. Moreover, in 2009 the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan integrated the IL program as an optional course in the curriculum of LIS. Ullah & Ameen (2014) elaborated that though the IL program is still in its infancy stage in Pakistan the library professionals rendering their services in medical colleges have good IL skills for the critical evaluation of information (Ameen & Ullah, 2016). In a recent study, Rafiq et al. (2020) investigated the IL practices and methods used by library professionals in university libraries of Lahore, Pakistan. The study employed a descriptive research methodology. The data was gathered using a cross-sectional survey tool. According to the findings of the study, the majority of academic libraries practiced a basic level of IL instructions. Moreover, hands-on testing was the preferred mode of IL instruction delivery, as most of the library professionals conducted IL sessions using computer software. Furthermore, Ameen and Gorman (2009) conducted a study on the usage of digital libraries and online databases by the students of

the University of Punjab. They expressed that due to the non-availability of a proper IL program the utilization of databases was lower in the academic libraries of the country.

In a study, Hamid & Ahmad (2016) expressed that the user education program in universities has improved students' searching skills and techniques and trained students to use library sources and services more effectively. According to Mahmood (2013) due to the extensive growth of publications, it seems very hard to teach everything during a class lecture. Therefore, the library users should be information literate to access, retrieve, evaluate and use their required information. A significant study conducted by Bhatti (2012) where the major challenges were highlighted as lack of IL policy, lack of refresher courses for library professionals, and lack of collaboration between library professionals and teaching staff regarding the IL program, which prevents library professionals from launching and delivering a quality IL program. The study also recommended some suggestions that government should implement IL policy. Higher educational institutions and associations should arrange refresh courses for library professionals. Moreover, faculty and library professionals should collaborate with each other for a successful IL program.

Research objectives

1. To analyze the current status of the IL program in the academic libraries of Pakistan.
2. To assess the role of social media for providing IL instructions in the academic libraries of Pakistan.
3. To examine the strategies, the library professionals adopted for the marketing of the IL program in the academic libraries of Pakistan.
4. To identify the challenges which prevent professionals from launching and delivering IL program in the academic libraries of Pakistan.

Methods and Procedures

Questionnaire

This study is based on a mixed-method technique to investigate the current status, practice, and social media adoption level in the academic libraries of Pakistan. A descriptive survey method was used to collect data by using a questionnaire and interviews were scheduled to get the data from library professionals. Data was collected by using a structured questionnaire. It was administrated by email to the library professionals. The study of available literature indicated an appropriate and directly related data collection instrument developed by (Jabeen et al., 2016; Baro et al., 2013). The available instruments were modified and adapted for the data collection purpose of the current study.

Before administering the instrument, it was tested for validity and reliability. Therefore, this instrument was presented to experts who made corrections and removed errors. A pre-test was carried out for content validity at the departmental libraries of the University of Balochistan. The Cronbach Alpha result for the instrument is .8 at the level of significance. It shows that the instrument was highly reliable, extensively used, and had a reasonable length to measure IL program practices level in the academic libraries (Mahmood, 2017). Moreover, an interview guide was used to collect qualitative information. The population of this study was 194 HEC recognized universities in Pakistan. It was not an easy task to collect the data from all librarians of the country. Therefore, a systematic sampling technique was used and data were collected from the 3 university libraries of capital cities of four provinces of the country. HEC recognized top-rank universities were selected for the current study. The questionnaires were sent by e-mail, and the library professionals were interviewed through a telephonic call.

Interviews

The in-depth interviews focused on:

- a) What do you think the IL program is necessary for the freshman?
- b) Which type of support library professionals need from faculty while launching the IL program in their libraries?
- c) What is your opinion regarding the usage of ICT/social media tools for marketing library sources and services and for delivering IL to your library users?
- d) Which type of problems the library professionals face while launching and delivering IL programs in their libraries?
- e) What is the role of government and library associations in the development of the IL program?

