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Change management in the information age: Approaches of academic library administrators in Pakistani Universities' libraries

Introduction:

Change is critical factor for development in any field of life as it minimizes the risks to diminish and optimizes the opportunities to survive. Change management is an approach to get into desired state from existing situation. As libraries have been facing the internal and external change pressure from many years and now it has become vital to adopt changes for the survival of its identity. Academic excellence cannot be achieved by ignoring the libraries and educational institutions. For this purpose strategic vision and strong leadership is required to bring change. This is why we have selected top management as a sample of the study. A strong and positive leadership is also essential to influence and motivate people to achieve organizational objectives as well as to create, admit and carry out the shared vision. The objective of this research is to identify the response of library leaders towards understanding of change management, the resistance factors, kinds of change (planned or unplanned) they managed and approaches used to deal with change.

Change in Islamabad and Rawalpindi academic libraries is accruing more quickly because the acclimatization of new information technologies is much higher compare to any other type of libraries. In these libraries change not only include the information technology, resources and services, culture and values but also strategic planning, decision making, translating vision into achievable targets and operations and evaluation. In theses academic libraries, heads are working in bureaucratic structural organizations where's centralized decision making and strict hierarchy encourages standards and dogmatic rules while discourage creativity and innovation as well. Nevertheless Public sector library heads emphasize on continuing education and on training & development of their staff that can produce a positive impact on operations and overall performance of libraries. In literature mostly studies on change management process in libraries include the areas of information communication technology, virtual reference & research services, performance management, digital libraries, organizational culture and structure, career orientation and human resource management. However in this study our focus is to briefly investigate the understanding of senior/head librarians towards change management, what areas they consider most important for change, how they are managing the change in work place in context of information technology, acquisition of new resources, negotiating change among top and bottom level management and skill development, The study involves the supervisor librarians of fifteen public sector university libraries of Islamabad (capital of Pakistan) and Rawalpindi region as a sample and data were gathered by questionnaire, based on quantitative research method. It is pertinent to mention that in the context of our selected sample, there is no particular research has already been conducted on change management in academic libraries of Pakistan; this is why the study will seek the broad-spectrum of situation of change management and will provide the new direction to researchers and academician.

Literature Review:

Managing change is vital for the survival and development of any organization. Change is a transition of current state to desire state and management of that transition stage is called management of change.

Van da Ven and Poole (1995) described change as “an empirical observation of difference in quality of state over time”. The term change in business literature is used as upheaval and chaos (Pritchett, 1996) that compelled organizations to learn the process of managing and coping with change. Literature has proved the positive relation of change and organization development. In the researches of organizational development, Porras and Robertson (1987) and Woodman (1989) talked about two theories namely implementation theory and change process theory that lead to organizational development. Implementation theory deals with coping planned change activities while process change theory involved the activities needed to handle change after its implementation. Both theories are important to consider while planning bringing change in organization.

Change has to be dealt on both levels, individual and organizational. There are number of variables related to external environment (political, policy, economic conditions etc.) and internal environment (structure, employees, culture etc.) that impact on change. Managing the change includes the detection of change, planning towards change, communication of change through defining new values, behavior skills required to bring change, agreement of all stake holders to avoid resistance to change, implementation and controlling of process.

Swift pace of internal and external environmental change pressure not only impacts the individuals, governments, economies, education, businesses but also libraries to redesign and redefine their activities while forecasting the future trends. Libraries adaptation towards change is also required for the existence of library. Ameen (2011) states that libraries may further lose their already neglected status unless they devise better offerings for their communities than mere collectors and organizers of information resources.”

