

Role of public libraries for promoting the use of digital resources and reading habits among children in digital era

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ABSTRACT

Purpose:

This study aims to investigate the public library activities in enhancing reading habits of children in digital era. It investigated the current activities of public libraries and challenges faced by librarians to deliver services to children.

Methods

Quantitative research approach was used to achieve the objectives of the study. A questionnaire was adopted for the purpose of data collection. The target population of the study consist of 132 librarians from public libraries located in Punjab province, Pakistan.

Findings

Conducive library's design, interactive workshops, recommending books to children based on their interests, and hosting of book clubs were used to attract children towards libraries. They made efforts to introduce children to a diverse range of digital reading materials, and provided explanations and guidance on how to access and use recommended digital resources effectively. Lack of communicating and engagement with parents, diverse learning needs and abilities of children, limited funding and resources make it challenging for librarians to provide quality educational materials for children. This study proposed libraries to collaborate with educators to develop inclusive activities, host parent-child workshops and reading sessions, customize programs for different age groups and learning levels, and explore grants and sponsorships to supplement funding.

Implications

Keywords: Reading; reading habits; reading habits among children; public libraries.

1. Introduction

There were days when adolescents and children would carry books in their hands. Children would read books containing images and words. These images and words would enable children to improve their reading skills. Now the modern era has changed the interests of children. Children have now moved from books to mobile phones. The modern era, the era of information technology, has an abundance of mobile phones, the internet, and live shows for children on TV, which affect children's reading habits. The students are running after mobile phones to watch movies and paying games. Such activities are affecting the activities of children relating to reading. Reading plays a very influential role in the development of children's cognitive skills. These aspects are killing the reading habits of children. When we

observe our children, they are mostly busy in watching cartoons or playing games on the internet.

Malipatil (2021) argues that a perusing society is viewed as an educated society. Therefore, fostering a reading culture should be encouraged among citizens, particularly children. Research and a variety of studies have demonstrated that today's generation is constantly on social networking sites and that the reading culture among youth has significantly decreased. There is a dire need to change the understudy's thoughtfulness regarding perusing, and this should be possible with the assistance of public libraries by expanding their administrations past the walls of the libraries and contacting the overall population, and changing them to become serious peruses. The researcher, therefore, intended to conduct research on the subject because they were aware of the significance of this fact. To carry out this study, it is essential first to discuss the significance of public libraries and then their role in encouraging children to read.

Children's reading habits is the means by which knowledge can be discovered (Akubuilu, 2015). According to Hughes (2007), reading is a complex relationship between the text and its meaning. Reading regularly is essential not only for personal development but also for the advancement of society and the nation as a whole. Without proper reading, a child cannot acquire the skills of patience, fraternity, progress, and equality. Leisure reading helps children become adroit and rational. In addition, children are empowered to become an essential part of society and have free access to culture through consistent reading habits. Olasehinde et al. (2015) argues that the reading culture makes the community more informed, connected to the outside world, and connected to its citizens. Reading is one of the most important ways to get information, and reading is the foundation on which other academic and analytical skills are built. The majority of people are aware that children's academic performance is directly correlated with their reading habits, which have a significant impact on academic performance. The role that the public library plays in fostering children's reading habits is very important, and it becomes even more important during the sixth through eighth grades, which are considered to be the "defining age" in the process of reading development.

Children should be encouraged to read as many books as possible from a variety of genres so that they can develop interests in a variety of fields. Children's reading habits can be greatly influenced by the library. In today's digital era, the reading habits of children are confronted with multifaceted challenges, and public libraries play a pivotal role in fostering and nurturing these habits. According to Harisanty and Anna (2020), public libraries, as information service centers for the community, strongly support activities that increase children's interest in reading through a variety of activities and facilities, such as fairy tale activities, games that can sharpen children's concentration, and interesting children's book collections. **The transformation of resources from traditional to digital formats is happened in previous decade.** In order to nurture future generations of readers, these activities and facilities are highly recommended for use by parents or others in neighborhood. All around the world, the public libraries embraced different advanced strategies to develop reading habits among children at early age by using different technologies. So, it is necessary to examine the role of public libraries to develop reading habits in this digital era. The only thing that can get children back to reading activities is the public library. The public library plays a vital role in developing children's reading habits. This research, therefore, aims to examine the role of public libraries that can enhance the use of digital resources and reading habits of children in digital era. This study will be carried out in Punjab. This study will adopt a quantitative research design to meet the objectives of the study. Schools and public libraries play a leading role in the reading habit of children. The challenges and implications of poor

reading habits and the role of public libraries in enhancing the reading habits of children will be investigated in this study.