Twelve key informants were being part of interview process. The interviewees were the same who were indulged to give feedback on questionnaire. Interview was scheduled and got consent in advance by email, and phone calls were made to confirm the appointments for interviews.

Data Analysis and Results

There were two phases of the study. The first phase was consisted on “quantitative strand” was taken data by using questionnaire and second phase was based on interviews from library professionals.

ROI: Current status of IL program in the academic libraries of Pakistan

IL instruction activities

IL empowers individuals to spread the range of their search to gain good control over their learning. For this purpose, the current study has been conducted to identify the importance of the IL program in the academic libraries of Pakistan. Where the subject respondents were asked that are they offering IL instruction in their libraries. All 12 (100%) respondents indicated “Yes” they are offering IL instructions to their library users.

Table1

Topics covered in IL instruction programs

Province	Academic Libraries	Introduction to library resources, services and policies	OPAC	Library website introduction	Identification of their own information needs	Online searching technique	Use of search engines	Use of HEC Digit Library	Plagiarism awareness/ethical use of information	Citation of information (Referencing styles)	Use of Citation Bibliographic management tools (Endnote, etc.)	Information Gateways
Balochistan	UOB	×	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
	SBK	×	×	×	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×
	BUTIMS	✓	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	×
Punjab	PU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
	GCU	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓	×
	LCWU	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Sind	UOK	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×
	BBSU Karachi	✓	×	×	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	SMIU Karachi	✓	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓	×	×	✓	×

KPK	University of Peshawar	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
	ICP	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓	✓	×	×	✓	×
	BBSU Peshawar	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	×

A variety of new methods of instruction have been employed to play a major role in making users more information literate. Therefore, academic libraries have adopted different methods to provide the best IL instructions to their users i.e. in the modern age briefing users about library resources and services, indicating them how to use online public access catalog (OPAC), providing them information about library websites, literate them about searching online techniques, using HEC digital databases and using Information-Gateways (e.g. Worldcat, SOSIG, HUMBUL Humanities Hub, British Academy Portal, SciCentral, etc. Moreover, instruct them how to use APA, Vancouver, Harvard reference styles, Bibliographic management tools such as Endnote, RefWorks, Zotero, Mendeley, etc (Wegener, 2018,p.6; Dewald et al., 2000). In this regard, the current study was conducted to find out the areas, which the respondents preferred while providing IL instructions to their library users. Lists of 11 areas were presented to them to indicate the program they offer in their institutions. The respondents from the Punjab University and Government College University, Lahore indicated that they cover ten areas while providing IL instructions in their libraries. The respondent from the rest of the libraries is providing specific IL instructions to their library users.

Table 2

Common IL instructions

Province	Academic Libraries	Library orientation	Guided library tour	Introductory information skills	Advanced information skills	Research level skills
Balochistan	UOB	✓	✓	×	×	×
	SBK	✓	✓	×	×	×
	BUTIMS	✓	✓	×	×	×
Punjab	PU	✓	✓	×	×	×
	GCU	✓	✓	×	×	×
	LCWU	✓	✓	×	×	×
Sind	UOK	✓	✓	×	×	×
	BBSU Karachi	✓	×	×	×	×
	SMIU	✓	✓	×	×	×
KPK	University of Peshawar	✓	✓	×	×	×
	ICP	✓	✓	×	×	×
	BBSU Peshawar	✓	✓	×	×	×

Results indicated that library orientation and guided library tours are the most popular type of IL instruction method offered by most of the libraries. The rest of the methods are not considered as important as library orientation and guided library tours (Table 2).

*RO2: Role of social media in the practices of IL program in the academic libraries***Table 3**

Level of social media adoption

Provinces	Academic Libraries	Extremely high	High	Average	Poor	Worse
Balochistan	UOB	×	×	×	✓	×
	SBK	×	×	×	✓	×
	BUTIMS	×	×	✓	×	×
Punjab	PU	×	×	✓	×	×
	GCU	×	×	✓	×	×
	LCWU	×	×	✓	×	×
Sind	UOK	×	×	✓	×	×
	BBSU Karachi	×	×	×	✓	×
	SMIU	×	×	✓	×	×
KPK	University of Peshawar	×	×	✓	×	×

ICP	×	×	✓	×	×
BBSU Peshawar	×	×	×	✓	×

Result elaborates the level of adoption of social media tools for the IL program. 8 (67%) respondents indicated average response and 4 (33%) respondents mentioned poor response for the adoption of social media tools for the IL program at their libraries (Table 3).