Siddiqui (2003) expressed his views that the amount, diversity and speed of information available through state-of –the-art technological developments have forced academic libraries to change the mode of library services and operations for the benefit of library users. Appleton, Stevenson and Boden (2011) also highlighted the need of change in learning spaces development to become academic libraries more responsiveness to changing demands of students and faculty members, marking trends and benchmarking against comparative institution

Among many forces of change, advancement in information technology (IT) has greatly impacted academic libraries of Pakistan. Now academic libraries are reframing their organizational structure, roles and responsibilities, competencies required for staff, services and collections. Change in information seeking behavior also force libraries to reorganize their units like reference, cataloging, acquisition and circulation comprising the activities of automation, digitization, RDA, content management system (CMS), online purchasing, and virtual reference & research services to satisfy their students’ and faculty members’ informational needs.

Besides using advanced information tools, and software, academic libraries also needed the skilled human resource to provide satisfactory services. Research has revealed that “librarians who feel more involved, consulted, informed and more in control are more satisfied” (Horenstein, 1993). Farley, Broady-Preston and Hayward (1998) considered organizational structure and human capital as main concerns for devising organizational change strategy. Further they also explained that involvement of employees in decision making, effective training and development and providing knowledge essential for change environment can streamline the process of change management. Leong (2008) also discussed important factors to face change such as creating awareness of change, formulating goals and training needs for operational plan, alignment between organizational and personal goals, targeted skill developing and participative management style.

Malhan (2006) said that “because of globalization, growing competition in the higher education sector and external pressure of market forces, the universities are undergoing change to stay current and competitive in their areas of operation.” Further he explains that skilled library personnel are equally important in current information environment and increasingly changing work requirement. Honea (1997) also expresses the importance of specialized knowledge increasing responsiveness to the environment and effectiveness in coping with change.

Academic libraries leadership and change management goes side by side to create balance between coping with change and achieving organization goals. Strong and visionary leadership translate the vision, mission and objective of organization into planned activities that caused improved organizational performance. “Positive leadership focuses on social influence— influencing others to attain group, organizational, and societal goals. The purpose is to motivate people to develop, accept, and carry out a shared vision”. Hernon and Schwartz (2008) “Institutions of higher education are characterized by one quite distinctive trait, they place a much higher emphasis on the correlation of power with expertise (education) than with hierarchical position”(Honea, 1997).

Feldmann, V. Level and Liu (2013) showed great concern in the case of Colorado State University Libraries towards leadership training and development opportunities for library administrators in the changing environment. They also quoted the theorizing of Gilstrap in academic libraries. Gilstrap (2009) described the linkage of theory X, theory Y, theory Z, contingency and systems theory of leadership and organizational change in context of academic libraries.

Gill (2003, p. 307) describes the relationship between change and leadership: “While change must be well managed—it must be planned, organized, directed and controlled—it also requires effective leadership to introduce change successfully. It is leadership that makes the difference”. Islamabad and Rawalpindi public sector university library heads have great opportunities to negotiate pursue and get approval of implementing new ideas and new technologies. Conversely they are facing problems from universities authorities and subordinates in process of implementing new ideas and technology. What they need is consensus and cooperation from all stakeholders considering the factors of resistance and fear towards change.

As Stephens and Russell (2006) discussed that perception, fear, trust (or lack thereof), and other internal human factors may multiply in the organizational setting to create generalized reactions to the unfamiliar or to change that is inconsistent with the prevailing culture, personal influence and autonomy.

Harding (2001) also focuses his research on the successful development and implementation of a change management program and strategic planning initiatives in an organization, sufficient support from all areas of the organization, Public Services, Human Resources, Marketing, Development and Communications, Systems, and of course Finance.

Apart from organizational support library administrators' skills and abilities also play key role in managing change at workplace. For inquiring their understanding and practices to cope with change, we have conducted a survey to gather data.

Methodology:

In our study library "Heads" are Librarians appointed on top rank at academic libraries and responsible for managing the whole operations of library. Yi (2010) partially questionnaire was used to know about Islamabad and Rawalpindi public sector universities library heads understanding towards change management, their approaches to cope with change and factors affecting their efforts to manage change. Approaches used to cope with change are categorized as dependent variable. Approaches can be changing job descriptions, focusing on human relations, use of power and authority and use of examples/case studies to manage change. Library heads education and their respective professional experience including the experience of being head librarians have been taken as independent variable in this study.

