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### Role of departmental library in satisfying the information needs of students: A survey of two departments of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur

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#### Abstract

The study aims to investigate the role and importance of departmental library in satisfying information needs of students. Perceptions of the students of the Department of Management & Business Administration (MBA) (having departmental library) and the students of the Department of Library & Information Science (LIS) (who did not have a departmental library) were comparatively analyzed. The study assesses the satisfaction level of the respondents from the MBA department with services of their departmental library. It also explores the LIS students' opinion about the need of departmental library. A questionnaire was distributed among 150 students of both the departments. The results show that most of the respondents from MBA department were satisfied with nearly all of the departmental library services. It was also found that most of the respondents from both the departments recommended the provision of online databases and Internet service for their departmental library. They also demanded more computers, digital collection and magazines/newspapers. The respondents from MBA department were found more interested in scholarly journals, multimedia services and audiovisual material than the respondents from LIS department. All of the respondents agreed that departmental library should be provided in all academic departments of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

**Keywords:** Departmental library; University libraries; Library services; User satisfaction; Islamia University of Bahawalpur

#### Introduction

The library enables an individual to obtain spiritual, inspirational, and recreational activity through reading, and therefore, the opportunity of interacting with the society's wealth and accumulated knowledge (Omojuwa, 1993). Libraries are essential to the educational process because they support curricula, teach information literacy, and foster critical thinking skills and provide opportunities for self-education, life-long learning and self-improvement (Wisconsin Library Association, 2006). The role of a library in disseminating information is supreme one (Saddique, 2005). It is a living force of people's education. Knowledge is power and the library is a powerhouse of knowledge. All types of libraries have important role in education in their own way. Education process is incomplete without library (Ahmad & Jawwad, 2008). Libraries play a very important role in helping the institution in achieving their mission (Kuh & Gonyea, 2003).

Jamil (1983) stated that universities, colleges and their libraries today have a major role in producing useful citizens, scholars, educationists, future leaders, intellectuals, scientists, doctors, engineers, economists and to help the nation in improving educational, economical, social and cultural conditions of the country. Similarly Bargellini and Bordoni (2001) concluded that libraries greatly contribute to the transition from information to a knowledge society. A departmental library is defined as a

library service unit, with collections, which is organized primarily to serve the needs of one or more academic areas and is physically detached from the main library (Lee, 2003). According to Swan (2002), departmental library mirrors the curriculum of the department and anticipates changes in the field of study. Lee (2005) emphasized on the need of departmental library and stated that universities should empower their libraries to develop campus-wide knowledge management systems.

A review of related studies, either in local or international context, reveals the important role of library services, particularly department library services in the academic growth of the students. For example, Majid, Anwar and Eisenschitz (2001) studied users' perceptions of library effectiveness in Malaysian agricultural libraries. It was found that libraries involving respondents in the selection of library materials received a better assessment for effectively meeting the information needs of their users. Respondents receiving notification of new library materials considered their library as effective. Lee (2005) did his research on academic departmental library collections as curriculum trend indicators. He concluded that an academic departmental library provides unique collection due to the collaboration of librarians and experts who are teaching in the field. It reflects changes in the profession and mirrors the curriculum. Moran (1996) conducted his research on the role of medical departmental libraries. He stressed that departmental libraries play a key role in meeting the information needs of many academic institutions. Adikata and Anwar (2006) probed the librarian's perception about the use of library by students. Data showed that librarians were not satisfied with the students' library use skills, availability of information resources, and the value given to the library by university management. Fatima and Ahmad (2008) investigated the information needs and seeking behavior of students at Ajmal Khan Tibbiya College, Aligarh University. The study showed that use of library resources needs to be increased. It was concluded that students oriented information resources needed to be facilitated so that the utilization of library resources and services may be maximized. Bhatti (2008) investigated the information needs of students of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. It was concluded that current provisions of various kinds of library services did not show the positive picture. Most of the students and researchers complained about the lack of indexing and abstracting services in the library. The reference service was not found to be useful by users to some extent. However, research students expressed that the material their library was providing was valid and accurate in terms of their information contents.