Table 4

Usage of social media tools

Province	Academic Libraries	Facebook	Twitter	Linked in	RSS	Skype	Wikis	Whats app	We chat	Viber	Instagram
Balochistan	UOB	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	SBK	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	BUTIMS	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Punjab	PU	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	GCU	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	LCWU	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Sind	UOK	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	BBSU Karachi	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	SMIU	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
KPK	University of Peshawar	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	ICP	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	BBSU Peshawar	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	Peshawar										

Results show that 12 (100%) respondents are using Facebook whereas, among them, only 2 (16%) respondents are using Twitter for delivering IL instructions. The rest of the social media tools are still not being used for IL instructions (Table 4).

RO3: Strategies the library professionals have adopted for the marketing of IL program in the academic libraries of Pakistan

Table 5

IL marketing strategies

Provinces	Academic Libraries	Official memos	Departmental meetings	Email discussion lists	Institutional website	Library website	Library blogs	Notices or letters to faculty
Balochistan	UOB	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
	SBK	✓	×	×	×	×	×	×
	BUTIMS	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

Punjab	PU	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	✓
	GCU	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	✓
	LCWU	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	✓
Sind	UOK	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	BBSU Karachi	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	SMIU	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	✓
KPK	University of Peshawar	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	✓
	ICP	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
	BBSU Peshawar	×	×	×	×	×	×	×

If a library would not adopt modern strategies for the marketing of their library services then they will not be able to satisfy their library users. The library users would prefer other information sources rather than using libraries for accessing their required information (Nims, 1999). For this purpose, respondents were asked to mention the marketing strategies which they have adopted to market IL instruction programs in their libraries. 7 (58%) respondents indicated the official memo for the marketing IL program, 5 (42%) mentioned departmental meetings, and the rest of 5 (42%) respondents only highlighted notices or letters as a source for approaching faculty and students for marketing their library services, modern strategies are not being used by the library professionals for the promotion of IL program.

RO4: challenges faced by the professionals in the provision of IL program in the academic libraries

Table 6

Major barriers while providing IL instruction

	Strongly agree		Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%	Responses	%
1. Lack of IL expertise among the academic librarians	0	0%	11	92%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
2.IL is not the part of the curriculum	2	17%	6	50%	0	0%	3	25%	1	8%
3.Lack of policy regarding IL in the academic institutions	1	8%	9	75%	0	0%	2	17%	0	0%
4.Shortage of library staff to provide IL instructions	2	17%	8	67%	0	0%	0	0%	2	17%
5. Lack of commitment among librarians for IL instruction	2	17%	8	67%	0	0%	2	17%	0	0%
6.Lack of awareness regarding the importance of IL among the academic community	2	17%	7	58.33%	0	0%	2	17%	1	8%
7.Lack of training opportunities for IL instructions for librarians	2	17%	7	58.33%	0	0%	1	8%	2	17%
8.Lack of time by librarians due to professional work	2	17%	7	58.33%	0	0%	3	25%	0	0%
9.Lack of collaboration between librarians and faculty	1	8%	10	83%	0	0%	1	8%	0	0%
10.Management is interested more in developing physical infrastructure than in such skill development	1	8%	11	91%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
11.Lack of interest of the users	3	25%	7	58%	0	0%	2	17%	0	0%
12.Library is part of administration not academic	3	25%	6	50%	0	0%	3	25%	0	0%

