

## FACTORS CONDUCIVCE FOR THE PURPOSEFUL USE OF LIBRARIES AMONG UNIVERSITY'S STUDENTS IN PAKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

Education is a social activity that plays a critical role in enriching the living standard of people and libraries are the essential tools for promoting educational activities. The internet changes the whole world into a global village. Still educational institutions and libraries work hand in hand toward promoting knowledge. Libraries play a key role in developing reading habits among students. In Pakistan's educational setup, libraries are not functioning in the true sense due to many reasons, and students get no opportunities for reading additional books apart from their course books. These poor reading habits continue at the college level or even in university. The present study was designed to find out the factors conducive for the effective use of library among university students in Pakistan. It was planned to achieve the objectives, i.e. to identify the conducive factors for library use, library resources motivating students, the impact of teachers' motivation for students toward the use of libraries, importance of physical facilities for attracting students toward libraries. To investigate these objectives, two questionnaires were developed each for teachers and students on five point Likert scale. The study concluded that university teachers motivate students through library related tasks for the use of library. Students' own interest, library environment, librarian and other staffs' attitude and availability of necessary facilities are various important factors for the use of library.

**Keywords:** Libraries, Use of libraries, Physical facilities, Libraries' personnel

### INTRODUCTION

No one denies the importance of libraries in developing reading habits among students of any level. It is a common view that libraries can play an important role in the academic achievement of the students. Libraries are a source of enhancing knowledge and play a unique role in personality grooming of the students. Libraries are commonly considered essential for educational, social and national progress. The number of people in the libraries shows the reading culture of that society. The present age is an age of knowledge, and libraries are the storehouses of that knowledge. Knowledge not only helps people to become civilized but also makes their lives easy, prosperous and peaceful as well as trained persons to play their role more effectively for national development.

Advanced countries of the world are affluence over the rest of the world due to their educational development. It has been observed that the study habits of students and their interests play an important role in their educational process. It is a common view of the people that, to some extent, Pakistan's educational system depends on rote learning that is confined to only one textbook. Greaney & Hasan (1998) claimed that students use a single textbook for examination preparation. In Pakistan's school system, students have a poor

concept of the library usage at school level. On the other side, these libraries are not functioning in the true sense. Students don't have any opportunity to look beyond the scope of one textbook of each subject, and sometimes they look for some solution books also. In the public school, students have poor reading habits because there is no provision for library period in the school set up. Pakistan's examination system does not emphasize on concept based learning and encourages rote memorization. Reliance on a single textbook and reproduction of materials from new recommended textbooks are also major factors leading towards rote memorization (Christie & Afzaal, 2005)

The poor reading habits continue up to the college level and those students who have poor reading habits face many difficulties at the tertiary level. Poor readers are unable to cope with the university examination system, which discourages rote memorization and limited subject knowledge. Pakistan's educational system only emphasizes factual knowledge, whereas its application aspect is overlooked. At the school level, library culture can be promoted with the help of student centered curriculum in which the students are free to choose books of their own choice for preparing a topic as in university level. Student centered curriculum as well as class rooms encourage self-study, independent learning and promote reading habits among students.

Regular utilization of the library leads to effective use of the library. Here the phrase effective use of the library means the library being used for studies, preparing assignments, looking for extra reading material instead of just depending on text books, reading newspapers, research, utilization of spare time in libraries for reading the literature of interest, etc. Effective use of the library shows consistency and regularity in consultation with the library, that provides benefits to the students in their studies. It is more broadly defined the use of the library as a habit, which enhances the reading abilities of students as well as enables them to improve their academic achievement.

## LITERATURE

### Importance of Libraries

Issac (1994, pp.1-3) writes in his paper entitled "Educational role of school libraries" that Libraries play an important role in promoting the objectives of an educational institution. Libraries are essential features of educational institutions because of their role as a disseminator of knowledge. Libraries enable the students to actively play their role as citizens of a democratic society. He further adds that Libraries develop student's imagination, fuel their creativity and expand their cultural interest in a way that enhances their self expression and improves their practical and vocational competence, which is necessary for building a country's economic prosperity.

