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Students' Understanding of the Importance of Information Literacy (IL) Programs and Skills

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What is the understanding of the students about the Need and Importance of Information Literacy (IL) program and IL skills

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Abstract

The research was conducted to determine the relevance of the information literacy skills of Lahore University of Management Sciences graduate students (LUMS). A convenient sampling technique was used to collect the required data from the population. A sample of 357 students was selected, and the useable response rate was 82%. Results of the study revealed that the majority 51 %, were aware of the IL "Somehow" concept of information literacy. Similarly, majority 86% of the participant had not received any training on information literacy. The findings also showed that 49% of the majority of students found the IL program "very important." Similarly, 36% agreed that the IL program is "significant" However, a major part of the respondents considered the information literacy program as an important program to meet their research skills as well as academic need. The findings revealed that the majority of students are conscious of the information and its relevance for their academic achievements. These results may be carried out in other universities with the same method, strategies, and environments of teaching and learning.

Keywords: Information Literacy; Skills; importance; LUMS University; Pakistan

Introduction

Information is essential and necessary for all ages of life in the context of efficient access, management, and creation of data. Communication is very necessary at the present time. In reaching everybody, effective access, utilization, and control of information take an hour to build expertise and satisfy the educational needs of students and staff. There are various problems in terms of identifiable proof, access to, use, and review of the current time. In addition, it is because of the abundance of innumerable evidence. In maintaining the ease of use, durability, and accuracy of the information and its properties when executing their activities, students, teachers, and multiple users face several problems. Information literacy (IL) has been in the interest of researchers in recent times. Its role in shaping enriched students in research is considered critical.

The American Library Association (ALA) 1989 defines IL as "to be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use the needed information effectively. Information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. Information Literacy is a collection of abilities that allow an individual to discover, view, interpret, and use data. Information literacy is highly concerned with research, in-depth thought, and the learning of educational principles. The development of ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) triggered the information explosion, so users' information needs to multiply to a much larger level, and it is impossible to fulfill user requirements only through traditional librarianship. Several advanced technologies are being used in the libraries to satisfy users' needs within time efficiently. The application of modern technical tools and complex systems refers to educating clients for practical use. In the international scenario, user education is at a high rate, but in Pakistan based not considered serious regularly. In Pakistan's academic universities, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) is conducting literacy programs for library users, faculty members, and students. The University library, Gad & Birgit Rausing Library, was initiated in an information literacy program to train the LUMS community with the skills and knowledge necessary to identify efficiently, discover, evaluate and ethically use the information to support academic excellence and lifelong learning. The information literacy program's goal is to help students/faculty members master information skills that will improve their academic or personal lives and allow them to become independent lifelong learners. It improved the role of library professionals as the teacher of the teachers. It is the need of the hour to conduct a study about the need and importance of IL in Lahore University of Management Sciences Students. Objectives of the Study are:

- To know the perception of the students about IL skills
- To explore the student's opinion about the need for an IL skills program
- To know the student's opinion about the importance of the IL skills program
- To furnish the suggestion for IL course

Literature Review

Various information literacy meanings, concepts, models, and guidelines were proposed by various scholars, information organizations, and associations Bawden (2001). Bruce (2003) states that the beginning of the 21st century was named the information age because of the increase in information production and information sources. With the emergence of information technology, information literacy has arisen and has grown to become known as the twenty-first century's essential literacy. At present, computer literacy in the information and communication technology environment is inextricably associated with information activities and critical thinking. Since 1974, information literacy has become an area of growing interest for librarians and information professionals, and there is a large amount of literature covering different aspects of the topic (Virkus, 2003).

Kousar and Mahmood (2013) gauged in their study, students are not fully familiar with or can't effectively use information resources due to the lack of information literacy skills (ILS). Information Literacy Programs (ILP) can effectively progress their abilities and indirectly to enhancements in academic activities. Bhatti (2010) conducted a study to assess the user education program, determined her research that in most universities, User Education Programs (UEPs) are establishing informal schedules due to lack of interest from the library or university management, policies, and resources. She also recommended that users can be inspired if UEPs mandatory in

the curriculum. Bhatti (2007) stated that the instructional services program in John Rylands University Library of Manchester (JRULM) consider most important for everyone, administrative staff, teachers, and students (who study course work or research). Kannappanavar and Swamy (2012) concluded a study that for better use of providing library services and resources, user education is a soaring effective role; it is necessary to educate our library users frequently. Results also signify users looking satisfied in the use of library resources after attending education programs. Suleiman (2012) worked on training programs for users; the study concluded that it is useful or helps obtain the necessary information through the library's information sources. The provision of better services and resources is the basic responsibility of a library. Still, effective use of these can be done through user training and is also the function of library management. Mohammadi, Moghaddam, and Yeganeh (2008) recommended, based on the research project, that fully qualified librarians need to train library users and also commented, guides or brochures are convenient than classroom instruction to educate the students. The study suggests that user education should fix in the students' course curriculum, and it is equally necessary for new and former staff members. In Pakistan's medical libraries, information literacy instruction programs are in an early stage and need to incorporate into the core curriculum (Ullah & Ameen, 2014). Useful library sessions, published manuals, lectures, conferences, etc., to train users utilizing different approaches but need a bit more improvement to implement new ones for better efficacy (Agyen-Gyasi, 2008). The study recommended that information literacy assimilates with students' courses because it is a valuable tool for students to recognize the necessary information to solve their problems (Amalahu, Oluwasina, & Laoye, 2009). In the field of education, information literacy skills are not helpful and are also equally applicable in our social relations, with the assistance of information literacy skills an individual can manage more effectively than a regular one (Burkholder, 2010). Singh and Klingenberg (2009) reported as information literacy programs integrated into the course curriculum of graduate and post graduate courses in several universities of India and Germany.