Results in (**Table 6**) highlighted the problems the respondents face while providing IL instructions. Where the 12 variables were listed and (strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree) respondents were asked to mention their responses. In the response of the first variable 11 (92%), agree and 1 (8%) disagree with the said statement. In the response of the second variable 2 (17%) strongly agree, 6 (50%) agree, 3 (25%) disagree, and 1(8%) strongly disagree. In the response of the third variable 1 (8%) strongly agree, 9 (75%) agree, and 2 (17%) disagree. In the response of the fourth variable 2 (17%) strongly agree, 8 (67%) agree, 2 (17%) strongly disagree. In the response of the fifth variable 2 (17%) strongly agree, 8 (67%) agree, 2 (17%) disagree with the same variable. In the response of the sixth variable 2 (17%) strongly agree, 7 (58%) agree, 2 (17%) disagree, and 1 (8%) strongly disagree. In the response of the seventh variable 2 (17%) strongly agree, 7 (58%) agree, 1 (8%) disagree and 2 (17%) strongly disagree with the same variable. In the response of the eighth variable 2 (17%) strongly agree, 7 (58%) agree, and 3 (25%) disagree. In the response of the ninth variable 1 (8%) strongly agree, 10 (83%) agree, and 1(8%) disagree. In the response of the tenth variable 1 (8%) strongly agree, 11 (91%) agree. In the response of the eleventh variable 3 (25%) strongly agree, 7 (58%) agree, and 2 (17%) disagree. In the response of the twelfth variable 3(25%) strongly agree, 6 (50%) agree, 3 (25%) disagree.

Qualitative data analysis: professionals' opinions

The study's qualitative process consisted of 12 interviews with library professionals.

The following are the findings of the thematic data analysis:

IL instructions necessity for the freshman

In the first interview question, the respondents were asked about the importance of the IL program for the freshman: they make any plans for delivering IL instructions in their libraries; which methods the libraries adopt for delivering IL instructions. The interviewees said:

“That the freshmen need to be trained about how to use the library and how to access different sources to fulfill their information needs. Whereas, on the response of the plans for delivering a successful IL program. The students can easily be educated if the program is formally launched as a credit hour course in their particular institutions”.

In the response to the method for delivering IL instruction, one of the interviewees said: -

“There are several other methods that the library professionals are adopting to provide IL instructions to their library users. But according to him library orientation and guided library tour is the most adopted method in the globe. As it takes minimum time and maximum library users can be instructed in one session.”

Librarians and faculty collaboration

According to many scholars, collaboration among library professionals and faculty members of an institution is an important aspect of IL programs. As a result, to launch an effective IL program, the library professionals and faculty members should cooperate (Barnard et al., 2005).

In the interview question, the respondents were asked about collaboration between library professionals and faculty members for designing and launching the IL program. What will be the result if the library professionals involve faculty members in the designing of the IL program?

The interviewees said that cooperation between library professionals and faculty is necessary for the production and launching of an IL program as well as for the designing of the IL syllabus.

Furthermore, the majority of interviewees replied that without faculty participation library professionals will not be able to achieve a successful outcome from the program that has been planned or launched.

On the other hand, one of the interviewees was against it and believed

“That Library professional can plan; initiate deliver, and review the IL program without the involvement of faculty members. Furthermore, he said, every year, library professionals provide IL instructions to their newcomers without the assistance of faculty. According to the interviewee, faculty collaboration is not necessary for delivering IL instructions in any institution.”

Importance of ICT/Social media for the deliverance of IL instructions

The interviewees were questioned about the value of ICT/Social media for the deliveries of IL instructions in the third interview question. The interviewees were replied that they are passionate about digital literacy. They believed that ICT/social media is very important in the modern age. With the help of ICT/social media, they can provide IL instructions easily and moderately to their library users. Moreover, they said, library professionals have long-term commitments with their users to make them able to use the information sources ethically and efficiently for their academic purposes. But in the libraries, such facilities are not available so they are not in the position to provide modern IL instructions.