2. Research Questions

The public library's role in encouraging reading is crucial. Making reading a part of our daily lives and establishing reading as a habit that will be desired and enjoyed by all of us throughout our lives are the primary goals of fostering a reading habit in society. In the digital age, where screen time competes with reading time, understanding how public libraries can continue to play a vital role in fostering reading habits is crucial for promoting literacy among children. Public libraries often house a wealth of cultural and regional literature. By exploring how public library activities impact reading habits, this research provides insights into how libraries contribute to the academic success of children in Punjab. The digital era presents both opportunities and challenges. Understanding how public libraries integrate digital resources and technology into their reading programs can provide valuable insights into promoting digital literacy alongside traditional literacy.

This study examines how library activities engage not only children but also parents and caregivers in promoting reading habits, thus fostering a sense of community around literacy. By focusing on children, this research can assess the long-term impact of library activities on reading habits, potentially uncovering trends in reading habits that extend into adulthood. Librarians working in public libraries develop themselves for enabling the readers in digital era. This research can explore how their attitude toward digital resources impact children's use of digital resources and reading habits in digital era. This study has the following research questions that made the researcher to carry out research on the topic;

1. What are the current activities of reading habits among children in public libraries
2. What is the role of librarians to facilitate children's reading habits in digital era
3. Which types of challenges faced by librarians to deliver services to child in public libraries?
4. How to enhance the reading habits among children in public libraries?

3. Literature review

3.1 Need of Reading Habits in Children

Developing strong reading habits in children is essential for their overall growth and development. These habits have numerous benefits that extend across various aspects of a child's life. Reading is the foundation of literacy. It helps children learn and understand the written word, enabling them to read, write, and communicate effectively. Strong reading skills are crucial for success in school. Children who read regularly tend to perform better in all subjects, as reading comprehension is essential for understanding textbooks and instructional materials. Reading exposes children to a wide range of words and phrases, helping them build a rich and diverse vocabulary. A larger vocabulary enhances their ability to express themselves clearly and intelligently (Maharsi, Ghali & Maulani, 2019).

Reading encourages critical thinking skills. When children read, they analyze, interpret, and evaluate information, which strengthens their problem-solving abilities. Reading fosters creativity and imagination. It allows children to explore new worlds, envision different scenarios, and stimulate their creative thinking. Reading fosters creativity and imagination. It allows children to explore new worlds, envision different scenarios, and stimulate their creative thinking. Reading is a solitary activity that encourages independence. Children can entertain themselves and learn on their own, which is an essential skill for personal growth (Celik, 2020).

3.2 Impact of digital resources and activities in enhancing reading habits of children

Children's reading habits are also influenced in special ways by libraries in preschools and other educational settings. Taking children to children's libraries on a regular basis gives them more opportunities to interact with the materials they will use to develop a reading habit. On the other hand, activities geared toward encouraging children's reading habits that are held in children's libraries are effective. In this sense, the presence of schools, public and kids' libraries nearby the living climate or in pre-school foundations come to the very front. Children's reading habits can be influenced in a big way by public libraries that are open to everyone and offer services just for children. Early childhood institutions, also known as kindergartens, day nurseries, and kindergartens, typically charge a fee for their services. Costs are challenging to cover for some families with low monetary circumstances. Public libraries, which are open to everyone and offer free services, are currently the most important candidates for such environments because they are well-equipped with a wealth of resources and well-trained staff (Watson, 2004). In addition, it will be beneficial for developing reading habits to provide children with a home library or mini-library. Reading habits are greatly helped by increasing the number and variety of books in the home, frequent visits to the library, and activities that make reading enjoyable.

Furthermore, according to Üstün (2007), people are more likely to read at home when the material in the books is connected to real-world experiences. As per a concentrate by Teale in 1999, libraries can cooperate to make programs that families can use at home and in the library to assist their youngsters with gaining understanding abilities and propensities (Teale, 1999). Children can develop the habit of using the library in addition to their reading habits. In this way, the fact that libraries collaborate with families to help preschoolers develop a reading habit will serve as a compass for both raising families' awareness of reading habits and helping children develop their own.

2.3 Promotion of reading among students: Role of public libraries

One of the keys to educational success is reading. Reading activities can have advantages, one of which is that they increase readers' knowledge, insight, and benefits (Schrijvers et al., 2019). The requirement for cooperation between parents, children, teachers, and school participation is one of the efforts to encourage students' interest in reading. Children receive assistance from their parents; In addition, schools provide students with literacy reading books and the infrastructure and facilities necessary for supportive support facilities.

