HEC Digital Library: online information resources and its importance for the faculty of Universities of the Balochistan

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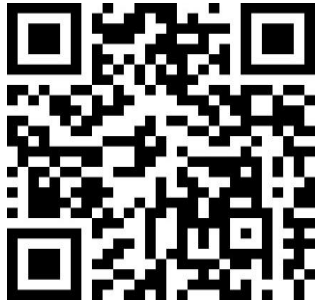Assistant Professor, Faculty of Library & Information Science
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Abstract: *This paper is an endeavor to examine the importance of data assets of HEC digital library by faculty members in universities of Balochistan both public and private sectors. The emergence of new technology is a prime source of motivation for users in every field of life. Being prerequisite of modern era, the traditional libraries are also diverting themselves towards digitization. In this scenario the importance and usage of digital library is attaining much attention. Being quantitative in nature the study used questionnaire as part of survey method to collect data from faculty members of Universities of Balochistan. Through this study it became clear that there is lack of digital libraries in Universities of Balochistan. However, some of Universities in Balochistan has established digital portions within the libraries, whereas in many higher institutions of Balochistan the digital libraries do not exist. Absences of digital libraries in universities have extensively affecting the teaching and learning of faculty members. This study revealed that the faculty members in Universities of Balochistan were found to be familiar with the importance of HEC digital library to some extent, but still the minimum level of usage was evident of its not understanding the significance. There seem some of the genuine issues as like lack of professional and skilled staff to carry out the digital library operations as well as lack of training/programs is dire need in these higher educational institutions of Balochistan.*

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Introduction

Being a new field of study a huge number of researchers from various disciplines, organization, institutions and countries are continuously reviewing the digital library in different perspectives. ARL defined digital library as "it is a sole component which connects different entities while allowing users for universal access to online information. Lynch (1995) mentions, "the digital library is a kind of electronic information structure that aims are to vide accessibility as well as usability of digitized documents in an organized format" The review of local literature depict that the number of studies have been carried out on various areas of HEC digital library. In their studies, Rafique and Ameen (2007) mention that "the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is giving access to number of peer-reviewed journals and databases from various disciplines through HEC digital library. In local perspective, Khan, Ahmed and Mesreik (2014) studied the faculties who have been familiar the importance of HEC digital library data assets in expending the worth of teaching and research. Likewise, Harter (1997) underlined that un-Qualified librarians and lack of user education can also sway the use of HEC digital library .In such challenging environment of survival, it is vital for faculty members to understand the real importance of digital libraries specifically the HEC digital library to adopt and implement technology in order to prove their existence in this technological world. "Use of internet and web has changed the library environment. Libraries in developed countries have embraced the digital milieu and enhanced the using new tools in regard with presenting web based library services (Shafique & Riedling, 2003). In this regard the digital library has becomes a well-organized institution to provide huge amount of information resources to the faculty members in a smooth and low economical way .To fulfilling this gape the HEC launched National Digital Library (HEC-DL) program in 2004 in regard with understanding the importance of online information resources as well as the provision of international standard resources to the users (http//www.digitallibrary.edu.pk/). Universities are center of research and innovations and the faculty members in them have significant position in uplifting education. That is why the understanding of importance of online information resources for faculty members became much crucial due to rapid changing by digitization in Pakistani universities. In this regard understanding the importance of HEC DL online information resources is very essential for the faculty members of Universities of Balochistan to speed up the research culture in this less developed province of Pakistan.

Research Design;

Being quantitative nature the study used survey method of questionnaire from selected population. The population consisted of (N=125) of faculties of universities of Balochistan. The obtained data was scrutinized with the help of SPSS.

Literature Review

The digital library is not a single entity; the digital library requires technology to link the resources of and services that are transparent to the end users; The purpose behind establishing DL are to access the information from every knock and corner of the globe. (ARL, 1995)..

Arms (2000), defined DL "a managed collection of information with associated services where the information is stored in digital formats and accessible over a network". A digital library is fundamentally a resource that constructs the intellectual substance and services of a traditional library in digital form.

Rafidue& Ameen (2012) in their study mentioned the use if online information on higher educational institutes is growing .study also indicates paradigm change in the way to acquisition process study also emphasizes the need of training and skills for libraries in order to utilize digital information recourses.

As far as the idea or concepts of digital library is concerned, there much discussion is being carried out across the world as well as in Pakistan in connection to the notions of digital library. Understanding the importance of digital library in Pakistan is not something new but from the last twenty eight year the discussion on digital library is gaining much attention and importance through different gatherings. It is clear that in Pakistan the libraries are adopting digitalization while transforming their traditional approach towards a digitized one but it's mostly usability is being witnessed in research and university libraries which is directly linked to the understanding its importance. In Pakistan, many various investigations carried out to observe the issues and challenges in connection with implantation of digital library system and management of its resources in higher educational institutes of Pakistan. The purpose behind the establishment of Higher Education Commission (HEC) was to serve and facilitate the Pakistani Universities and also raising their level to the World-class Universities. The basic objectives of Universities are to promote research and innovation. For the upcoming challenges in the field if ICT, the HEC has projects to offer fast and speedy internet services to the all Universities of Pakistan. The digital Library of HEC is a program that offers IT based education which includes video conferencing and other opportunities in educational field. The objectives of launching this program

are launching such programs are minimizing digital rifts and encouraging research culture in the higher learning centers of country.