One of the library professionals replied: -

“Now around the globe majority of the libraries are providing IL instructions with the help of mobile technology and social networking sites. According to him, in our country the library professionals' ICT skills are limited. They are required to enhance their abilities in terms of information technology. Moreover, he said that although they have strong communication skills but their ICT skills are limited which does not allow them to adopt the modern method of IL instructions to enhance their user's academic expertise.”

Challenges the library professionals face while providing IL instructions

One of the main purposes of the current study was to identify the difficulties the library professionals face while providing IL instructions in their libraries. The interviewees discussed in detail the challenges which they face while providing IL instructions to their users. Interviewees pointed out that one of the major problems is that IL is still not included in the curriculum of some LIS schools. Instead, newcomers are just guided to the main library, where they are only given an introduction and a guided tour by a library professional. One of the interviewees highlighted the issue

“That there is no any kind of IL policy for launching and delivering IL program in the libraries of the country.”

One respondent also shared the issue:

“That library users are not taking interest during the IL session. So it is very difficult to increase their thirst to take part in these learning opportunities. Another major issue is time and a lack of support. In a one-hour session, it is very difficult for the library professional to make a library user understand what a library is and what sources and services it gives.”

The role of government and library associations

The study also described the opinions of the library professionals about the attitude of the government and library associations for designing and launching IL programs in the academic

libraries. The interviewees were asked whether library associations or government have launched any workshop or conference for their training about the usage of modern technologies and the latest trends of the IL program. The interviewees said that: -

“The academic libraries are responsible for designing and launching IL programs in their libraries. Whereas, due to the lack of training the library professionals are not in the position to deliver a quality IL program in their libraries. Therefore, the government, library associations, and the HEC are required to organize workshops, conferences, and training to educate the library professionals and make them familiar with modern technologies. Moreover, none of the interviewees acknowledged the positive role of the government and library associations in this regard. An interviewee added that for bringing uniformity and delivering quality IL instructions to library users the government and library associations are required to facilitate the library professionals by organizing workshops, and seminars to enhance their professional skills and awareness of the latest trends in the field of LIS.”

Discussion

Findings elaborated that in the academic libraries of Pakistan the library professionals understood the value of the IL program for their users but as compare to the other developing countries the level of IL instruction program is still in its initial stage (Naveed and Rafique, 2018, P.247).

Library tours and orientations are the most adopted methods by the library professionals in these libraries. Previous studies have also stated similar IL practices in other developing countries, which validates the results of the current study (Baro & Keboh, 2012, p. 311; Ullah & Ameen, 2014, p.282; Johnston & Webber, 2003).

In addition, the findings show that still Modern technologies are not being used frequently in the academic libraries for the IL programs (Omar et al., 2014; Baro & Keboh, 2012, p.312; Starkey, 2010; Guo & Huang, 2020). The library users in the current age required advanced IL training such as; online discourses, web 2.0 applications, and other modern methods for retrieving information. The library professionals have to adopt advanced IL methods to satisfy their users and make them lifelong learner (Baro et al., 2013; Alakpodia, 2010; Baro & Zuokemefa, 2011,p.561; Jabeen et al., 2016,p.10; Ullah & Ameen, 2014,p.286; Agyen-Gyasi, 2008; Lee and So,2014).

Moreover, ICT and social media applications/tools permit library professionals to market their library services and interact with users (Ezeani et al., 2012; Olu Adeyoyin, Samuel, 2005). Findings of the study elaborated that Facebook is the only famous social media application/tool

among library professionals in the country. The rest of the social media applications/tools are not being used in the libraries for providing IL instruction and for the marketing of library services (Ellis et al., 2017; Baro et al., 2014, p.865; Koltay, 2011; Jayatissa & Edzan, 2002; Parusheva et al., 2018).