In contrast, students, particularly those in lower grades, usually have the ability to read children's literature. The kinds of perusing books that understudies are keen on incorporate stories containing fiction, verifiable and a sort of perusing book about innovative works, books about stories ever, and picture story books without pictures.

Selecting a book for students, it is best to choose a story from their point of view. Furthermore, picture story books are outfitted with an account in the story utilizing the youngster's language style and the circumstance of the story is generally finished in day to day exercises (Juchniewicz (2022).

Reading activities can be carried out by someone who shares the students' interest in reading and talents. Understudies can pick perusing books as per their age and outlook and their desires. Generally kids are more centered around perusing books that are remarkable, intriguing with splendid book tones and books that are given alluring variety pictures (Styles & Respectable, 2020).

Measures to improve reading

Rafi et al. (2021) suggested that Government can increase general motivation to improve reading and resource usage trends by expanding the network of public libraries at the union

council level with competent staff. Given the ongoing education and populace development in each locale, the law on the public library can likewise be revised and carried out to help the current library framework better and make more libraries in the public interest.

Utilizing cutting-edge technology to collect, organize, store, and make information and valuable documents accessible to the general public and future generations is the primary objective of public libraries. The Internet has made it easier to access databases and other information sources, and mobile phones have revolutionized convenient communication in the age of technology (Mcharazo & Olden, 2016).

Challenges in improving reading habits

Public libraries are significant and the focal point for bringing issues to people in general, no matter what their orientation, station, religion, and identity are. In the digital age, information inequality is a major problem, and public libraries have limited resources to address it (Sin, 2011).

Public libraries continue to struggle with the challenge of providing users with new services that satisfy their scientific, cultural, and entertainment requirements as well as developing the necessary social methods, despite significant efforts (Askarizad & Safari, 2019).

Public libraries in Europe provide special opportunities for children with reading disabilities to view, read, or hear books in various ways, some Asian libraries do not offer materials that are simple to read (Ikeshita, 2019).

According to Ikeshita (2019), public libraries in many developed and developing nations offer readers with print disabilities access to sufficient legible materials and reading facilities. Moreover, public libraries spread wellbeing data to accomplish the objectives set in their arrangements and establish the groundwork for advancing social wellbeing by further developing client wellbeing education (Tajedini et al., 2019).

Better information, future counseling, and other opportunities help alleviate the discomfort of the younger generation by raising awareness of various diseases, particularly the Corona Virus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak. It additionally brings issues to light of the public authority's political exercises, financial advancement, the modern upset, and promoting exercises for different items in the news or electronic media. It is difficult to meet all of these public demands because public libraries in both developed and developing nations face budget cuts and a lack of skilled workers. People require public areas where they can connect by thinking, learning, researching, or creating on their own or with others. However, the creation of community centers that provide all the necessary opportunities for the exchange of views on the development of an educated society has always been impeded by budgetary constraints. In light of this, public libraries are required to fill the void and encourage new community connections and activities (Lehman, 2018).

According to Habib-ur-Rehman et al. (2017) the majority of Pakistani public and religious libraries face budget cuts, insufficient inventory, traditional services, insufficient human resources, and inadequate cataloging and classification.

Quick access to information and responses to various references is made possible by the technology. It makes it easier for librarians to collect data, make it easier for people to find information, and teach people how to use information resources and skills. However, meeting the requirements of data centers is made more difficult by the inadequate technology roadmap in developing nations (Bertot, 2009).

It is difficult for the government to expand the network of public libraries in each region due to the large population, low literacy rate, and large cultural and linguistic communities. Because of poor transportation, a lack of technological infrastructure, and widespread geographic complications, public libraries barely serve communities in remote areas where access is impossible (Varheim et al., 2019).

Professionals are required to take a variety of training courses, seminars, symposia, conferences, and advanced training courses as a result of the introduction of ICTs and their integration into libraries. In order to combat the continued existence of private vendors and intense competition in the future, public libraries must be completely prepared for the technological revolution. In order to respond to open-source publications, budget constraints, customer purchases, and other trends, librarians must modify job descriptions. The 21st century has been referred to as the "age of technology," which simply translates to "globalization" (competition). In this era, the role that public libraries play in the right direction is crucial for rousing a society that has been asleep. In terms of public services, previous research evaluated the value of public libraries as a whole, focusing on adult services, with the exception of children (Stejskal et al., 2019).

