Winter 12-18-2020

The User-Education Programs in the University Libraries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Quantitative Study

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Abstract

This study evaluated the User Education Programs (UEPs) in the Public Sector Universities' libraries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This study aimed to explore the overall scenario of the user's education, to probe how much time is allotted for UEPs, what methods and approaches of UEPs are in practice and to suggest the measures for improving user education programs in the libraries. The data from the target sample was collected through questionnaire which was then analyzed as per the objectives of the study. The study identified 34 central and departmental libraries in the six universities of the Southern Part of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. All the universities' central and departmental libraries offered users education programs to their users. The UEPs were conducted by the library staff and the faculty members of the respective departments. The most adopted methods or approaches for user education programs were lecture library tours and demonstration. Most of the respondents suggested that there should be a written policy for UEPs, the instruction sessions should be conducted on regular basis, and the UEPs should be organized at the departmental level.

Keywords:

User Education, University Libraries, Information Literacy, Library Instructions, Pakistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Introduction

The rapid change in the educational system of the academic institutions, the advancements & development of new technologies, and financial constraints are the major issues and challenges for the libraries. These issues especially the technological developments have changed the taste and flavor of library users. "Some opined that technology has changed the traditional meaning of the library and also there is less need of library instructions, other believes that technology is the supporter not replacer of the library, the latter claim is more genuine and valid" (Jan, 2010). This

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view supports and promotes because new and more state of the art libraries and information centers are established around the globe. To make the information and knowledge hubs more appealing, user education or library instructions are indispensable

The term user education is comprised of two distinct words; "user and education". The user means the individual or person who uses the resources and services of the library. The library user is, "a person who uses one or more library services at least once in a year" (Devarajan, 1989). The word "education means the instruction highlights the methods by which the user is being taught and made aware of library contents". It is a tool and method that enables the users to become the actual users of the library and use its resources and services effectively. The library instructions aware the students' staff and faculty of the university about the policies, facilities, rules and regulations, services, and resources of the library, so that users could meet the educational and intellectual needs as per their requirements.

Alimohammadi and Sajjadi (2006) stated that "user orientation programs provide a platform to the librarians to provide an insight into the library services, resources and facilities to the new users". The concept of user education programs is not new but its need was felt in the 1880s' (Jan, 2010). The user education "is concerned with all those activities involved in making the users of the library conscious about the tremendous value of information in day to day life to develop interest among the users to seek information as and when they require" (Kumar & Phi, 2009).There are different methods used for user education programs (UEPs) which are the lecture method, the advertising, the workshops, the brochures and newsletters methods, the demonstrations technique, the exhibitions, virtual tours of libraries, mobile text messaging, and the mass media tools (Kumar & Phi, 2009)

Literature Review

Hamid and Ahmad (2016) reported that the common methods of education programs (UEPs) in the university libraries of Pakistan are lectures method, workshops and tours of the library. These activities are carried out once in each term and also once in a month. The results showed the positive impact of these activities on the searching skills and expertise of students. Michael Onuchukwu Okoye (2013) investigated the challenges confronted by the librarians and found that all the librarians were unanimously agreed that there is a dire need for coordination and implementation of user education instructions in the libraries.

Kannappanavar and Swamy (2012) reported that modern technologies are now being used in the libraries to satisfy the information needs of users. It was suggested that the staff of libraries needs proper training to use modern gadgets and technological tools. These user's education instructions helped the libraries to offer services and facilities to meet the information needs of the users. Suleiman (2012) suggested that user education and instructions should be compulsory for the users of all faculties and departments and also give the instructional materials to the participants.

Chen and Lin (2011) surveyed and reviewed the publications of information literacy and user education. It was reported that these activities were beneficial for the staff, faculty, and students. Bhatti (2010) assessed the user-education programs in the university and observed that most of the universities organized the user education programs on an informal basis. It was proposed that library authorities should work to ensure maximum participation of the users in the orientation sessions.

Jan (2010) studied the user education activities in the academic libraries of Pakistan. The results revealed that majorities of the libraries delivered user education services to the users and e majority of such instructions and session were organized by the professional staff of the libraries. Kumar (2009) explored that UEPs provide valuable information to the users of the library. The tools used for user education programs were lecture methods, advertising, workshop, newsletter, brochures, and demonstrations. Agyen-Gyasi (2008) opined that user education is one of the important service of the library and should be offered to new students of the university. It should be designed to equip the users to make effective use of the library facilities, resources, and services.

Brunton (2005) examined the impact of user instruction activities on students and found that UEPs assist the students to overcome their anxiety and stress-related issues and problems. It was recommended that the UEPs should be arranged throughout the semester to enhance the use of library resources. Rhodes and Chelin (2000) investigated the use of the world wide web for user education activities in university libraries. It was explored that most of the libraries were using the web for user education activities to save the resources, to cope with the increasing number of students, to provide 24/7 access to users, to collaborate with other departments of the universities and to enhance the use of the web for library instructions.

Objectives of the Study

This current was designed to achieve the following objectives: -

- To examine the user education services offered by the libraries
- To probe how much time is being allotted for the user education programs
- To investigate the methods and approaches used for the user education
- To know the frequency of conducting user education activities
- To suggest the measures for improvement of users' education programs

Research Methodology

The descriptive survey method was used and data was collected through questionnaire. The population of this study were librarians/in-charge of the Central and Departmental/Seminars libraries of the six public sector universities of the southern region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The researchers found 34 central and departmental libraries in the six universities and data was collected from the librarians/in-charge of these libraries. The collected data was then analyzed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 23). Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentage and frequency were applied to the collected data to achieve the stated objectives of the study. Moreover, the citation management software EndNote X8 was used to manage the references of the study.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed as per the objectives of the study and the results are presented in the form of tables which are interpreted in the following sections.

