

Use of Library by the Students of Foundation University College of
Liberal Arts and Sciences, Rawalpindi

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of library by the students of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Rawalpindi. The importance of library as an institution has been realized. The Objectives of this study were (a) to investigate the present use of library by the students of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (b) to analyze the organizational set up of library for the purpose of effective learning (c) to identify the problems faced by the students in the use of library and (d) to give recommendations for effective use of library. The nature of this study was descriptive. The population of this study consisted of all the MA /M.Sc. level students. One hundred and eighty students of various programs were selected randomly as sample. A self developed questionnaire consisting of 10 items was used as instrument for data collection. It was concluded that the majority of the students hesitated to use the library because of the problems they faced during its use. Lack of books, lack of organizational set up and lack of space and other physical facilities were the major factors associated with the less use of library.

Keywords: Library use; Students; Academic libraries; Pakistan

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Introduction

Education plays a vital role in the development of a country. It is one of the fundamental rights of every individual. It not only enhances knowledge but also develops overall personality of a person where library has become “a place entrusted with the acquisition, organization, preservation, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in whatever format it might appear” (Olanlokun & Salisu, 1993). The traditional library practices and modern technological advances must be developed and embraced if it is to be relevant in this information age. It is a very high price which must be paid otherwise the library will eventually become like the legendary character who slept for twenty years at Gargill Mountain in Gulliver's Travels and eventually woke up to find the world completely changed. “All good methods of education postulate the existence of a well-stocked efficiently organized library” (Alie, 1989).

Students cannot acquire knowledge only through textbooks or classroom lectures. They are referred to other books also. The library is of great help in the fulfillment of their wishes, ambitions and inclinations, as it provides ample opportunities for acquiring knowledge. On the other hand, it is much more convenient for the students to collect required material from the library. It not only saves their time but also cost of books and their energy.

The basic purpose of this study was to investigate the level of the use of library by the students of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Review of the Related Literature

University libraries derive their mission from that of the parent organization, the university. Thus historical development of the university libraries has been influenced by the contexts in which the parent organizations operate. The vision, mission and strategies which are selected by universities as a guide for meeting the core functions of teaching, learning, research and providing community service form the foundation on which the role of the university library is based. Perceptions held by the university's stakeholders on the role of the library as a contributor to these core functions, influence the environment within which the university library crafts its own mission and role. The

commonly accepted perception is that “university education process values self-motivated discovery on the part of students and faculty and assumes that libraries and librarians play an important and sometimes essential role in education” (Wolpert, 1998).

The early years of university library development focused on the establishment of the academic library that aspires to compete favorably with those of the western world, in keeping with the aspirations of the parent organization of providing good university education within the continent. The components of the academic library consist of:

- i. Input: staffing, budgeting, collections and accommodation.
- ii. Processes: collection development, organization and management.
- iii. Outputs: reference services, usage of finding tools, catalogs, collections and document delivery services.
- iv. Continuous training of users and service providers through direct contact.
- v. Ongoing feedback from stakeholders: students, staff and the public (Field, 1998).

The role of university library in teaching, learning and education is influenced by the university’s culture, value and stakeholders’ perceptions of the library as an essential pedagogic tool in support of the university enterprise. In turn, this determines the types of library services developed in support of the teaching and educational process. Currently, however, there is general absence of teaching methods which encourage and reward independent learning based on students’ critical analysis and incorporation of various sources of information to classroom notes and prescribed texts. General reliance by students on lecturers’ teaching notes, caused by various problems linked to poor libraries and lack of access to textbooks, has tended to be the norm and sometimes these are used by generations of students without consideration of the currency of content. The acceptance and “normalization” of this style of teaching by universities results in the subliminal devaluing of the commonly accepted university culture which demands independent research, critical analysis and use of current information as part of learning (Horava, 2005).

The McFarlane Report considers teaching functions as consisting of orienting, motivating, presenting, clarifying, elaborating and confirming. All these styles used for instructional services by faculty

influence the role which library has to play in providing support to students' learning. However, without library and information professional's appreciation of the complexity of interaction involved in these methods, the role of the academic library as academic support will be superficial at best (Joint Information Systems Committee, 1995).