Akhtar (2008) studied the library services and user satisfaction from the departmental library of LIS department, Punjab University, Lahore. He concluded that most of the users were not satisfied with the overall quality of library services. Most of the respondents said that there was a lack of professional journals in the library. They demanded for Web OPAC, TOC, CAS and suggested that e-mail of relevant information services should be arranged in the library. Similarly, Shafique (2009) also explored the research students' satisfaction with the library services of the same department and found that most of the research students did not find their departmental library services very satisfactory. She also recommended many library services to fulfill research students' information needs.

#### Statement of the problem and objectives of the study

Review of the above literature reveals the important role of departmental library and its services in the academic life of students and faculty as well. Unfortunately, very few academic departments (5% only) at the IUB have their departmental libraries. Keeping the important role of departmental library in view, it is needed to explore the students' perceptions about the need and importance of departmental libraries. Following are the objectives of this study:

1. To investigate the role of departmental library in satisfying the information needs of the students at IUB.
2. To assess the level of satisfaction of MBA students with their departmental library services.
3. To determine the most needed information sources and services, which should be provided by the departmental library?

#### Research methodology

To achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire survey was conducted. The sample of the study was graduates from two academic departments of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur, one with departmental library (Management and Business Administration-MBA) and the other without departmental library (Library & Information Science-LIS). In total 150 questionnaires were distributed among the students from both the departments, out of which 121 were received back. Thus the response rate was 80%. The collected data were analyzed with the help of SPSS software version 14.

### Analysis of data and related discussion

Data were collected through the distribution of questionnaires among students. One hundred and twenty one questionnaires have been analyzed below.

#### Gender of the respondents

Out of 121 respondents 56 (46%) were male and 65 (53%) were female (Table 1).

Table1. Frequency distribution of respondents' gender

Gender	Frequency (LIS Deptt.)	Frequency (MBA Deptt.)
Male	19	37
Female	38	27
Total	57	64

#### Time spent per-week in utilizing departmental library services

The respondent from MBA department were inquired that how much time do they spend in utilizing their departmental library resources. Frequency showed that majority (51, 78.5%) of the respondents spent 1-3 hours, eight (12.3%) spent 4-6 hours in utilizing their departmental library resources, while the frequency of those respondents who spent 7-9 hours and 10-12 hours were one (1.5%) each (Table 2).

Table 2: Frequency distribution of time spent in utilizing departmental library

Time	Frequency	Percent
1-3 hrs	51	1.5
4-6 hrs	8	1.5
7-9 hrs	1	12.3
10-12 hrs	1	78.5
Missing	4	6.2
Total	65	100.0

#### Respondents' satisfaction with departmental library services

The respondents from MBA department were asked to mention the degree of their satisfaction with their departmental library services. Response showed that majority was satisfied with reference service (Mean=2.68) and circulation service (Mean=2.54). However the respondents were found satisfied to some extent with SDI and CAS services (Mean=2.19), interlibrary loan (Mean=1.80), reservation of books (Mean=2.19), internet service (Mean=1.98), research journals (Mean=2.05), indexing services (Mean=2.06), periodical service (Mean=2.37), catalogue service (Mean=2.42), newspaper service (Mean=2.16), photocopying service (Mean=1.76). It is notable that none of the respondents was highly satisfied with any service of their departmental library (Table 3).

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of respondents' satisfaction with departmental library services

Services	Mean	SD
Reference service	2.68	.714
Circulation service	2.54	.930
Information for your specific needs	2.19	.753
Interlibrary loan service	1.80	.876
Reservation of books	2.19	.820
Internet service	1.98	.1031
Research Journals	2.05	.750
Indexing services	2.06	.827
Periodicals service	2.37	.829
Catalogue service	2.42	.915
Newspaper service	2.16	.840
Photocopying service	1.76	.979

Note. 4= Highly satisfied, 3= Satisfied, 2= To some extent satisfied, 1= Not satisfied

Services of departmental library recommended by the students from both the departments

The respondents from both departments were given a list of different services and asked to recommend the services which should be provided by the departmental library. Online database service was recommended by most of the respondents (n=36 LIS deptt., 36 MBA deptt.). Frequencies of the respondents who recommended various services are provided in table 4.

