USER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA AND ISLAMABAD

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which libraries in Pakistani universities are User Relationship Management (URM) oriented. Quantitative research approach and survey technique was employed in this study. Data was collected from chief librarians of all universities in Khyber PakhtunKhwa (KPK) Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) through structured questionnaire.The findings revealed that libraries considered that URM is valuable for both library and users. The paper shows an interesting result in terms of CRM informal practices, however a holistic approach of URM need to be explored. This study is a concrete contribution to the accessible literature on libraries to design new service, draft blue print and devise effective and efficient service delivery system and will be beneficial for library

administrators, professionals' staff and university administrators to better understand the needs of library users.

Keywords: URM practices, Users' feedback and complain system, Academic libraries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & Islamabad.

INTRODUCTION

Libraries have always been very keen to satisfy their user's needs and strive for their satisfaction up to the maximum. Twenty first century fetched new challenges for all type of organizations and libraries are not exclusive of it. New fade of marketing and customer satisfaction have been introduced in libraries like Total Quality Management (TQM), Business Process Re-engineering (BPR), Six Sigma and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) which have become the faddism for 21st century organizations. The paradigm shift of marketing was begun to move from product centered approach to customer centered approach in 1980's (Maxim 2009). The concept of CRM has been developed in 1990s and it was adopted by the organizations of all shapes and sizes, especially service sector organizations focusing on customer's satisfaction and loyalty (Richard, Huff and Thirkell 2005). As like other organizations, libraries have to face growing challenges to meet customer expectations, needs and retain them in the presence of diverse competitive environment. The ability to understand customers, build relationships strong and marketing assorted services is imperative (Taleghani, Gilaninia and Mousavian 2011).

Customer (User) Relationship Management (CRM) has been the priority of library service strategy from long ago; especially the academic libraries have always transformed themselves as learning resource center for users with excellent ethos of service nucleus.The long term relationship with library users may the only services strategy which can be a building block new service culture and competitive advantage for academic librarianship. It was so imperative to study the phenomenon in the Pakistan settings, especially the Khyber PakhtunKhwa (KPK) state of affairs regarding user's relationship. The study produced very interesting results which glorify the picture of less developed area of KPK with its comparison to comparatively advanced area of federal capital to comprehend the overall portrait. This study would also serve as fundamental ingredient for the planners and administrators academic librarianship in general and university librarianship in particular to devise their service strategy.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at accessing and describing the URM practices of libraries in Pakistan as well as making policy recommendations for the improvement of URM practices. The main purpose of the study is to examine the extent to which libraries in Pakistani universities are URM oriented. The study aims to look at the extent to which the management of libraries in universities are structured and organized to support URM. The study also tried to find out whether or not libraries in universities are receptive and responsive to users' needs. The extent to which libraries in universities adopt technology- based practices to enhance user relationship has also been examined.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Technological explorations and experimental implementations demonstrate a widespread awareness of library users' changing roles in today's society and their efforts to adjust to the change as a result of the rapid development of economy and technology. Libraries in Pakistan and areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and even Islamabad do not comprehend the users' needs including their required information which could give the libraries competitive advantage to build strategic relationship with their users. This shortcoming of the libraries results in the avoiding the libraries by users or creates their casual behavior towards libraries. The literature and practice have seen both favorable and opposing attitudes towards URM among library administrators and professionals. Provided, libraries implement URM, it will not only change the role of library, but the image of library staff as well. It is direly needed to know the exact status of URM awareness among libraries and its implementation so that the accurate landscape could be sketched out and grey areas be known, which would indicate the rooms for improvement.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study has served the following main objectives:

1. To find the current URM activities in university libraries of KPK and Islamabad.
2. To know about the user's feedback system in the university libraries of KPK and Islamabad.
3. To examine users' complain mechanism KPK and Islamabad.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study has strived to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the current URM activities in university libraries KPK and Islamabad?
2. What are the user's feedback system in the university libraries of KPK and Islamabad?
3. What are the users' complain mechanism in the university libraries of KPK and Islamabad.

RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The findings of this study are diverse and important for the stakeholders of the libraries in Pakistan. The findings and recommendations of the study are based on pragmatic information and will serve management of libraries in Pakistan to take initiatives and make important decisions regarding their users, enhancing their satisfaction and making them delighted with packages they would be provided with. The partnership of business techniques can make a new model of services by the university libraries. Maintaining and enhancing their users' experience and concentrating on meeting their users' objectives are the only ways for academic libraries to endure in this unpredictable competitive atmosphere. It predicts that this study is a concrete contribution to the accessible literature on libraries to design new service, draft blue print and devise effective and efficient service delivery system. This study will be

beneficial for library administrators, professionals' staff and university administrators to better understand the needs of library users.

LITERATURE REVIEW

User Relationship Management

CRM (referred to as URM in libraries' perspective), generally, is how organizations set up and sustain relationship with their customers through association between them. It is a business practice that has been used even before computer (Hall 2012). Without appropriate URM practices, library professionals may misunderstand users' demands and be incapable to fulfill customer needs, and expectations. Recently, library scientists have targeted on the idea of customization or customized services (Bielema 2007). Libraries offer different channels of communication (i.e., Libweb), through which patrons can ask for a service; however, this is an inactive plea of assessment. Individualized service concentrates on being ''better, quicker, and cheaper'' as indicated in current management methods (Cardwell 2001). Meanwhile, some libraries have recognized link outreach applications to know users' better by offering higher quantity of details and information's about library programs and services (Alkindi and Al-Suqri 2013).

The use of URM in library services, library professionals can concentrate on how they can develop and organize their collections and services to entice more customers to the library. Thus, it has become their top concern to figure out how customers anticipate using a library. A relationship is a link or connection between an enterprise and its user (Mohammed 2002). Library scientists have indicated following areas to address URM practices in the library like data searching, book suggestions, library services marketing and sources utilization effectiveness (Yen 2002, Chen 2004); purchase budget granted (Kao 2003); collection development and cataloging (Chu 2005); library services (Will 2006); CRM software in e-journal access (Borchert 2006).

User relationship Management in Libraries

Different studies have been conducted on URM in libraries to find out its usefulness, importance, and significance. It has also examined library services and collection development can be improvements adopting URM practices. Different issues and hindrances were also studied in the libraries when URM was implemented. In addition, diverse aspect of CRM related to people, process, and technology were also studied. There is no complete study done on this subject in libraries to cover the current practical activities in the libraries. The following paragraphs will provide a review of some of the studies and literature dealing with URM and libraries.

Broody-Preston et al., (2006) examined that in the current aggressive atmosphere, librarians needed not only to determine and accomplish users' needs, but to form dynamic partnerships with their users if the exact market potential of educational libraries is to be realized. Excellent communication techniques are important for URM to be effective. Continuing education and training for employees and users regarding abilities and/or latest systems is an

important ingredient of a URM approach. Miao and Bashan (2007) examined the concept of user services and summarized the methods and conditions required to provide better user services in the libraries. He established an effective user services plan in libraries and provided examples and models for better user service projects. Wang (2007) conducted a case study to find out the possible limitations when CRM applying plan was started in the library perspective, and discovered its performance and effectiveness after execution. This research was designed to develop initial hunches or ideas and to obtain solid suggestions for a design to use in future development and implementation initiatives. The outcomes emphasized on the significance to get over libraries' lack of experience in terms of URM execution, and illustrate the greatest task experiencing a library to raise inner attention of the URM features and abilities that are now provided, and to inform library employees on how these features perform. Rajesh (2009) stated actual existence of the inter-relationship between market-orientation and excellent support performance. In total, three kinds of libraries were found: the strong; the medium; and the weak. The results show that the greater market-orientation is favorably connected with the libraries' excellent performance. Żołędowska-Król (2009), found that library users should not be treated as inactive individuals of library solutions but as partners to be involved in collaboration and discussions on information services. Siriprasoetsin et al., (2011) Investigated that the information and knowledge of URM among library employees and authority of library directors is focusing on user relationship, is a key to library success. Key elements also include the acceptance and assistance of the use of URM in the library, the obvious vision and mission about using URM in the library strategic plan, the information and knowledge of URM among library personnel on URM procedures, user characteristics, and behaviors. The business lifestyle and interaction aspects involve the creation of the URM cultures in working of the library, good teamwork, cooperative and obvious working agreements, obvious roles and responsibilities, good interaction among library employees, cross library functional integration, and performance evaluation and development were considered as important factors. The user management procedures factor contains recording and registration of user profiles, user analysis and classification, services to individual users, services to expected users, and current user interactions. The technological innovation for assisting URM aspects contains interaction technological innovation, and operations assistance through technological innovation. The programs for library services and emails aspects can be direct programs, such as circulations counter and self-circulation assistance, and indirect programs such as telephone, call center, email, personal web, library web, and social media technological innovation.