The questionnaire comprises 19 questions that cover the areas of organizational information, library heads perception about change management, how change is administered and adoption of different approaches to manage different types of change.

The web based questionnaire using online survey management service "Datagle" (<http://www.datagle.com>) was sent to fifteen libraries of twin cities. Ten library heads completed the questionnaire successfully, four didn't respond while one library head refuse to provide feedback due to sensitivity of organizational information. The questionnaire was useful to get information, however the validation has not been checked due to small size of population.

Significance of the study:

The result of this study reveals the understanding, behavior and response of library leaders towards change management. It is useful to see their preferred approaches to manage different type of changes (planned, unplanned etc). This study also gives insight to the time and efforts library leaders put into change management and how they are accepting new strategies in the field of information technology. Lastly the result of this study consent to library heads to review their different options, analyze the credence of these options and better understanding of factors impacting on their approaches to manage change.

Sample size:

Population of our study was fifteen public sector universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. However we have selected top library director or administrator of each library as our sample of study. All selected university libraries were sent questionnaire. The data about universities were taken from higher education commission Pakistan website and particulars of library heads were collected from each university website.

Data Analysis and Discussion:

All the 10 respondents were male. The results show gender imbalance at top positions in the academic libraries of Islamabad/Rawalpindi.

As depicted in Figure.1, Majority of the respondents (60%) were of age 50 to 59. Only one respondent was above 60 year old. The results reveal that majority of respondents are near their retirement in the library science profession.

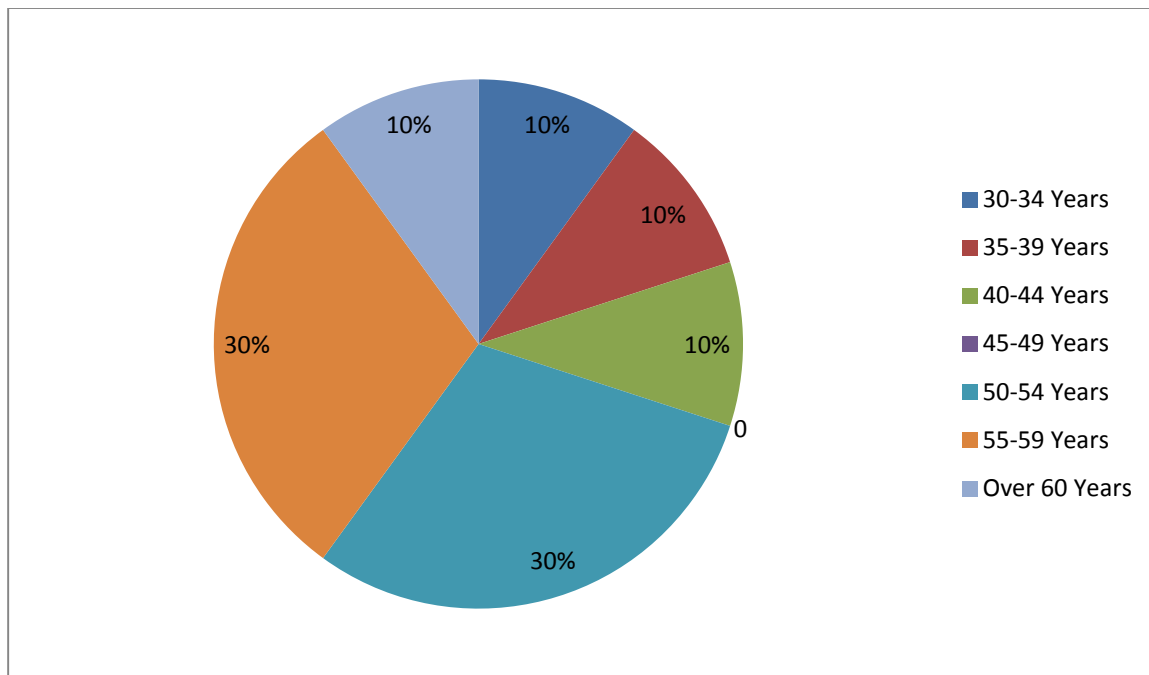


Figure 1: Age of respondents

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondent had dual degree other than library Science, while 25% of the respondent have only MLIS degree (mean no other subject degree). 25% have other degrees like diplomas in computer science and certificate course in information technology. No respondent had advanced degree in library and information science, e.g. Mphil or Ph.D degree. The results reveal that no respondent had qualification in management sciences, e.g. MBA.