### Libraries as a source of knowledge

Knowledge is necessary for the social, intellectual and economic development of a nation and education is a tool for giving facts of knowledge to the students. Education helps individuals become independent learners, develops the ability to understand various issues, to gain information and to interpret these issues logically. In these days, the mass media and the abundance of advanced technologies for information retrieval and manipulation are creating a more dynamic society that necessitates the demand of self-study. For the purpose of creating an aptitude and prolonging the desire for learning and self-study among students, libraries play a vital role. A well-organized and well-equipped library is the foundation stone for self-study. Libraries facilitate access to information and play an important role in the intellectual growth and academic learning of the students. Libraries not only provide opportunities for guidance but also allow students to explore ideas and concepts apart from their syllabus. This helps to develop intellectual, imaginative and practical pursuance among the students. Education and libraries work hand in hand toward the same goals, because education deals with advancement of individual aptitude and attainment of knowledge, whereas libraries provide opportunities and material to fulfill the purpose of education (Vara Lakshmi, 1994, pp.120- 122).

### **Condition of libraries in Pakistan**

Haq (1999, 53) documented that libraries in Pakistan are insufficient to fulfill the objectives of our [Pakistani people] ideology that is “the promotion of Pakistani culture and Islamic way of life”. In Pakistan the public libraries are not used for the benefit of the whole community because they are limited only to larger cities.

Haq (1999, pp.5-7) stated that Pakistan’s educational standard is going down because libraries are neglected at the grass roots level. Unfortunately, low priority is given to education,

### **ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN DEVELOPING READING HABITS**

#### **Importance of Reading**

Mahmood (2004, pp. 18-24) is of the view that reading is necessary to fulfill the demands of the modern technological age. Reading habits are the practices of people to deliberately seek reading material and devote time to reading. The need for information and knowledge motivates people toward reading. Reading is a source of pleasure, intellectual satisfaction and knowledge attainment. In Pakistan the reading habits of people are very poor. There are two types of non-readers, those who know how to read but do not read enough and those people who have not been trained to read. There are many reasons for these poor study habits.

#### **Absence of a reading culture**

In our society people usually prefer to believe on oral information.

#### **Illiteracy**

One cause of poor reading habits is that 55% of our population is illiterate.

#### **Poor purchasing power**

One-third of our population is living below the poverty line and unable to fulfill their basic necessities. So it is impossible for them to purchase books.

#### **Poor education system**

Pakistan’s education system runs on the one textbook system and teachers don’t encourage students to read books other than the textbooks.

#### **Inadequate library systems**

In Pakistan’s the reading habits are declining day by day. Public libraries are very few, and the school libraries are not present in a true sense. Some foreign organizations have established good libraries in big cities but due to security constraints they have been closed.

#### **Absence of a conducive reading environment**

There is no proper reading environment in Pakistan’s libraries and the facilities of heating, air-conditioning, furniture, etc. are very poor.

#### **De motivated library staff**

Library staff is not motivated and committed to their profession. People usually complain about their irrational behavior.

#### **Non-availability of required reading material**

The Pakistani publishing industry is very poor. Our authors are not attracted toward writing good quality books due to the absence of reading culture and imported English literature is costly and out of the reach of the common people.

### **Lack of information about published journals**

Pakistan has the problem of the non-availability of published journal reviews, bibliographies and the locally published material.

### **FACTORS AFFECTING READING HABITS**

Library use among students can be promoted by developing reading habits among students. Iftikhar (2002, pp. 21-26) describes in his study different environments that are conducive for developing reading habits and promoting library use among students. He mentions the following factors as:

#### **Home environment**

Home environment plays a key role in developing reading habits among students. If the readers have a peaceful environment at home then their reading habits will be effective.