According to Hickling-Hudson and Hepple (2019), libraries in every region play an appropriate role in enhancing general public pedagogy, providing teacher education, and providing new ways to connect with local communities.

In order to facilitate public information services, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Library Directorate (KPKPLD) was established in 1946 with offices in Mardan, Abbottabad, Nowshera, Peshawar, Swat, Swabi, Dera Ismail Khan, Haripur, and Dir district. In addition to books and other materials, these libraries also have nine databases to support public digital reading in areas without a nearby public library.

Because, according to Donovan (2020), paper is better suited to serious research that requires in-depth attention, whereas digital reading is better suited to easy reading. Prior to the establishment of these public libraries, municipal libraries operated under district administration served and existed in some locations with inadequate staff, furniture, buildings, and resources. Within the framework of the provincial higher education commission, recently established libraries play a crucial role in the development of a community that includes relevant buildings, collections, databases, a skilled workforce, and computer experts in each district. Considering this situation, the objective of this study is to decide the ongoing status of library asset use and to analyze the accessible stock and the public library organization to meet the data and instruction needs of the local area.

Jabbar et al. (2021) conducted a study to find the role of parents and Public libraries in developing the reading habits of children. They discovered that parents have more influence over their children's reading development than schools or society. The schooling of their folks altogether impacts the way that kids approach perusing. Reading habits, parent-child reading interaction and engagement, home literacy practices, and the availability of various reading materials all had a significant impact on children's reading development. As a result, literacy and education strategies for mothers were deemed to be more significant than those for fathers. Youngsters' syntactic, lexical, and language familiarity could be affected by their moms.

Habibu and Ejembi (2011) looked into how public libraries and schools encourage children and teens to read in Nigeria. Children's academic success is heavily influenced by their comprehension and reading skills, which in turn are influenced by our efforts to encourage reading habits, according to their research. It is important to keep in mind that the school and public libraries play a crucial role in preparing students for academic success. They suggested that starting a good reading routine with the right kind of books, especially at the beginning, is very important. Keepers should be on the extreme front line supporting new, creative strategies and sponsorship for grasping headway. To increase reading time, limit time spent watching videos, surfing the internet, and watching television. To accommodate a variety of comprehension needs and levels, the selection of books that are accessible to children and adolescents should be expanded. These are books that aren't always required reading in the

classroom, but they can help students learn more or figure out their own reading preferences and habits.

Harisanty and Anna (2020) investigated the children's research conducted at Taiwan's public libraries. They concluded that parents play a crucial role in fostering a child's interest in reading and encouraging them to visit libraries. To guarantee that there is no hole in crafted by guardians who take their kids to the library, not simply housewives and representatives, guardians with any word related foundation are expected to routinely welcome their youngsters to the library. Regardless of distance, parents can invite their children to the library. The majority of people who visit the library do so on motorcycles. The essential reasons guardians take their youngsters to the library are to empower areas of strength for an in perusing and to involve spare time for helpful exercises. Once a week, parents invite their children to the library, with each visit lasting no more than one to two hours.

Malipatil (2021) moreover finished examination to look at the job of Public Libraries in propelling Comprehension of the job of guardians and libraries in advancing kids' understanding propensities. He discovered that reading habits ought to be taught to citizens, particularly children. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the youth reading culture has significantly decreased and that today's generation is constantly on social networking sites. Public libraries can help with pulling together understudies' consideration on perusing by contacting the overall population and empowering them to become serious perusers by extending their administrations past the limits of libraries.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Parikh and Vyas (2020) conducted a survey on library patrons' reading habits. They discovered that library patrons are significantly more interested in reading eBooks and other digital content. During isolated indoor lockdowns, users have found their own unique ways to involve themselves in a variety of learning, leisure, and hobbies in addition to reading more content. Ahmad et al. (2020) directed study to investigate parent's job and library job in perusing society of the kids. They discovered that parents are the first and most important force in boosting and stimulating learning potential by developing the habit of reading continuously, which is why they play an effective role in instilling reading habits in their children.

Many researchers in the world have conducted research on this topic, but this topic has not been investigated extensively in Pakistan. So this preliminary literature review gives a gap for further study. Feeling this gap, the researcher aimed to conduct research on the topic. Therefore, it was essential to explore this area in the Pakistani context to the role of the public library in sustaining and promoting reading habits among children in digital era.