Table 1: Qualification of respondents

Qualification	%	Count
Master degree other than library science	50	5
MLIS	50	5
Other (Please specify)	0	0
Mphil/MS	0	0
PhD	0	0

Respondent position titles were recorded as 60% of the respondents were chief/head/senior librarian while 30% were librarian/documentation officer and one was In-charge Librarian.

Table 2: Respondents' position in administrative hierarchy

Variable	%	Count
Chief/Head/Senior Librarian	60	6
Librarian/Documentation officer	30	3
Dean/Director	0	0
Deputy Director	0	0
Other (Please specify)	10	1

Majority (50%) of the respondents had 1-3 years experience in current position while 20% had 4-6 six year experience in current position. Response to question for years of all directorship/headship experience varied as 30% of respondent said they had total 1-3 year directorship experience. Twenty percent said 4-6 and 7-9 years respectively. Significantly twenty percent said they had over 22 years experience in respective role. 30% of respondent said that they were involved in librarianship profession between 13-18 years while 20% percent responded that they were in profession between 1-6 and 19-24 years. The results revealed that majority of the respondents were new at top management position of their library and are still early learners of management skills.

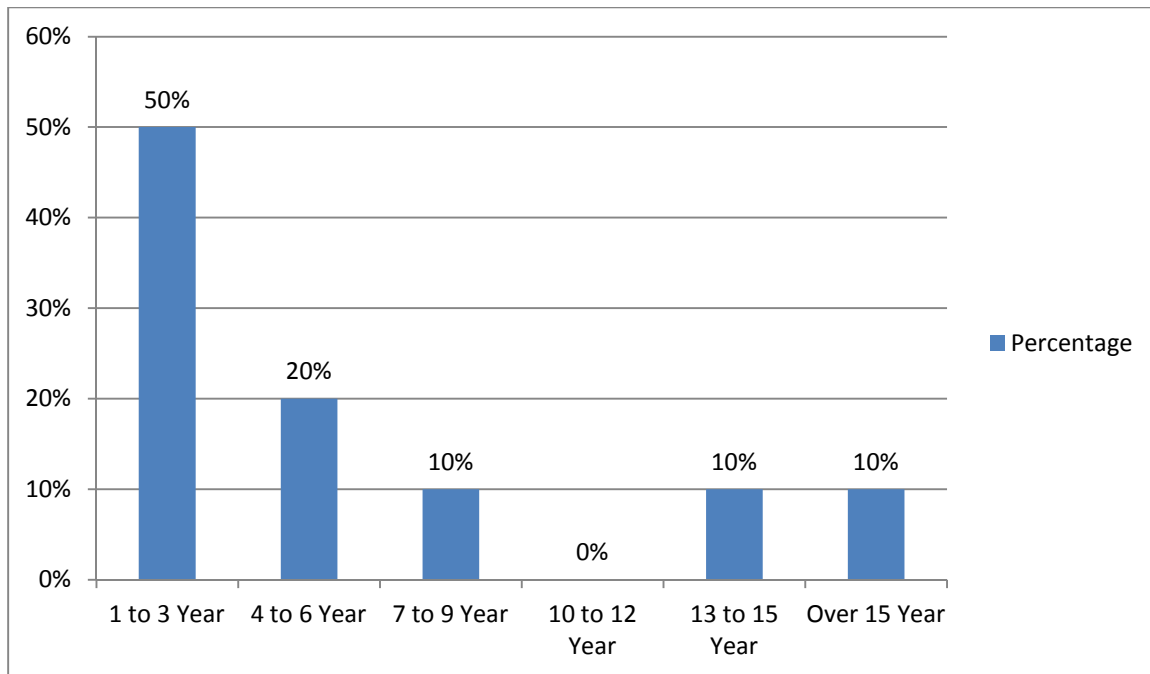


Figure 2: Number of years at present position

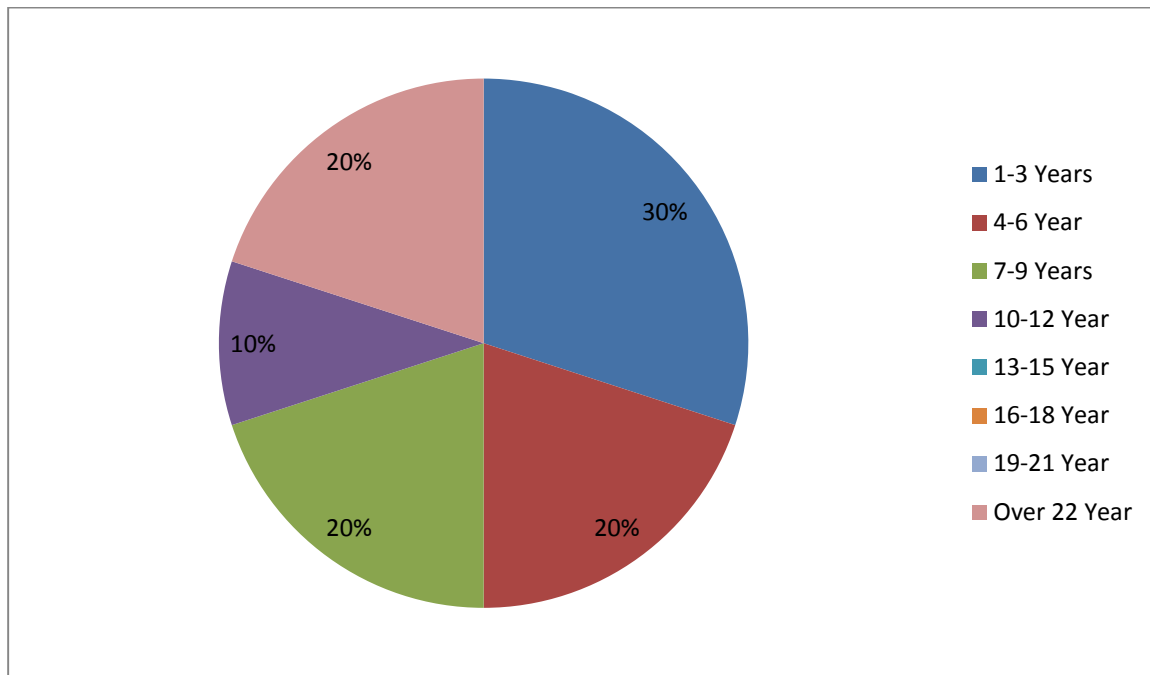


Figure 3: Number of years as library administrator

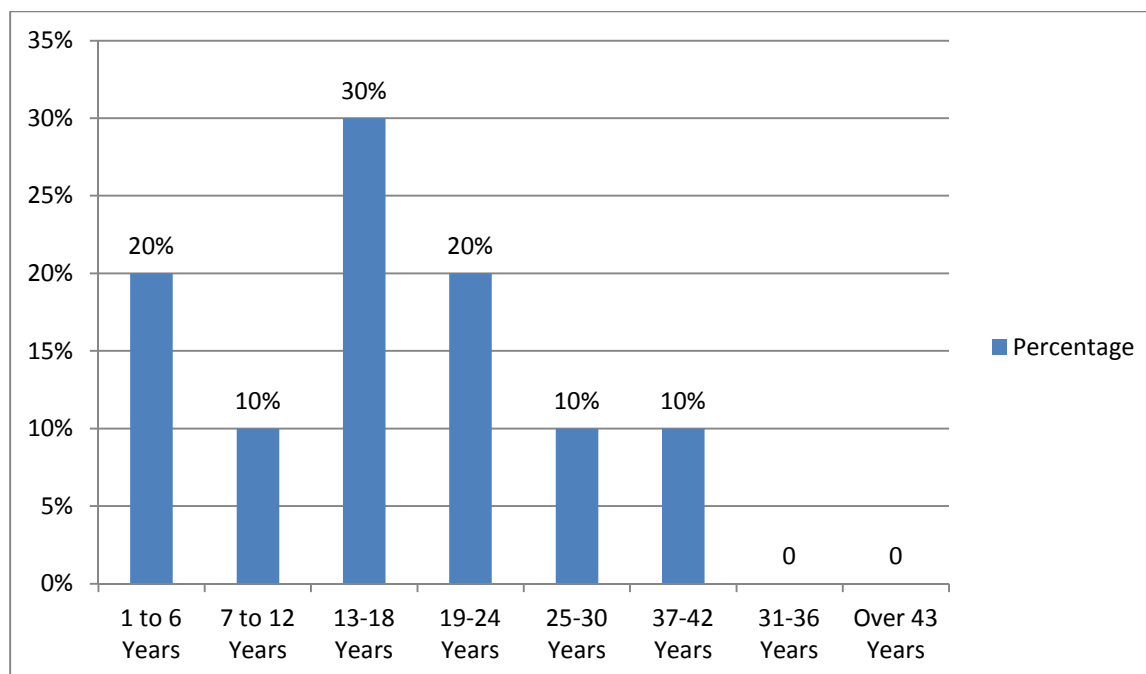