User Relationship Management in Pakistan Libraries

Developing nations such as Pakistan are still in the early levels of implementing URM lifestyle within their library landscape. To them, URM needs a large investment; therefore, they are still not prepared to completely follow URM lifestyle. Similarly, recently, there have been a lot of competitors within the library business in Pakistan. They have also noticed the significance of users; so, their primary concentrate is to maintain their current customers as well as to entice new ones by providing better features and solutions, nowadays. Therefore, most of the universities libraries have set up little automation software so the staff will be able to comprehend their users' needs more carefully and simultaneously stay aggressive.

A study conducted by Idrees, (2007) concluded that the professional library staff in Islamic Research Institute was highly cooperative, motivating and positive behaving with users. As a

result, users were highly satisfied with them. As far as none professional and security staff concerns, they were moderately cooperative and needed some rectification and training. The study recommended for orientation programs and proper marketing of library services. Khan, (2006) mentioned that the users of Peshawar university central library were found satisfied with the library services, nevertheless, the staff providing reference services had been recommended for continuous training and improvement. It is also noted that a seminar library of university of the Punjab was cooperative and competent, but lacked innovation and enthusiasm(Ramzan 2010). Staff needed some training according to the recommendations of this study. And when it was studied in Pakistan, it was determined that the library staff of the central library of Islamic university of Bahawalpur was found good in attitude, helpfulness, approachability and dutifulness(Bhatti and Rubina 2009).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Framework of the Research This research is based on a positivist approach and it is deductive. Furthermore, in this research, the researcher at the beginning proposed to use mixed (qualitative and quantitative) research methods. Data was collected using structure questionnaire to provide sufficient answers to the research questions.

Descriptive Statistics

Study was quantitative in nature, based on survey by circulating structured questionnaire form the library staff using non-random sampling technique. By employing all the efforts, responses from 35 participants, i.e., 81.4 % were received. Data was collected from 35, among them 22(62.9%) belonged to public sector university/DAIs while 13(37.1%) were in the private sector. Among 35 universities/DAIs 20 (57.1%) universities/DAIs were located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa while 15 (42.9%) were situated in the Islamabad region. 22 (62.9%) universities/DAIs have been established in the past 22 years followed by 7(20.0%) universities/DAIs during 1971 to 1990. It is pertinent to mention that only 6(171%) universities/DAIs have been established in the twenty-three years after the independence of Pakistan.

From timing prospective, it was found that 14 (40%) libraries observe eight hours of service timing i. e 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Approximately one third i.e. 11 (31.4%), 10 out of 35 observed twelve hours of service timing i.e. 8:00 am to 8:00 pm, and only two have their services timing up to fourteen hours i.e. 8:00 am to 10:00 pm. Day-wise more than fifty percent i.e. 19 (54.3%) serve their users five days a week while more than one third i.e. 14 (40.0 %) libraries remain open in six days a week. It is pertinent to mention that only 2 (5.7%) out of 35 libraries offer their services seven days a week.