Table-1: Number of Libraries

S. No.	Name of University	Central Library	No. Departmental Libraries	LIS-Professional
1.	University of FATA	01	Nil	01
2.	Kohat University of Science Technology, Kohat	01	02	02
3.	Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak	01	02	Nil
4.	University of Science and Technology Bannu	01	10	03
5.	University of Lakki Marwat	01	Nil	01
6.	Gomal University D.I-Khan	01	14	09
7.	Total	**06**	**28**	**16**

Table-1 shows the information about the 34 libraries including both central and departmental libraries of the six Universities of the Southern Part of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Each university's main library means its central library. The University of FATA and the University of Lakki Marwat have only the central libraries and there are no departmental libraries in these two universities. The data demonstrates that the Gomal University D.I-Khan has 15 libraries, the University of Science and Technology Bannu has 11 libraries, the Kohat University of Science Technology and the Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak each have 3 have libraries. All these libraries have 16 library professionals performing their duties as librarians or in-charge of the library.

Table-2. User Education Activities

S. No.	User education program	Frequency	Percent
1	Teaching faculty	17	50.
2	Librarian/in-charge	17	50
3	Total	34	100

All the universities' central and departmental libraries offered UEPs to their users. The respondents were asked who conduct the user education programs in their libraries. The responses of the respondents are presented in Table-2

Table-2 illustrates that 50% of respondents said that teaching faculty conducts the user education programs for the students at their respective departments and 50% responded that LIS professionals (Librarians or in-charge) are arranging these sessions to educate the library users.

Table-3. Time Allotted for User Education Programs

S. No.	Time	Frequency	Percent
1.	Half hour	19	55.9
2.	One hour	15	44.1
3.	Two hour	00	00.0
4.	More than two hour	00	00.0
5.	Total	34	100.0

Table-3 indicates the information about the time allocated for UEPs. It was found that 19(55.9%) respondents said that the duration of UEPs is a half-hour and 15(44.1%) provides

one-hour user education session to their users. While none of the respondents select other options like two hours or more than two hours.

Table-4. Approaches and Methods used for User Education Programs

S. No.	Approaches/Methods	Frequency	Percent
1.	Lecture	34	100.0
2.	Workshop	14	41.2
3.	Library Tours	28	82.4
4.	Demonstration	24	70.6
5.	Website	4	11.8
6.	Tutorials	17	50.0
7.	Pamphlets	6	17.6

Table-4 demonstrates the methods and approaches used for conducting user education programs. The most adopted methods or approaches were lecture method used in 34(100%), libraries, library tours were adopted by 28(82.4%) libraries and demonstration technique was used in 24(70.4%) libraries. The other methods were also used which include workshop in 14(41.2%) libraries, website tool in 4(11.8%) libraries, the tutorial in 17(50%), and pamphlets in 6(17.6%) in 6 libraries.

Table-5. Frequency of User Education Programs

S. No.	Frequency	Frequency	Percent
1.	Beginning of academic year	19	55.9
2.	On demand	8	23.5
3.	Every semester	7	20.6
4.	Total	34	100

The respondents were asked how frequently and when the user educations programs are conducted in their libraries. The responses of the respondents are summarized in Table-5

Table-5 reveals that 19(55.9%) of the library administration delivered user education activities in the beginning of each academic year, 8 (23.5%) libraries offered user education on the demand of the library users while 7(20.6%) libraries organized these programs in every semester.

Table 6. Suggestions for the Improvement of User Education Programs

S. No.	Suggestion	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	There should be written policy for UEPs	34	4.7059	.46250
2.	It should be conducted on regular basis	34	4.6176	.49327
3.	UEPs should be organized at departmental level	34	4.6176	.77907
4.	The audio visual aids should be used in UEPs	34	4.5882	.60891
5.	The session should be conducted by the experience library staff	34	4.5588	.56091
6.	More time should be allotted for UEPs	34	4.5588	.61255

Suggestions were asked from the respondents about the improvement of user education programs in the university libraries. Table-8 demonstrates the response of respondents about the given suggestion along with their mean scores and values of standard deviation. The suggestions received high mean values are; there should be written policy for UEPs with Mean score:4.7059, the programs should be conducted on regular basis with a Mean value: 4.6176, UEPs should be organized at the departmental level with Mean:4.6176, the audiovisual aids should be used in UEPs with Mean:4.5882, the session should be conducted by the experienced library staff (Mean 4.5588) and More time should be allotted for UEPs (Mean 4.5588).

Finding and Conclusion

The major findings of the study are summarized as under: -

- The study identified 34 central and departmental libraries in the six universities of the Southern Part of the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
- A total of 16 library professionals were working in these libraries, while some of the departmental libraries were run by non-professional staff.
- All the universities' central and departmental libraries offered users education programs to their users.
- The user education programs were conducted by the library staff and the faculty members of the respective departments.
- Majority of the libraries (55.9%) allocated a half-hour to user education activities.

- The most adopted methods or approaches for user education programs were lecture library tours and demonstration.

- The majority of library administration carried out the user education instructions and sessions at the beginning of an academic year.

- Most of the respondents suggested that there should be a written policy for UEPs, these instruction sessions should be conducted on regular basis, and the UEPs should be organized at the departmental level.

- The user education programs could be improved if more time is allotted to these actives and such instruction should provide by experience LIS professionals.

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