Figure 4: Number of years involved in all library services

Respondent were asked to select multiple activities that they adopted to cope with change. This question was designed to know about library heads' perception and understanding towards change management. Majority (25%) of respondent considered redesigning process, system, tools and job responsibilities are core element of change management process while 21% thought that awareness of need analysis is important activity. 17% also selected the need of starting new projects and importance of human relations. Only 4% respondents consider personal development in change management process.

Table 9: Activities related to change management process

Statement	%	Count
Redesigning processes, systems, tools, job roles, organization structures	25	6
Awareness of the need for change	21	5
Starting new projects and initiatives	17	4
Building consensus among users, staff and authorities on specific change	17	4
Minimizing resistance to organizational change through involvement of all stakeholders	13	3
Change in Individuals	4.2	1
Reinforcement to sustain the change	4.2	1

Seventy percent respondent said that they manage planned change in which they gradually put efforts to make change in system and work while 30% respondent said that they also have to face unplanned change as well.

Respondents were asked to choose the approaches they most often used in dealing with change. Majority (44%) said that they always realigned the job description and responsibilities, 40% said that they often trained their staff to meet the change requirements, 50% often used authority to control the situation, 55% always encouraged staff participation and 60% respondent communicated with upper management to meet the challenges of change forces.

Table 10: Change management approaches library heads adopt

Statement	Never	Occasionally	Sometimes	Often	Always
I realigned the roles, duties and/or relationships of staff.	0.0% (0)	33.3% (3)	0.0% (0)	22.2% (2)	44.4% (4)
I provide training and support for people	0.0% (0)	10.0% (1)	20.0% (2)	40.0% (4)	30.0% (3)
I helped resolve conflicts, negotiated compromises and /or helped from coalitions	0.0% (0)	10.0% (1)	10.0% (1)	50.0% (5)	30.0% (3)
I told many stories, shared many social events, and /or used a variety of rituals with staff	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)	44.4% (4)	44.4% (4)	0.0% (0)
I used many task forces or project teams	0.0% (0)	10.0% (1)	20.0% (2)	70.0% (7)	0.0% (0)
I promoted staff participation and involvement.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	11.1% (1)	33.3% (3)	55.6% (5)
I communicated with top level management concerning change initiative or projects.	0.0% (0)	10.0% (1)	10.0% (1)	20.0% (2)	60.0% (6)

Library heads were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of change management. In response 37.50% said that they visited library section to see the improvement while the same percentage of respondent said that they asked for user feedback. Only six percent have formulated any committee to check the change management process.