Majority of the libraries were equipped with printed collection of books less than fifty thousand i.e. 24 (68.6%). Seven libraries have been found with printed collection from more than fifty thousand to one fifty thousand. Only four libraries were having a rich collection of books ranges from one fifty thousand to two fifty thousand. Due to nominal budget, collection development is totally ignoring, expenditures are not spared for library services. Consequently, majority of the libraries have less than 50,000 books in their central library. Regarding electronic collection that majority i.e. 31 (88.6%)of the libraries were having less

than ten thousand of electronic books collection followed by 3 (8.6%) libraries with up to 20000 collections.

For the analysis of data from respondents; the researcher used Statistical Package for Social Sciences software (IBM SPSS19). Frequencies, percentages and mean were measured.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT DISCUSSION

Perception About user relationship Management

A question was asked about the importance of CRM and its mutual benefits for library and users, in order to know the perception of the respondents serving in the libraries of universities and DAIs. The results shown in table 4.1 indicate that a significant majority of the respondents believe in the CRM advantages for the mutual benefits of both parties i.e. user and libraries.

Table 1: Perception about URM for Mutual Benefits

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	85.7 %
No	5	14.3 %
Total	35	100.0 %

User Relationship Management Activities in Libraries

URM Mechanism in Libraries

The respondents were asked about the mechanism they have adopted for enhancing relationship with the users of the library. Results in table 4.2 show those libraries using appreciation letters, in order to encourage the users and enhance the relationship with the users, followed by best user award, while the remaining mechanism e.g., (Users prizes and gifts, special incentives, recognition letters, special occasion messages/ wishes, users of the week/month/years) has not been formally implemented.

Table 2: URM Mechanism in Libraries

Rank	Mechanism	Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Appreciation letter	11	24	31.4	68.6
2	Best user awards	10	25	28.6	71.4
3	Special occasions message	7	28	20.0	80.0
4	User prizes	7	28	20.0	80.0
5	Recognition letters	6	29	17.1	82.9
6	Special incentives	6	29	17.1	82.9

| 7 | User of the week. | 4 | 31 | 11.4 | 88.6 |
| 8 | User gift system | 3 | 32 | 8.6 | 91.4 |

Library Usage

As far as usage of the library by the users is concerned, the results in table 4.3 show that, the users most often visit the library for catering their information needs.

Table3: Library Usage

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Occasionally	2	5.7 %
Often	9	25.7 %
Most often	24	68.6 %
Total	35	100.0 %

Library Contact with Library Users

The respondents were also asked that whether they try to get in touch with the library users after giving membership or not? The result shows in table 4.4 that significant majority of the libraries contact their users after giving them membership of their libraries. A very little number of libraries do not contact with their users after giving them membership.

Table 4:Contact with Users after Getting Membership

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	82.9%
No	6	17.1 %
Total	35	100.0 %

Medium of Contact with Users

The respondents were asked which channel of communication they use to remain in touch with their users. The results in table no 4.5 show that majority libraries use "face to face communication" with their users followed by libraries using email as channel of communication with their users. While the remaining channels (telephone calls, class orientation, letters, broadcast) are not being used properly.

Table 5: Medium of Contact with Users

Rank	Channels of communication	Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Face to face	22	13	62.9	37.1
2	E-mail	21	14	60.0	40.0

3	Telephone calls	17	18	48.6	51.4
4	Class orientations	15	20	42.9	57.1
5	Through letters	6	29	17.1	82.9
6	Broadcast	3	32	8.6	91.4

Orientation Programs for the Library New Members

The respondents were asked that whether they arrange regularly orientation programs for the new users or not. The result shows in the table no Table 4.6, that significant majority of the respondents of the libraries arranging orientation programs for their new members of the library. The number of libraries which do not gives values to the orientation programs for new members are very less.

Table 6: *Orientation Programs for NewMembers*

Statement	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	30	85.7 %
No	5	14.3 %
Total	35	100.0 %

Place of the orientation Program s

A question was asked from the respondents that how you designed orientation programs for new members and where you conduct this library orientation. Either you invite the new members to library or arrange these programs in the class rooms. The results shown in table no. 4.7 indicate that a most of the respondents invite the new members to library and very few of the respondent population arranged introductory classes in the class rooms to make them familiar with library and its services.