#### **Parent's interest**

The parents' interests and study habits play a key role in developing reading habits among students. In developing countries poor reading habits of students reflect on their parents taking more interest in working to earn money than in reading and studying.

#### **Physical environment**

Physical environment is also a key contributor that affects the process of reading. The provision of a proper environment can be helpful for developing reading habits among students.

#### **Distribution of study time**

Distribution of study time is also very important for developing reading habits among students. Those students who have a planned schedule for their reading can better utilize their time for reading different types of books, as compared to those students who have no preset schedule.

### **LIBRARIES AND THE PROMOTION OF READING HABITS**

Mahmood (2004, pp.35-41) claimed that libraries play an important role in promoting the reading habits in any society. However, libraries in Pakistan are almost non-existent. He proposed that libraries could use following activities to promote good reading habits.

- An effective library orientation program should be introduced in libraries with the purpose of training users to get maximum benefits from the available library services.
- For the promotion of reading habits special lectures, training courses, book fairs, exhibition, etc. should be organized.
- Library activities should be promoted through advertising using the mass, electronic and print media.
- Books and journals should be recent, relevant to users' interest and according to their needs.
- Well-trained and qualified staff should be appointed in libraries.
- Library staff should provide training to the user to organize home libraries.
- Mobile libraries should be started in remote areas.
- For the promotion of reading habits several campaigns can be launched, e.g. library week, book day, etc.
- Quiz competitions can be organized in libraries to check the student's knowledge about various books.

## FACTORS CONDUCIVE FOR THE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE LIBRARY

### Library use in different academic periods

Library consultation from the beginning promotes the reading habits at the higher level of education. Khan (1994, p.26) stated that the aim of a school library is not only to develop reading habits and create self-confidence for the selection of appropriate reading material but also to train the students on how to use a collage library. The development of reading habits at the school level provides assistance in the instructional system of the college and helps them in consulting books, periodicals, pamphlets, audiovisual aids and other resources.

These pre-developed skills of library use and reading habits help the students at the university level in the creation of new knowledge and also the transmission of knowledge for the prosperity of the nation and learning process. Proper attention must be given for the improvement of libraries at each level of education.

Chaudhry (2002, pp.124-127) has enlisted the following services/facilities a library must have:

- Library building
- Library personnel
- Circulation
- Interlibrary loan services
- Automated service
- Indexing and abstracting service

## UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES IN PAKISTAN

Universities are the places that provide a chance for teachers and students to seek the truth of their social and physical universe through inventive education and research as well as take part in the advancement of knowledge. The sole aim of the university is to produce good citizens, intellectual pioneers for our society and trained manpower for the prosperity of the nation. One of the key roles of a university library is to introduce creative and research oriented programs that will make the youth creative and self-dependent citizens equipped with clarity of mind and genuineness (Khan, 2007 and Fazal, 1995).

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

The aim of the present study was to investigate the factors that are conducive toward the effective use of the library among university students in Pakistan.

### Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were to find out the;

- Factors that create interest for regular use of the library among university students.
- The library resources (physical resources, library schedule, books relevant to students' interests, etc.) motivate students toward the use of the library.
- The teacher's role in motivating students towards library use.
- The importance of physical facilities for attracting the students toward the library
- The main factors that hinder the students from using the library.

## METHODS OF STUDY

- The Research was based on the descriptive method as the research was designed to describe those factors that are conducive to the effective use of library. The research was conducted in the universities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. To achieve the objectives of the study, two universities were selected one from Islamabad and one from Rawalpindi (Quaid-i-Azam University from Islamabad and University of Arid Agriculture from Rawalpindi). For research purposes, criterion purposive sampling technique was used to obtain the desired sample size from the entire research area population as the study was concerned only with those students who use the library regularly and with university teachers and librarians.
- A total of 15 students from each university and a total of 15 teachers from each university were selected for this study.
- Two questionnaires were developed on five point Likert scale. There were five options (SA= Strongly Agree, A= Agree, UNC= Uncertain, DA= Disagree, SDA= Strongly Disagree) for each statement to obtain the information about conducive factors that motivate the students related to library use. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher themselves to ensure 100 % return rate from the respondents.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Mean score was found for each statement.