3.2 Research Design

The overarching framework or structure that leads a research project is referred to as research design. It is an important part of the research process because it describes how the study will be carried out, what methodologies and procedures will be utilized, and how data will be collected and analyzed to answer the research questions. A well-designed research design is vital for providing relevant and reliable results that may add to the current body of knowledge in a certain field of study (Kothari, 2004). Qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed in a variety of sectors, including social sciences, psychology, business, and healthcare. They each serve a particular purpose and have various approaches, and researchers select between them based on the nature of their study questions and aims. In practice, researchers may employ a mixed-methods strategy that includes components of both qualitative and quantitative research to create a more complete knowledge of a study topic. When you need to measure, quantify, and statistically analyses data to answer specific research questions, make generalizations, and draw objective conclusions, quantitative

research is appropriate. It is an effective method for hypothesis testing, prediction, and research in fields requiring numerical precision and replicability (Creswell, 2017). Due to the nature of the research questions of this study, quantitative research approach was opted to achieve the study's aim.

A research method is a strategy or methodology that researchers employ to perform a study or inquiry in order to answer research questions. Researchers can use research methodologies to collect and analyze data in an organized and reliable manner. Survey research is a study approach that involves gathering information, views, attitudes, behaviors, or attributes from a sample of persons or institutions (Dad & Khan, 2012). Surveys are structured questionnaires or interviews given to respondents and are a frequent approach in social sciences, market research, and a variety of other sectors (Powell, 2004). Survey research seeks to collect data in a systematic manner in order to answer particular research questions. This study applied survey research method using web-based questionnaire to collect the data from the respondents.

3.4 Population and sampling

The term population refers to the entire group of people, things, or entities that are the subject of a research study. It indicates the bigger, encompassing group from which a researcher draws findings or inferences about the greater population (Powell, 2004). Understanding and characterizing the study population is a critical phase in the research process since it influences the study's scope and generalizability. The population of current study is library professionals from public libraries located in the province of Punjab.

Researchers employ sampling strategies to choose a selection of persons or things from a wider group for data gathering and analysis. These strategies are important in research since studying a full population is sometimes impracticable or prohibitively expensive. Researchers can establish reliable inferences and draw conclusions about the entire population by selecting a sample that is typical of the population. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy used in research to pick a sample of people or things based on their accessibility and availability to the researcher. This strategy is frequently used because it is practical and convenient, but it may not produce a representative or impartial sample. Convenience sampling is distinguished by its ease and quickness, making it a popular choice in circumstances where more rigorous sample procedures would be difficult or impracticable. Due to the scattered population, this study used convenience sampling technique for the selection of respondents.

3.5 Research Instrument: Development, validity and reliability

A research instrument is a tool or gadget used by researchers to collect data for a study. These devices are intended to assist researchers in gathering information, measurements, or observations from participants or subjects. Depending on the nature of the research, the type of data required, and the research aims, research instruments can take numerous shapes. Due to the nature of research questions, this study adapted a questionnaire in the light of reviewed literature. The questionnaire contain five sections. First section consisted of demographic information of the study sample. The second section of the questionnaire covered the questions about activities carried on for reading in public libraries for kids. Third section of the questionnaire covered role of librarians to facilitate children's reading habits in digital era. Challenges to deliver services to child in public libraries were covered in section four while section five was about suggestions to enhance the reading habits among children. Moreover, Likert scale was applied to record the response from the respondents.

Pilot testing, also known as a feasibility study or a pilot study, is an important first phase in the research process. It entails carrying out a small-scale trial run of a research project before

launching the full-scale investigation. The primary goal of pilot testing is to detect and fix any difficulties, defects, or obstacles in the research design, data collecting techniques, and research equipment before they have an adverse effect on the larger and more thorough study. A pilot testing consisted of 05 respondents were carried out. The main purpose to conduct pilot-testing was to ensure the validity and clean the flaws in the instrument. On the basis of pilot-testing, some of the sentences were rewritten because it was difficult to understand by study respondents.

Seeking professional advice while developing a questionnaire is an important stage in the research process. Experts in the relevant subject may offer significant insights and input to assist ensure that your questionnaire is well-constructed, valid, trustworthy, and accurately measures the variables of interest. To collect the opinions from experts about questionnaire, the questionnaire was sent to three experts of the field. The recommendations received from the experts were incorporated after discussing with supervisor.

The Cronbach's alpha (often referred to simply as "Cronbach's alpha" or "alpha") is a widely used measure of internal consistency or reliability for a set of items or questions in a questionnaire or a scale. It assesses the extent to which the items within the measure are interrelated or consistently measure the same underlying construct. In other words, it helps determine whether the items in a questionnaire are reliable in consistently measuring what they are intended to measure. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.60 or higher is commonly considered acceptable for research purposes. This threshold is often used as a rule of thumb, especially in fields like psychology, education, and social sciences. The reliability of the questionnaire used for current study is showed in below table.