Table 4. Frequency distribution of respondents' recommended services for departmental library

Services	Frequency (LIS Deptt.)	Percent	Frequency (MBA Deptt.)	Percent
Online databases	36	63.2	36	55.4
Electronic books	10	17.5	21	32.3
Internet service	34	59.6	42	64.6
Digital collection	22	38.6	21	32.3
More computers	30	52.6	41	63.1
Magazines/newspapers	20	35.1	35	53.8
Scholarly journals	16	28.1	31	32.3
Microform material	7	12.3	13	20.0
Multimedia services	19	33.3	27	41.5
Audio visual material	13	22.8	32	59.2

Respondents' opinion from both the departments about need & importance of department library

A list of different statements was given to the respondents from both departments in order to inquire their perceptions regarding departmental library. It was found that majority of the respondents (Mean=4.67 LIS deptt., 4.75 MBA deptt.) strongly agreed that departmental library should be provided in each department. The respondents from LIS deptt. strongly agreed that departmental library was more helpful in satisfying information needs (Mean= 4.63) while students from MBA deptt. were found agreed (Mean=4.38). Students' level of agreement about various statements is given in table 5.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of respondents' opinion about departmental library

Statement	Mean (LIS)	Mean (MBA)
Departmental library should be provided in each department	4.67	4.75
Deptt. Library is more helpful in satisfying information needs	4.63	4.38
Deptt. Library supports the academic programs	4.19	4.22
Deptt. Library provides relevant material	4.48	4.00
Deptt. Library saves the time of user	4.53	3.82
Deptt. Library offers effective collection	3.89	3.65
Deptt. Library supports the academic curricula	3.78	3.55
Deptt. Library provides peaceful environment for study	4.02	3.59
It is easy to utilize departmental library	4.06	3.89
Deptt. library opening hours meet students' needs	3.89	3.65
Deptt. library membership process is convenient	3.76	3.61
Departmental library provides adequate collection for study	3.73	3.24
Borrowing books from departmental library is easy	3.84	3.24
Deptt. library staff can better understand individual users' information needs	4.30	3.49
Deptt. library fulfills information needs of students in a better way	4.45	3.13
Deptt. Library should be the mandatory part of all academic departments	4.16	3.79

Note. 5= Strongly agree, 4= Agree, 3= Neutral, 2= Disagree, 1= Strongly disagree

Suggestions provided by the respondents

Majority of the respondents from LIS department suggested that departmental library was necessary for each department (n=32). One of the respondents stated that departmental library was useful for academic programs (n=1) and one respondent demanded digital library in each department (n=1).

The respondents from MBA department demanded more books, computers (n=3), and photocopying service (n=3). They suggested that library staff should be more co-operative and staff behavior should be improved (n=3). Two of the respondents demanded that issuance period of the books should be extended. They demanded Internet service (n=1), expansion in library building (n=1) and peaceful environment in the library (n=1).

#### Major findings

1. The study found that majority of the respondents from MBA department and LIS department were agreed that departmental library should be provided in each academic department of IUB. According to them, it satisfies information needs in a better way, provides relevant material, supports the academic program and is easy to use.
2. Majority of the respondents from both the departments recommended online databases, internet services, digital collection and more computers.
3. The respondents from MBA department were more interested in reading scholarly journals, multimedia and audio visual material as compared to respondents from LIS department.

#### Conclusion and recommendations

Libraries play a key role in fulfilling the educational needs of students. Without library, educational process is incomplete. Libraries help the institutions in achieving their mission. The study highlights the importance and need of departmental library in satisfying information needs of students. Students feel comfort in utilizing a departmental library due to its various beneficial aspects. A departmental library offers relevant and effective collection. Students feel ease in utilizing departmental library as compared to the central library. On the basis of respondent's opinions and suggestions, the study concludes that departmental library must be provided for students in their respective departments at IUB, as Lee (2005) emphasized on the need of departmental library and stated that universities should empower their libraries to develop campus-wide knowledge management systems. Following recommendations are made on the basis of findings of the study:

1. Departmental libraries should be established at each academic department of IUB.
2. Departmental libraries should be equipped with online databases, better internet access, updated collection (both print and electronic), more computers, multimedia resources, scholarly journals and magazines/newspapers etc.
3. The quality of departmental library services should be enhanced and well qualified staff should be appointed in the library.

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