Both at global and national level the number of researchers has investigated the accessibility, usability and mentioned that the online information and digital library is most cheap and quick way of delivery of information to the users. However, the process of digitization of libraries in Pakistan is under development but in this regard especially Baluchistan, a province of Pakistan which comprised 42% land area of the country is much behind in digitalization of its libraries either public or private sector. Although, this study aims are to explore the importance of HEC DL in both public and private sector universities of Baluchistan.

Data analysis and interpretation

Respondent's demographic information, Gender of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Male	82	65.6	65.6
	Female	43	34.4	34.4
	Total	125	100.0	100.0

N	Valid	125
	Missing	0
	Mean	2.52

Importance of HEC electronic books for faculty members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Important	18	14.4	14.4	14.4
	Important	52	41.6	41.6	56.0
	Some Important	33	26.4	26.4	82.4
	Not Important	16	12.8	12.8	95.2
	Don't Know	6	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

HEC Journal databases importance

N	Valid	125
	Missing	0
	Mean	2.19

HEC Journal databases importance for faculty members

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Important	39	31.2	31.2	31.2
	Important	43	34.4	34.4	65.6
	Some Important	27	21.6	21.6	87.2
	Not Important	12	9.6	9.6	96.8
	Don't Know	4	3.2	3.2	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

HEC research repository

N	Valid	125
	Missing	0
	Mean	2.14

Importance of HEC research repository

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Very Important	46	36.8	36.8	36.8
	Important	39	31.2	31.2	68.0
Valid	Some Important	23	18.4	18.4	86.4
	Not Important	10	8.0	8.0	94.4
	Don't Know	7	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

OPAC

N	Valid	125
	Missing	0
	Mean	2.30

Importance of Online Public Access catalogues (OPACs)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Very Important	31	24.8	24.8	24.8
	Important	49	39.2	39.2	64.0
Valid	Some Important	27	21.6	21.6	85.6
	Not Important	12	9.6	9.6	95.2
	Don't	6	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Social Networking sites

N	Valid	125
	Missing	0
	Mean	1.49

Importance of Social networking sites, blogs, wikis. Facebook WhatsApp.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	71	56.8	56.8	56.8
Valid	2	47	37.6	37.6	94.4
	3	7	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Dissertations

N	Valid	125
	Missing	0
	Mean	1.71

Importance of dissertations available through HCE DL

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	58	46.4	46.4	46.4
	2	47	37.6	37.6	84.0
	3	18	14.4	14.4	98.4
	4	2	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	125	100.0	100.0	

Conclusion;

Being the part of new battle (digitization) the usage of digital information has becoming the need of time. The data collected through this study makes it clear that digitization is rapidly affecting every sphere of life, either institution, organization or businesses in private and public sector and the digital library is closely connected with teaching, learning and research. In this regard, the researchers and teachers are found to be acquainted with the significance of HEC digital library in regard with improving the value of research and teaching (Khan & Masrek, 2014).

This study assessed the importance of HEC DL online information resources for faculty members in Universities of Baluchistan, which is also the main research question of this study. The results presented in this study extract the situation of HEC digital library. Various kinds of online information resources available on HEC DL, such as conferences proceeding, e-journals, e-books like e-databases, OPACs, websites, social networking sites which has much importance for faculty members in HEC sponsored universities of Baluchistan. The results in this study depict the importance of digital library and its usage purpose by faculties in higher learning institutes of Province. The usage of e-books for research is 40% which shows the average importance of HEC, DL online resources. While the importance of journals, databases were 36.8%. The 46.6% respondents agreed that dissertations available through HEC DL have much importance in their teaching and learning process. The social networking tools have great part in research and teaching. The (56.8%) also have mentioned the importance of social networking sites such as face book, Twitter, Whatsapp, Instagram. This is clear picture of change in regard with priority and importance by faculty members of various universities of Balochistan. The training corners by HEC have key role in developing faculty member's potentials towards modern education. Despite of these the training venues in different Universities of Baluchistan have less encouragement.

The overall findings in this study described that, the researchers and teachers are found to be acquainted with the significance of HEC digital library and they also have opinions that this would prove as milestone in

regard to their educational development.   But the need for modern technology demanding   more user education as it is linked with the provision of modern ICT tools in the higher educational intuitions of Balochistan which contribute to a larger part in assisting faculty members in universities of Balochistan.

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