Table 3.1
Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test

Sr #	Questionnaire Section	No of Items	Alpha Value
1	Current activities of reading habits	10	0.780
2	Role of librarians to facilitate children's reading habits	10	0.764
3	Challenges to deliver services to child in public libraries	12	0.820
4	Suggestions to enhance the reading habits among children	10	0.873

3.8 Data Collection and analysis

Following the final edits, the researchers created a questionnaire using Google Form. The researcher sent the questionnaire link by email, Facebook, and WhatsApp. When a respondent requested clarification, the researcher briefed the question. However, information was gathered from 132 librarians. When the data collection phase was over, the researcher assigned a number to each questionnaire. The data was entered into the "Statistical Package for the Social Sciences" (SPSS) for analysis. The mistakes that occurred during data input into SPSS were corrected. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, "frequency and percentage counts", "mean", and "standard deviation" in SPSS software. To determine the

difference in opinions, the Independent Sample t-test was performed. The regression test was also used to test the hypotheses.

4. Results

4.1 Demographic Information

The outcomes (Fig. 4.1) showed that a larger proportion of responses 75 (56.8%) were male as compared to female 57 (43.2%).

The results (Figure 4.2) demonstrated that larger proportion of responses 55 (41.6%) were belonged to age group of 26-30. The figure showed that the large number of respondents 27(20.4%) and 22 (20.4%) fallen in age group of 20-25 and 36-40 respectively.

The results (Figure 4.3) showed that larger proportion of responses 84 (63.6%) had Master degrees. A high number of respondents 48 (36.4%) have MPhil degree.

The results (Figure 4.4) showed that larger proportion of responses were librarian 77(58.3%), followed by assistant librarian 55(41.7%).

The findings (Fig. 4.5) showed that larger proportion of responses 59 (44.6%) responded that they doing their job from 6-10 years, followed by 49 (37.1%) to age group of 11-15.

Table 1: Demographic variables

Demographic variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	75	56.80
Female	57	43.20
Age		
20-25 years	27	
26-30 years	55	41.60
31-35 years	23	
36-40 years	27	
Education		
Master/BS	84	63.60
MPhil	48	36.40
Designation		
Assistant Librarian	55	41.70
Librarian	77	58.30
Work experience		
1-5 years	24	
6-10 years	59	44.60
11-15 years	49	37.10
Total	132	100

4.2 Updating Knowledge of digital resources

Table 2: Updating the knowledge of digital resources

Level of agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree		
Agree		
Neutral		
Disagree		
Strongly Disagree		

Total		
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4.3 Role of Librarians for promoting use of digital resources

The respondents were asked about their role to facilitate children's reading habits. The outcomes (Table 4.5) showed that the majority of the respondents were agreed that they actively recommend digital resources to children based on their reading preferences and age (Mean=3.56; SD=0.69) and they make efforts to introduce children to a diverse range of digital reading materials (Mean=3.54; SD=0.71).

Moreover, the outcomes revealed that majority of the respondents were agreed that they ensure that the digital resources I recommend align with the educational goals of children (Mean=3.52; SD=0.64), and overall, they believe that my recommendations positively influence children's reading habits (Mean=3.46; SD=0.78).

Table 3: Role of librarians for promoting use of digital resources

Role of librarians for promotion of digital resources	Mean	SD
I recommend digital resources to children	3.56	0.69
I make efforts to introduce children to a diverse digital reading material	3.54	0.71
I ensure that the digital resources I recommend align with the educational goals	3.52	0.64
I provide guidance to access and use recommended digital resources	3.37	0.75
I recommending digital resources by considering the age and reading level	3.31	0.84
I collaborate with teachers to align digital resources with curriculum.	3.21	0.96
I recommend digital resources that are culturally diverse and inclusive	2.61	1.03

Scale: Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1

4.4 Current activities to enhance reading habits in digital era

The respondents were asked about the current activities carried out in public libraries. Table 1 showed the results regarding the current activities of reading habits. The outcomes indicated that majority of the respondents were agreed that the library offer sponsored reading events to motivate children to read more (Mean=4.42; SD=0.66), the library offers a variety of engaging storytelling sessions for children (Mean=4.34; SD=0.65), the library conducts interactive workshops that encourage children to read (Mean=4.33; SD=0.56), Library staff actively recommend books to children based on their interests (Mean=4.18; SD=0.76), and the library provides a welcoming and child-friendly environment that encourages reading (Mean=4.30; SD=0.70).