Table 7: Orientation Programs for New Members in library and class room

Rank	Statement	Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Orientation in library	28	7	80.0%	20.0%
2	Orientation in class room	10	25	28.6 %	71.4 %

Activities of the Orientation Programs

The respondents were asked about the activities of the orientation programs for new members of the library to make relationship stronger with the library users. Results in table 4.8 shows that most of the libraries used "presentation" method to encourage new members and to enhance relationship with them, while the others activities (distribution of introductory literature, welcome banners, virtual visit, showing library video, distributing welcome card and presenting flowers) are not being materialized.

Table 8: Activities of the Orientation Programs

Rank	Activities of the orientation programs	Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Presentation	25	10	71.4	28.6
2	Distribution of introductory literature	7	28	20.0	80.0
3	Welcome banners	5	30	14.3	85.7
4	Virtual visit	4	31	11.4	88.6
5	Showing library video	3	32	8.6	91.4
6	Distributing welcome card	1	34	2.9	97.1
6	Presenting flowers	1	34	2.9	97.1

User's Feedback Mechanism in Libraries

For the improvement and judgment of the current library resources, services and employee's performance customer feedback is essential. Apart that to find out the satisfaction of the users from the library product and services, different mechanism of feedback was asked, data in table no. 4.9 shows that some libraries uses "ask a librarian" and "email" which are not satisfactory for the future of library professions and there are no proper feedback system and library staff showing casual attitude towards users' feedback mechanisms and procedures.

Table 9: Feedback Mechanism Used in Libraries

Rank	Feedback mechanism	Frequency		Percentage	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Ask a Librarian	14	21	40.0	60.0
1	E -mail.	14	21	40.0	60.0
2	Suggestion/Complaint box	12	23	34.3	65.7
3	Survey	9	26	25.5	74.3
4	Complaint register	8	27	22.9	77.1

5	Help disk	7	28	20.0	80.0
6	Orientation	6	29	17.1	82.9
6	Discussion with user	6	29	17.1	82.9
7	Library webpage	3	32	8.6	91.4

Action on User's Complaints

To know about the customer complaints regarding library resources, services and staff efficiencies and attitude different techniques are employing. In addition, to improve library services and make correct their drawbacks and enhance users' relationship strong, different questions were asked regarding feedback. The data shown in table 4.10 show that most of the libraries uses " try to full fill users need" followed by "meeting with complaints" and fewer are trying to "educate and train their staff". However, there is no proper system of accountability in libraries from top to bottom concerning management of user complaints.

Table 10: Action on Users' Complaints

| Rank | Action on users complains | Frequency | | Percentage | |
		Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Try to fulfill users' needs	25	10	71.4	28.6
2	Meeting with complainants	22	13	62.9	37.1
3	Staff training	14	21	40.0	60.0
4	Corrective action against staff	11	24	31.4	68.6
5	Totally ignore complains	2	33	5.7	94.3

CONCLUSION

User care and satisfaction is the focus of all organizations for which formal and informal practices are exploited, even in university libraries around the globe and Pakistan is no exception. With the development of the technology, the demand of the users' has changed therefore new strategy should users expectation oriented that would be helpful in serving efficient and effective users service and thus the user would retained in the business. User relationship management has strong power to make more qualitative library service in this competitive environment. This study based on studying and analyzing the current activities and practices of user relationship management (URM) system in the university libraries of Pakistan.Successful URM can bring lots of benefits to the libraries, including increase products and services quality, user satisfaction, user retention, user value and finally libraries success. The study revealed that there is no proper execution of URM practices in the university libraries of Pakistan, however there are some activities which informally implemented. The awareness campaign about URM in libraries must be launched so that all the professionals will be introduced with its importance. There is a call for holistic approach of URM execution. Libraries should use modern medium of communication for the close relationship with the users like social media, electronic media and print media. An active feedback system should be introduced to improve the URM mechanism and continuous improvement of library services. Software especially integrated library systems (ILS) which can handle URM activities may be implemented in the libraries. Infrastructure of university

libraries must be improved which can support URM initiatives. Library schools must introduce URM subject as part of curriculum.

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