Purpose of the study

This research aims to explore the perspectives of LUMS students to learn how they develop their understanding of information literacy and how they measure the importance of IL. A complete analysis of information literacy also sheds light on instruction and curriculum design for information literacy. It will enable librarians to improve training and introduce information literacy standards through the program by understanding how students think about information literacy and what the term means to them.

Research Methodology

The study aims to evaluate the importance of the students of LUMS, Pakistan, for Information literacy. To gather the data from LUMS students, a semi-structured survey questionnaire was used. A total of 357 LUMS students were selected as a sample for this study 357 questionnaires were circulated among the students of different LUMS schools to gather the results. 306 (82 percent) questionnaires were received out of 357 questionnaires; eight incomplete questionnaires were omitted at the data entry point. A convenient sampling method was used to collect the data.

Data Analysis and Discussion

To obtain the full data, the questionnaire was split into separate sections. The first section of the questionnaire was intended to gather details about gender, age, school, etc. Table 1 shows that 203 (67%) and 103 (33%) were male and female students among the participants, respectively. Whereas 83 (27 percent) of respondents were aged 16-20, 223 (73 percent) were aged 21-25.

Table 1 *Demography of Participants*

Demography of participants	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	203	66
Female	103	34
Age group		
16-20	83	27
21-25	223	73

IL Familiarity Level of Students

Study participants were asked to note their level of IL familiarity. The findings revealed that 16 percent of students were familiar with IL "To a Great Extent," 51 percent were aware of the IL "Somehow" concept, 23 percent had "very little" IL awareness, and 11 percent said they were ignorant of the IL concept.

Table 2 *Familiarity Level of Respondents*

Familiarity Level	Frequency	Percent
To a Great Extent	48	16
Somehow	155	51
Very Little	71	23
Not at All	32	11

Study respondents have been asked to mention the receiving of training. The study results indicate that 86% of the participants have not undergone any IL skills training/workshop/seminar. There were just 14% of respondents who reported that they had attended any IL skills training.

Table 3 *Training on IL skills*

Training	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	14
No	264	86

Respondents' Opinion Regarding Need of IL Program

Participants have been invited to offer their views on the need for an IL curriculum. The findings revealed that 85% of respondents thought they wanted the IL program to better their academic success. There was just 15 percent of students who rejected the need for the curriculum listed above. The findings show that a majority of 208 (68%) agreed that the IL curriculum should be a compulsory part of the program and that 98 (32%) were not in favor of this proposal.

Table 4 *Respondents' Opinion about Need of IL Program*

Need	Frequency	Percent
Yes	259	85
No	47	1
Mandatory		
Yes	208	68
No	98	32

Importance of IL Program

Students were invited to share their opinions on the importance of the IL program. For this purpose, a five-point rating scale was used. The findings showed that 150 (49 percent) of the majority of students found the IL program "very important." "Similarly, 109 (36 percent) agreed that the IL program is "significant," and only one (0.3 percent) student was not in support of the IL program, a handsome number of students.

Table 5 *Respondents' Opinion about Importance Level of IL Program*

Importance	Frequency	Percent
Very Important	150	49
Important	109	36
Moderately Important	40	13
Of Little Importance	6	2
Unimportant	1	.3

Respondents' Opinion Regarding Contents of IL Program

Participants were invited to provide their opinions on the content of the IL program. Participants were given options such as 'Library Related Contents', 'Subject Related Contents' and "Research Related Contents," with the option "check all that apply" were given to the participants. Results in Table 6 showed that the majority of the students, 140 (46%), chose all options i-e, "Library, Subject, and Research Related Contents," only 38 (12%) chose "Subject Related Contents" and 33 (11%) each chose "Library Related Contents" and "Research Related Contents."

Table 6 *Respondents' Opinion about Contents of IL Program*

Contents	Frequency	Percent
Library, Subject, and Research Related Contents	140	46
Subject Related Contents	38	12
Library Related Contents	33	11
Research Related Contents	33	11
Library and Subject Related Contents	25	8
Subject and Research Related Contents	24	8
Library and Research Related Contents	13	4

Discussion and Conclusion

The study findings show that most of the participants were male students between the ages of 21 and 25, indicating that more participants were out of senior students who spent sufficient time at university. The findings also establish that respondents have familiarity with information literacy programs; They mention that information literacy is very relevant and very important for everyone considering the amount of information one has to deal with daily work, which is in line with the findings of Ameen and Ullah (2016) that the 13 research papers from Pakistan have been released on IL. Four of the 12 LIS schools offered a 3-credit hour course at the Masters's level on IL instruction. Furthermore, the results show that students can identify their information requirements, the sources to access their required information, and authenticate the data retrieved, which contradicts with the findings of Jan, Anwar, and Warraich (2016) that the students have a deficiency in information literacy skills. Further study indicates that most students believe that information literacy is important for their academic achievements, reflecting their interest in receiving such training to meet their educational needs. In the library, subject, and research-related content, most students like to be literate so that they can be aware of their specific topics and courses.

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