Table 11: Procedure the respondents' adopt to assess effectiveness of change management

Statement	%	Count
I visit all departments related to the implementation of large-scale change to observe whether anticipated improvements have been made.	37.5	6

I assess the effectiveness of change projects or programs to interviewing library users.	37.5	6
I conduct an assessment survey to examine if the implementation of change has attained specific goals and objectives.	18.8	3
I establish an evaluation committee to assess implementation of change.	6.2	1

Library heads were asked to give their view on authorities' support in change management process. Among all only 33% strongly agreed that their authorities support change initiatives while 22% were strongly disagreed with this statement, while 44% respondent said that there are sufficient funds to run activities and programs while 11% respondents were strongly disagreed with this statement.

Table 12: University support and availability of funds

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
University presidents, rector or vice-chancellors like and support library change initiatives or programs.	22.2% (2)	11.1% (1)	0.0% (0)	33.3% (3)	33.3% (3)
There are adequate university support funds for library change initiatives or programs in resources and services.	11.1% (1)	22.2% (2)	22.2% (2)	44.4% (4)	0.0% (0)

Academic library heads spent most of their time in managing resources and services. This is true in academic libraries as they have to change their collections and mode of services according to need of students. 50% percent of respondents spent their time in supervising the activities of their subordinates and assigning and synchronizing the resources for explicit projects.

Table 13: Time and effort on different tasks to support effective implementation of change management on a likert scale

Statement	Least	Little	Moderate	Much	Most
Managing changes in resources, services and administration.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	20.0% (2)	60.0% (6)	20.0% (2)

Creating a clear long-range vision and direction for change project.	0.0% (0)	10.0% (1)	20.0% (2)	50.0% (5)	20.0% (2)
Presenting and explaining the needs of library changes to university administrators.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	40.0% (4)	30.0% (3)	30.0% (3)
Maintaining contacts with university administrations.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	30.0% (3)	30.0% (3)	40.0% (4)
Supervising subordinates work during the change process.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	20.0% (2)	30.0% (3)	50.0% (5)
Allocating and coordinating resources for specific change tasks.	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	50.0% (5)	40.0% (4)	10.0% (1)

All academic libraries head paid attention to development of their human resource while 50% of respondents opt for decentralization of power where they distributed decision making power to their subordinates for the completion of tasks. 100% responses have been received in regard of upgrading technologies and facilities. It is not strange because academic environment is very diverse and evolving, demand for quicker adoptability is much high compared to other libraries. In Pakistan mostly university libraries are in transition stage, they are in process of fully or partially automation. Surveyed libraries are developing modern resources, upgrading their computer labs and using different software's to digitized there collection.

Library departmentalization is also reframed, reference services are not limited to physical users, virtual reference and research services, shared cataloging, online acquisition of material, audio video material, digitization and use of online databases played a great role in changing framework of library core sections.

Information technology revolution also demands change in budget and policies to formulate adequate up-to-date collection, services and skills needed to provide services, local and international cooperation to attract more users and meet ever-changing requirements of them.

Table 14: The changes respondents brought to their respective libraries regarding change management

Statement	Yes	No
Development of staff's new skills.	100% (10)	0% (0)
Decentralization of power in library administration.	50% (5)	50% (5)
Reorganization of specific units such as reference cataloging, and acquisition.	88.9% (8)	11% (1)

Upgrading technologies and facilities.	100% (10)	0% (0)
Budget adjustments.	70% (7)	30% (3)
Policies	60% (6)	40% (4)

Increasingly transforming, demanding and dynamic environment forced librarians to develop their technical, human and conceptual skills to better perform at workplace and satisfy their library users. All Respondent showed great interest in devolving human resource to deal with change.