The study also pointed out the challenges that are preventing library professionals from adopting modern technologies for the deliverance of the IL program. such as old curriculum, unfamiliarity with modern technologies, lack of training/workshops, lack of resources, and lack of cooperation and motivation from higher authorities Moreover, the results stated that lack of policy, lack of interest of the users, are also the challenges for library professionals while providing IL instructions (Anyaoku et al., 2015; Kinengyere, 2007; Ullah & Ameen, 2014, p.282; Anyaoku et al., 2015; Issa et al., 2009; Muema Kavulya, 2003). In a relevant study, Bhatti (2012) also expressed that policies are the foundations of any institution. It provides a guideline to the library professionals on how to set up ICT tools for the IL program and how to structure an IL program in the curriculum and how to train the library professionals about modern technologies. Without the policy, the adoption and implementation of the IL program is impossible (Baro & Zuokemefa,2011, Bruce, 2004; Kavulya, 2003).

Recommendations

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations may be incorporated.

Integration of IL into the curriculum/IL tutorial

IL should be integrated into the curriculum and taught as a credit hour course in higher educational institutions as well as IL tutorials should be provided to the library users on the official website of the library (Baro & Zuokemefa, 2011, p.562; Matlin and Lantzy, 2017).

Implementation of IL Policy and uniformity in IL program

Proper policies can bring positive changes in the deliverance of IL instructions (Bhatti, 2012).

Though, it is the core responsibility of the library associations, top management of the universities, library professionals, and the higher education commission, to plan, introduce, and implement such IL policies. Therefore, it is recommended that the higher education commission of Pakistan (HEC),library professionals, and the library associations should implement a IL policy and make compelled the educational institutions on a provincial, and national level to adopt and implement the IL policy. It brings uniformity in IL instruction programs of the country (Jabeen et al., 2016).

Training and workshops

The library professionals always required such events as refresher courses, training, seminars, orientations, and workshops that they may be aware of new trends in the field of LIS, and about the modern technologies used in the libraries for the marketing of library services. After the completion of the training, these institutions should evaluate the level of improvement of their library professionals and then plan further new activates for the library professionals (Umar, 2012;Ullah & Ameen, 2014, p.286; Saunders, 2018).

Marketing library services through Websites, Social Media and Smartphone

In the 21st century, users are mostly dependent on the internet, and they get access to their required information while using the facilities of websites and social networking sites (SNSs). Therefore, the academic libraries are required to promote their services on their official websites, social media, and mobile apps along with the traditional methods of IL instructions (Ellis et al., 2017; Havelka, 2013; Guo & Huang, 2020). IL instruction should be provided to every student before their graduation it will help them in the achievement of their social, occupational, and educational goals (Tuten & Marks, 2012; Oh & Reeves, 2014; Baro et al., 2014, Witek & Grettano, 2012, Burclaff & Johnson, 2016).

Role of Library Associations for IL program

The developed countries around the world have recognized the library associations' role in the development of the IL program. Therefore, the library associations have formulated the standards and frameworks for the implementation of IL programs (Saunders, 2012, p.226). While in Pakistan the library associations including PLA are not paying serious attention to proposing IL policy, launching training courses/programs for library professionals, and organizing seminars for the promotion of the IL instruction programs. Therefore, it is recommended that library associations should arrange such training, seminars, and workshops for educating library professionals, and make them aware of modern technologies and new trends.

Conclusion

Academic libraries play a leading role in the educational development of their users. Therefore, IL is one of the ways for academic libraries to directly carry out the educational mission of their institutions and create a foundation of lifelong learning for its users. This study points out that there is a dire need to put more attention on IL instruction programs in the academic libraries of

Pakistan. Moreover, the study described that the academic libraries of all four provinces are applying different modes and approaches for providing IL instructions to their library users. While the common mode which is adopted by the library professionals is guided tour and library orientation. Moreover, library professionals are not familiar with ICT, social media, and other modern technologies for rendering library services and educating library users properly. Some challenges such as lack of interest by library users, lack of skilled library staff to handle IL instructions, lack of facilities, low acceptance of online IL delivery approach, and absence of IL policy are identified as the major challenges that are preventing library professionals from delivering a successful IL program. The finding of the study will be a source of information for university administration, policymakers, and also for library professionals of the country for understanding the challenges and to draw away forward for future developments.

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