Table 4: Current activities to enhance reading habits in digital era (N=132)

Current activities of libraries	Mean	SD
The Library offers sponsored reading events	4.42	0.66
The library offers a variety of engaging storytelling sessions	4.34	0.65
The library conducts interactive workshops that encourage children	4.33	0.56
The library provides a welcoming and child-friendly environment	4.30	0.70
The library organizes reading contests	4.28	0.69
The library hosts book clubs or reading groups	4.28	0.71
The library provides a diverse collection of age-appropriate books	4.12	0.78
Library staff recommend books to children based on their interests.	4.08	0.90
The library encourages parents to participate	4.08	0.90
The library's layout and design are conducive to engaging children	4.07	0.74

Scale: Strongly Agree=5, Agree=4, Neutral=3, Disagree=2, Strongly Disagree=1

4.5 Recommendations and activities increased interest in reading

Table 5: Recommendations and activities increased interest in reading

Level of agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree		
Agree		
Neutral		
Disagree		
Strongly Disagree		
Total		

4.6 Demographic factors influencing correlation of updating knowledge with promoting use of digital resources

Table 4: Demographic factors influencing correlation of updating knowledge with promoting use of digital resources

Types of correlation	Pearson Coeff.	Sig.	Pearson Coeff.	Sig.
Gender	Male		Female	
Updating digital knowledge and promoting the use of digital resources	.462**	.000	.496**	.000
Updating digital knowledge and promotion of reading habits	.225	.055	.295*	.026
Designation	Librarians		Assistant librarians	
Updating digital knowledge and promoting the use of digital resources	.398*	.000	.588**	.000
Updating digital knowledge and promotion of reading habits	.126	.274	.437**	.001
Education	BS/MLIS		MPhil	
Updating digital knowledge and promoting the use of digital resources	.502**	.000	.449**	.001
Updating digital knowledge and promotion of reading habits	.303**	.005	.128	.383
Work				
Updating digital knowledge and promoting the use of digital resources	.101	.230	.234**	.001
Updating digital knowledge and promotion of reading habits	.055	.515	.030	.669
Age				
Updating digital knowledge and promoting the use of digital resources	-.165*	.050	-.120	.090
Updating digital knowledge and promotion of reading habits	-.174*	.037	-.128	.071

4.7 Demographic factors influencing correlation of efforts and activities with impact of reading habits among children

Table 4: Effects of gender on relationship of using e-resources with academic performance

Types of correlation	Pearson Coeff.	Sig	Pearson Coeff.	Sig.
Gender	Male		Female	
Promoting the use of digital resources and impact on reading habits	.552**	.000	.497**	.000
Library activities and impact on reading habits	.225	.055	.295*	.026
Designation	Librarians		Assistant librarians	
Promoting the use of digital resources and impact on reading habits	.203*	.015	.466**	.000
Library activities and impact on reading habits	.308**	.003	.232	.001
Education	BS/MLIS		MPhil	
Promoting the use of digital resources and impact on reading habits	.209	.056	.298*	.040
Library activities and impact on reading habits	.457**	.000	.616**	.000
Work				
Promoting the use of digital resources and impact on reading habits	.101	.230	.234**	.001
Library activities and impact on reading habits	.055	.515	.030	.669
Age				
Promoting the use of digital resources and impact on reading habits	-.165*	.050	-.120	.090
Library activities and impact on reading habits	-.174*	.037	-.128	.071

5.2 Discussions

The outcomes indicated that majority of the respondents were agreed that library offer sponsored reading events to motivate children to read more, the library offers a variety of engaging storytelling sessions for children, the library conducts interactive workshops that encourage children to read, Library staff actively recommend books to children based on their interests, and the library provides a welcoming and child-friendly environment that encourages reading. The outcomes showed that the majority of the respondents were agreed that they actively recommend digital resources to children based on their reading preferences and age, they make an effort to introduce children to a diverse range of digital reading materials, they ensure that the digital resources I recommend align with the educational goals of children, and Overall, they believe that my recommendations positively influence children's reading habits. The findings showed that majority of the respondents were agreed that addressing the diverse learning needs and abilities of children within the same program is challenging, difficulty in communicating the importance of parental engagement and collaboration in child education, Integrating technology effectively into child education services is a challenge due to limited access or expertise, and limited parental involvement in supporting their child's educational activities adds to the challenges were the major challenges to deliver services to children in public libraries. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents were agreed that collaborating with educators to develop

inclusive activities, providing technology workshops for both librarians and children, hosting parent-child workshops and reading sessions, and customizing programs for different age groups and learning levels.