### Questionnaire for Teachers

Sr	Statement	Mean Score
1	Those students who prefer to study alone are more inclined toward using the library	3.63
2	Those students who had a reading Interest since childhood use library frequently.	4.03
3	The main conducive factor for library use is a student's own interest	4.1
4	Those students who want to enhance their knowledge use the library regularly	4.1
5	You give students assignments that require them to use library resources	4.53
6	The family environment plays a key role in developing reading habits among students	4.36
7	Peer group motivation is an important factor toward regular library use	3.93
8	Availability of library in school and colleges helps in developing reading habits among students	4.5
9	Comfortable seating and study areas matter a lot for library use	4.26
10	The workspace and the comfortable area of discussion are important for library use	3.26

11	Temperature control and a proper ventilation system are important factors in motivating students towards library	4.16
12	Attitude of librarian and cooperation of library staff motivate the students toward library use	4
13	Availability of current books, journals and periodicals is an important factor for library use	4.66
14	Availability of computer technology and online services play important role in motivating the students toward the library	4.53
15	Physical condition of books attracts the students toward the library	3.43
16	Ease of use of library facilities is important to attract the students	4.13
17	Convenient libraries hour is important in motivating the students toward library use	4.36
18	Guidance services related to library use are provided in your library	3.43

#### Student's Questionnaire

Sr	Statement	Mean Score
1	The main conducive factor for library use is a students' interest	4.03
2	Students use library to enhance knowledge	4.15
3	Teachers motivate students for the use of library	4.01
4	Peer group motivation is an important factor toward regular library use	3.75
5	Availability of library in school and colleges helps in developing reading habits among students	4.26
6	Attitude of librarian and cooperation of library staff motivate the students toward library use	3.96
7	Availability of current books, journals and periodicals is an important factor for library use	4.51
8	Availability of computer technology and online services play important role in motivating the students toward the library	4.25
9	Convenient libraries hour is important in motivating the students toward library use	3.95
10	Guidance services related to library use are provided in your library	3.35

#### FINDINGS

##### Findings from Teachers' Questionnaire

- Teachers confirmed that the students who are in the habit of reading since an early age use library more frequently at university level.
- In teachers' opinion students' interest and thrust for knowledge are the important factors for using the library.

- Teachers are of the view that they assign such tasks, which are related to the use of library.
- Family environment and peer groups have importance for using library habit.
- Opinion of the teachers revealed that availability of library at school level and other basic facilities (Workplace, temperature, seating places, new books, journals, the Internet, etc.) are important factors for using the library.
- Attitude of a librarian is important for encouraging students for the use of library.
- Teachers explicit that library timing is equally important for the users of library.
- Teachers provided guided services about the use of library to the students.

#### Findings from Students' Questionnaire

- Students are of the view that students' interest is a major factor for using the library.
- In the opinion of students, Libraries are the source for enhancing knowledge.
- Teachers' motivation is a plus point for the students to use the library.
- Peer group's interest towards the library affects the interest of the students in using the library regularly.
- Students believed that Library staff's behavior, availability of books and online facility attracts students for using the library.
- Students think that Timing and guidance services for students are other factors, which are equally important and have positive effects on the students' trend towards the use of libraries.

#### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

For the purpose of identifying the main conducive factors for library use, the questionnaire was divided into two categories. The first category was about general conducive factors, including personal interest, motivation from peers and family, enhancement of reading, writing and general knowledge, group study, etc. The second category was concerned with the facilities provided by the libraries for attracting the students, including physical facilities, latest material, guidance services, location, schedules of library, etc. It is clear from the data analysis that for enhancing library use among students, personal interest, external motivation, physical facilities and the provision of library from the primary level are important. The major reason for using the library at the university level is the learning system and research activities at that level. Students' personal interest, external motivators and the availability of libraries at the grass roots level are the factors which help in developing the habit of using the library among the students. However, if the students don't have a personal interest or have not developed reading habits from an early age, then the library use at university level can be enhanced by improving physical facilities and providing constant encouragement from the teachers.

One thing that attracts students toward libraries is the calm and peaceful environment of study. Libraries are the places where the learning material should be placed everywhere in an organized manner. Such an environment would attract users and motivate them to sit there and read books, some other journals or books of their own choice. One of the main reasons for library consultation is the desire to excel in life, at university level many students use the library for preparing their assignments, whether they are personally interested or not.

As far as external motivators are concerned the family environment and peers are important in developing reading habit. Libraries are used for discussion (group study) as well as for study in isolation. Almost all teachers require their students to use the library and assign them tasks for library consultation but not all teachers prefer book references rather than the Internet. The main hindrance to library use is the unfriendly attitude of the librarian and the other library staff. Some problems are also related to the education system, because the examination system in Pakistan is based on rote memorization and selective study. Although in Pakistan, at university level the education is more research oriented, but the examination system still gives preference to traditional methods.



In universities user's guidance services are not properly provided to the students. Many students in universities don't know to use the catalogue and hesitate to take help from others. Their habit of hesitation takes them away from libraries. Many students don't use the library because of the long distance of libraries from their department. The students who have not reading habits and personal interest can be conditioned by the centralized location of library. When the library is centrally located they may ignore it once, twice or even a third time, but may be the fourth time they feel curiosity to enter the library and see what is happening inside the library. Many students complain about time management, problems for using the libraries. It is useless to provide libraries unless students are provided proper time to use the library. Class's schedules may be managed in such a way that the students get enough time to use the library. Libraries may ideally be opened at least for 12 hours in a day. Recent published books, research journals can play an important role for motivating the students toward libraries. With the provision of proper guidance services, regular updated catalogues, the cooperation of library staff and regular encouragement from teachers, students can be motivated toward libraries. If teachers demand library-oriented tasks from students and the students face problems with librarian behavior, difficulties in searching books and a noisy environment, then the students cannot give the required output. It just means pushing them into the libraries in an unnatural environment.

The librarian may seem enthusiastic when providing their user's guidance related to library use. Library staff may not assume that the academic staff is enough to help students for using the library. The availability of libraries from the school level not only develops the reading habit but also makes them aware of the use of different functions of the library. It is not only the duty of library staff to maintain discipline, but also every individual student must realize his/her duty on his/her part and try to follow the rules and regulations of library. There may be separate areas for discussion and isolation places for the students who prefer to study alone. It is the duty of teachers to avoid providing learning material or notes and encourage the students to consult libraries and prepare their learning material themselves.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of findings and conclusions, following recommendations are being made:

- Guidance services may be provided to the students in academic institutions.
- The education system may be library oriented and discourage rote memorization and one-text book systems.
- Research activities may be promoted in academic institutions.
- Extra efforts of students for preparing assignments and exams may be recognized by the teachers and duly rewarded.
- The librarian and library staff may be enthusiastic and cooperative. They need to realize that with their friendly attitude they can enhance the number of library users. They may be sure that no students face confusion in searching the required material.
- Basic knowledge about library utilization may be included at all levels of education.
- The latest books and journals may be provided to enrich libraries.
- For reference books, suggestions may be taken from students and teachers about the areas of their working.
- Regular courses of professional development about new trends in the field of library may be arranged for library staff.
- Library staff may have complete information about different books, periodicals and about other materials related to the library.
- Internet facility for the students may be provided to all the Post Graduate colleges/ Degree Colleges.

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