The knowledge gained through the class lectures of teachers may be easily forgotten after sometime but that which the student acquires himself through self-study will be remembered by him even after leaving the class-room. Students have different tastes at different stages of life and when they are able to read they like to read books according to their need and taste (Chuabe & Chuabe, 2008).

The utility of a library depends upon its proper organization which includes the distribution of books, their arrangement, the situation of the library, etc. At present a library is not properly utilized in most of the institutions. The library exists only in name and the students cannot easily get books from there. Books for these libraries are purchased without any reference to the interests or abilities and standards of students (Alie, 1989).

The principal does not know what type of books is there in library. Besides, in most of institutions the staff does not pay any attention towards the proper management of the library and tries limiting the number of books taken by the students as far as possible. Such a library is quiet useless. No taste for self study can be developed in the students through such a library. Hence it is necessary to introduce reforms in libraries to attract students (Allen, 1993).

The books in a library should be properly arranged and classified as they have as great an importance as the library itself. The importance does not consist in storing a large number of books as in having suitable books in a proper order. In this connection, attention should be directed towards the utility of the books. These books should be capacity and ability of the students so that they may read and understand themselves. When the student is able to understand a book himself he feels encouraged to read other books as well (Shahid, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

The present study aimed at investigating current trend of use of library by the students of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and to give recommendations for the effective use of library.

Objectives of the Research Study

Following were the main objectives of the study:

1. To investigate the present use of library by the students of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Science.
2. To analyze the organizational set up of library for the purpose of effective learning.
3. To identify the problems faced by the students in the use of library.
4. To give recommendations for the effective use of library.

Significance of the Study

The role of library is very important for the healthy educational environment to enhance the students' learning. Therefore, the findings of the study may be useful:

1. To the students, to enlarge and consolidate their knowledge acquired in the classroom.
2. To the librarians, to select and organize library material according to the age, ability and interests of the students.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited only to the students of master programs of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Research Methodology

All the master level students of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences were the population of the study. One hundred and eighty students of various programs were selected randomly as a sample of the study. A self developed questionnaire consisted of 10

items, keeping in view the objectives of the study, was used as instrument for the collection of data. Item wise analysis of the data was made in order to arrive at findings of the study.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The students from six master programs participated in the study. Table 1 reveals that the highest number (44%) of respondents was from the Master of Applied Psychology whereas only 15 percent respondents were from the Master of Economics.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents as the sample of the study

Programs	Frequency	Percent
Master of Applied Psychology	80	44
Master of International Relation	20	11
Master of Fine Arts	25	14
Master of Education	20	11
Master of English	20	11
Master of Economics	15	8
Total	180	100

Table 2. Students' opinion about library services

Items	Yes	Percent	No	Percent
Have library rules been displayed in the library?	86	48	94	52
Is there any catalog available in the library?	14	8	166	92
Are the books and allied materials subject wise arranged?	115	64	65	36
Is the latest and relevant material available in the library?	43	24	137	76
Do the librarians select books according to the age, ability and interests of the student?	51	28	129	72
Is there sufficient space to fulfill students' need?	85	47	95	53
Does the librarian issue the books easily?	101	56	79	44
Does the librarian help students in searching relevant books?	83	46	97	54
Are the computer/ internet facilities	34	19	146	81

available in the library?				
Is library providing favorable learning environment?	77	43	103	57

Data shown in Table 2 reveal that:

1. Only 48 percent of the respondents were in the favor that library rules were been displayed in the library. It is clear that the library staff did not give importance to this point. Hence, there is a need to display rules in library for the guidance of the students' and to maintain discipline.
2. Only 8 percent of the respondents were agreed that there was any catalog available in the library whereas 92 percent respondents were worried about it, because they have to face a lot of problems in its absence. Hence, it is very essential for the staff to make and provide proper catalog to the students for their help so that they may not waste their time.
3. Sixty four percent of the respondents were in the favor that the books and other materials were subject wise arranged in the library whereas 36 percent of the respondents were not satisfied about it. Hence, it is the foremost necessity of the library to organize books subject wise and according to the need of students.
4. Only 24 percent of the respondents agreed that there were latest and relevant books in the library whereas 76 percent of the respondents were found complaining about it. Hence, it is very necessary that library should have latest and relevant books and other material so that students may get latest and effective learning.
5. Only 28 percent respondents were in favor that the librarians select books according to the age, abilities and interests of the students whereas 72 percent of the respondents were found completely against it, rather worried about it. Hence, it is the responsibility of the principal and the library staff to keep in mind these factors while selecting books.
6. Only 47 percent of the respondents were in favor that there is sufficient space in the library according to the need of the students whereas 53 of the respondents were not agreed with it. Hence, it is very essential that there should be sufficient space so that students may utilize it with full satisfaction.

7. Fifty six percent of the respondents agreed that the librarians issue books easily whereas the remaining 44 percent of the respondents did not agree with it. It is obvious that the students are at the mercy of the library staff because they do not take books to their homes without their permission. Therefore, it is necessary for the librarians to issue books to the students according to their feasibility.
8. Only 46 percent of the respondents were in favor that the librarians help the students in searching their required books whereas 54 percent of the respondents were much worried about it. Hence, it is very essential for the librarians to help the students so that the students may not waste their time in searching their relevant material.
9. Only 19 percent of the respondents agreed that there is the facility of computer / internet in the library. The remaining 81 of the students were found complaining that, no doubt, the library has the facility of computer/ internet but it is only for library staff because they do not allow students to use it. Hence, it is the need of the time to provide modern technology and latest information to the students so that they may compete at every level.
10. Only 43 percent of the respondents agreed that library was providing a learning environment to the students while 57 percent were found against it. In their opinion, it was the main reason which kept them away from the library. Hence, it is very essential for the principal and the librarians to create a proper learning environment so that the students may fully utilize it.

Findings of the Study

Following are the main findings of the study:

1. Fifty two percent of the students said that the library of the FUCLAS has not displayed any rules in it.
2. Ninety two percent of the students indicated that the library has not any catalog for the help of the students.
3. Thirty six percent of the students complained that the books and other library material were not subject wise arranged.
4. Seventy six percent of the students were of the opinion that the library does not have latest and relevant books.

5. Seventy two percent of the students indicated that the library is not comprised of books and other material according to the age, ability and interests of the students.
6. Fifty three percent of the students complained that the library has not sufficient space according to the need of the students.
7. Forty four percent students were worried that they have to face problems in issuing books.
8. Fifty four percent students indicated that the librarians do not help the students in searching relevant books.
9. Eighty one percent of the students indicated that the library has the facility of computer/ internet but only for the librarians instead of them.
10. Fifty seven of the students revealed that the environment of the library is not supportive and conducive for effective learning.

Conclusion

The work of an institution is to give knowledge of necessary things and to bring about such an all-around development of the student that he is able to lead a successful life in his future. No doubt, the library of Foundation University College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is trying to play an important role in students' learning but still, it is unable to provide full facilities and a better learning environment. Consequently the students hesitate to visit library to read books and enhance their knowledge regularly. Most of the students only join it to prepare their assignments or to pass their free time. The remaining students avoid joining it because of the problems they face. On the other hand, the library staff also does not pay full attention to its duties in selecting, organizing and issuing books that badly affect students' learning.

It is indubitable that the role of the library as information intermediary would never change. However, the means to fulfill this invaluable role keeps changing and the library must adapt to maintain its relevance. Traditional library practices must be fully developed and the best of modern technology must be embraced.

Recommendations

Following are the major recommendations of the study:

1. To create discipline in the library, proper rules should be displayed at suitable place and the librarians should explain these rules to the students in the beginning of each semester.
2. An effective catalog should be maintained for the help of the students and to save their time.
3. Books should be subject wise arranged according to the age, ability and interests of the students.
4. The principal and the librarians should consult with teachers and students while selecting books.
5. Number of latest books, other material and research journals should be increased in the library.
6. In order to create effective and conducive learning environment in the library, it is proposed to equip it with latest and relevant books as well as computer and internet so that students may get latest information to enhance their learning.

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