Recommendations. Design a child-friendly and inviting space within the library with colourful, comfortable seating, and age-appropriate furniture. Display books with attractive covers and arrange them in an organized, accessible manner. Maintain a diverse collection of books that cater to various age groups, interests, and reading levels. Include books that feature characters from different backgrounds and cultures to promote inclusivity and diversity. Host regular story time sessions with engaging storytellers or librarians who bring stories to life with enthusiasm. Offer sessions for different age groups, including toddlers, preschool and elementary school children. Organize reading challenges, summer reading programs, and book clubs to encourage children to read regularly and set goals. Provide incentives such as certificates, small prizes, or recognition for completing reading challenges. Create themed reading lists and book recommendations based on age and interests. Offer reading guides and suggestions to parents and caregivers to help them choose appropriate books for their children. Host events related to books, writing, and literature, such as author visits, writing workshops, and book fairs. Incorporate interactive learning resources like educational games, puzzles, and multimedia materials that complement the reading experience. Set up cozy reading corners or nooks with soft cushions and bean bags where children can read comfortably. Ensure good lighting and a quiet atmosphere for focused reading. Offer access to digital resources and e-books, especially for older children who may prefer reading on electronic devices. Offer library tours and orientations to school classes and encourage teachers to integrate library visits into their curricula. Educate parents and caregivers about the importance of reading at home and how to support their child's reading journey. Recognize and celebrate children's reading achievements through awards, certificates, or displays of their reading milestones in the library. Encourage children to provide feedback on the library's collection and programs, making them feel involved in the library's activities. Instill in children a love for libraries and a sense of ownership by involving them in library-related decisions or activities.

5.3 Conclusions

The core aim of this study was to investigate the public library activities in enhancing reading habits of children in digital era in Punjab. The objectives of the are to investigate current activities of reading habits among children in public libraries, to examine the role of librarians to facilitate children's reading habits in digital era, to explore the challenges faced by librarians to deliver services to child in public libraries, to suggest strategies to enhance the reading habits among children in public libraries. To finish this investigation, an adequate review of the relevant literature was undertaken. Quantitative research approach was used to achieve the objectives of the study. The target population of the study was consisted of 132 librarians from public libraries in Punjab. A questionnaire was developed and used for the purpose of data collection. The outcomes indicated that majority of the respondents were agreed that the library's layout and design are conducive to engaging children in reading activities, the library conducts interactive workshops that encourage children to read, library staff actively recommend books to children based on their interests, and the library hosts book clubs or reading groups specifically for children. The outcomes showed that the majority of the respondents were agreed that they actively recommend digital resources to children based on their reading preferences and age, they make an effort to introduce children to a diverse range of digital reading materials, they ensure that the digital resources I recommend align with the educational goals of children, and they provide explanations and

guidance on how to access and use recommended digital resources effectively. The findings showed that majority of the respondents were agreed that difficulty in communicating the importance of parental engagement and collaboration in child education, addressing the diverse learning needs and abilities of children within the same program is challenging, limited parental involvement in supporting their child's educational activities adds to the challenges, and limited funding and resources make it challenging to provide quality educational materials for children were the major challenges to deliver services to children in public libraries. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents were agreed that collaborating with educators to develop inclusive activities, hosting parent-child workshops and reading sessions, customizing programs for different age groups and learning levels, and Exploring grants and sponsorships to supplement funding.

Implications

This study explored the current state of reading habits among children in public libraries in Punjab. With the proliferation of digital media, it is essential to assess the extent to which children engage in traditional and digital reading activities. This study discovers the role of librarians in public libraries to develop reading habits and challenges they faced in enhancing reading habits among children. Moreover, this study presented strategies for enhancing reading habits. This study will be valuable for management of public libraries. The findings of this study can improve strategies of public libraries to enhance reading habits among children. This study fills the literature gap and further benefits parents, educationists, teachers, and education policymakers in devising strategies to encourage reading habits among their children. The findings of this study can inform policymakers and library administrators in Punjab about the effectiveness of current library programs and services and provide recommendations for improving them to better support reading habits among children. This research work will help readers to know the status of public libraries in providing services that enhance reading habits in children. This research will give insights into the matter with respect to the role of libraries in improving the reading skills and habits of children. Moreover, this study will provide guidelines for future researchers aiming conduct research on the topic.

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