It is pertinent to mention that in this study we surveyed public sector universities where the administration follows strict hierarchy, centralization of power, clear chain of command, so it is an encouraging aspect that library heads are taking feedback from their subordinates and involving them in decision making process. Among all, 80% of respondents used decentralization to manage the change. By commencing this activity heads became more flexible and responsive towards changes accruing in internal external environment and moreover they could seek better understanding, cooperation and motivation towards solving problems.

Table 15: Respondent's approaches to manage the change in their respective libraries

Statement	Yes	No	N/A
I manage change by developing employees' new skills.	100% (10)	0% (0)	0% (0)
I manage change through the decentralization of power	80% (8)	20% (2)	0% (0)
I manage change by redefining the meaning of work in high-technology environments.	80% (8)	0% (0)	20% (2)

Respondents of survey categorized information technology, library resources, policies and human resource development equally important for potential change while library facilities remained on top priority. Meanwhile budgeting and library collection is unattractive for change according to 20% of respondent.

Table 16: Library sections where the respondents' most likely implemented the change

Statement	Yes	No
Information technology	90% (9)	10% (1)
Technical services	90% (9)	10% (1)

Library resources	90% (9)	10% (1)
Public services	66.7% (6)	33.3% (3)
Library collections	80% (8)	20% (2)
Library personnel	90% (9)	10% (1)
Library facilities	100% (10)	0% (0)
Budgeting	80% (8)	20% (2)
Policies	90% (9)	10% (1)

Findings:

1. Mostly library head positions are occupied by males as in our sample size all of the respondents were found to be male leadership.
2. Mostly library heads have dual degrees other than library science and they have sufficient experience of directorship/headship in their respective field.
3. Understanding towards change management is very low among library leaders as most of them didn't give importance to factors like personal development, starting new projects, creating consensus among all stakeholders, minimizing resistance towards change and reinforcement of sustainable change.
4. Mostly respondents said that they managed planned change but results also found that they didn't formulate any committee to manage change.
5. Library heads most of the times adopt the approach of resolving conflicts and negotiation of compromises using autocracy to manage change whereas realignment of roles and responsibilities is also a famous approach to manage change. Results also showed that Library leadership also encouraged staff participation and involved in motivating their subordinates by telling stories, quoting examples and sharing social events.
6. Mostly library heads have support from university authorities to initiate programs to cope with change. These libraries can be more open toward assessing new trends, seeking partnership opportunities for meeting the ever changing needs of its clients. As Rogers (2007) discussed that libraries need to set trends rather than only reacting. Result also depicted that some academic libraries are facing financial crises to initiate programs, upgrade resources or services to meet change requirements.
7. Library heads spent most of their time on supervising subordinates, creating vision for change project, managing change in resources, services and administration while less time on allocating and coordinating resources for specific change tasks. Library heads needed to adopt focused and task based strategies to cope with technological change. As Chang and Chen (2011) also highlighted the changing role of academic libraries and librarians in terms of two specific intersection-information literacy and problem-based learning in the academia as a response of technological revolution.

8. Mostly library heads witnessed changes in development of staff's new skills, upgrading technologies and facilities. Leong (2008) also discussed the regular and targeted staff development as an essential factor to face change.
9. Mostly library heads gave importance to development of human resource and decentralization of power to manage change in Information technology.

Limitations of study:

1. In this study data were collected from public sector universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi region. Accordingly result of this study can't be generalized to private sector universities and other institutional and college libraries.
2. The study was entirely dependent on the response of academic libraries' heads. Their willingness to respond accurately was not in control.
3. Response or views of library heads may be differ from other librarians (not on top managerial position) in terms of managing change.
4. Lack of understanding or misconception and personal bias might influence results as the data has been collected from senior level management so it is quite possible they wanted to give good impression about their leadership and their assumed approaches towards change management.

Future Research:

Research can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of change management process. Other library staff apart from library heads should be analyzed to know their perception about change management. Private sector libraries trends towards change management is also potential research area or the research can be done on the comparison of both sectors.

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