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Eco Literacy: Assessing the Contribution of Public Sector College Libraries of Bahawalpur District

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Abstract: The eco-literacy study is relatively recent. E-literacy is the capacity to analyze an ecosystem and take action to preserve or restore it. This method might aid in bottom-up change. Eco literacy aids in the resolution of eco-challenges. Teaching, reading aloud to children, and using fashion as a platform may assist individuals in comprehending eco-concerns. The study is carried out to examine the role of public sector college libraries in eco-literacy; to identify the demographic factors related to eco-literacy and to assess college teachers' and librarians' perception of public sector college libraries' participation in eco-literacy. The current study is descriptive in nature and Cross tabulation chi squares are used to obtain a representative cross-section of the population's views and sentiments on a current issue through a survey. The participants of the study were the academics and librarians of the colleges in Bahawalpur District. Participants in the study also had a more positive perception of libraries' role in fostering a more sustainable society and were likelier to say they would attend sustainability events hosted by a library. The current study led to the need for more empirical research on sustainable libraries and how the public sees libraries' efforts to promote eco-responsibility. However, more research is required to fill a gap in the existing empirical literature.

Introduction

Librarians are critical to any library's effective and long-term functioning. Furthermore, librarians contribute significantly to civic life by teaching volunteers and the general public (Cantafio & Ryan, 2020). Because of global challenges such as climate change and natural resource depletion, sustainability is gaining appeal (Bastille et al., 2020). Because of greater interconnection across communities, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization believes that a fresh viewpoint on social transformation and sustainable community development is required. This strategy emphasizes spontaneous

community development. Bottom-up approaches are required for social progress and community longevity (Gaffey, 2018). As a result, local communities need critical sustainability information to increase their eco-literacy (Knapp, 2017).

Literature Review

Libraries can assist individuals in understanding and dealing with eco-challenges. Libraries, as educational institutions and sources of intellectual and spiritual sustenance for local communities, may aid in disseminating literacy

to individuals who would not otherwise have access to it (Zhang, 2020). "As learners demand change, so must public college libraries," Miller contends (2010). Because of its new position as an eco-literacy center, the public college library system is expanding dramatically (Kayode et al., 2020). The UN Agenda 2030 calls for libraries and other educational institutions to assist the SDGs. As a result, libraries may help to increase eco-literacy (Krajina, 2021). IFLA established the International Advocacy Programme in 2016. This campaign seeks to raise eco-literacy among librarians and urge libraries to support the SDGs (Loach et al., 2017). eco-literacy among librarians is critical to the construction of a green library. Ethically, a corporation should prioritize long-term management.

The distinction between eco-friendly and sustainable libraries was briefly discussed in the beginning. Fedorowicz-Kruszewska contends that, despite widespread use, writers should distinguish these words (2019). As a result, both notions will be covered in the following paragraphs.

The term "green library" refers to an environmentally friendly and sustainable approach to library administration and has recently gained popularity. Eco-friendly practices and procedures must be implemented to increase the building's sustainability to have less of an influence on its natural surroundings. A library may take steps toward sustainability by, for example, lowering its consumption of water and electricity. To wit: (Grincheva, 2022) Sorting rubbish, recycling old books, and limiting paper consumption are all environmentally responsible behaviors (Clement, 2019).

In contrast to green libraries, sustainable libraries prioritize environmental and social (by providing information and a secure work and study space) and economic sustainability. Being eco-literate is synonymous with being ecologically concerned. Markets, talks, and Q&A sessions are examples of how event organizations can help with this. A sustainable

library will also use eco-friendly practices in its administration, digitize its collection, and make sustainability-related materials easily accessible. Researchers discovered that sustainable management in libraries necessitates a focus on a variety of factors, including the library's community, the nature of the library, the role of librarians, the function of the library, the library's infrastructure, the implementation of standards, and environmental management (Prendeville et al., 2017; Raynes & Heiser, 2019).

Problem Statement

Despite the profession's advancement, there is a need for more published research on the issue of eco-responsibility in library settings (Hunting, 2021). The internet is a terrific place to learn more about the Green Library Movement and how libraries promote eco-sustainability. The Green Library Movement has been around since the 1990s but fully took off in the library sector in 2003. According to Beutelspacher and Meschede, the Green Library Movement has been growing since the 1990s (Kryder-Reid, 2015).

However, various writers may have different perspectives about what makes a library "green." Depending on who invented the phrase, a "green library" might refer to a library that completely follows green construction practices and laws or a library that also provides information, counseling, and activities connected to sustainability. Any reading is valid (Fox et al., 2011). Distinguishing between green and sustainable libraries is important. In addition to a green physical structure, a sustainable library would incorporate green policies and procedures, sustainable leadership, eco-literacy for employees, counseling, and community participation activities (Deveci & Karter, 2020). The challenge of constructing environmentally friendly libraries may often be addressed due to the availability of well-defined standards and certifications. However, talks about establishing a long-lasting library are rare (Farnsworth, 2011). Published research may indicate libraries'

environmental consciousness. The researcher defines eco-friendly libraries and offers an overview of eco-friendly activities that have evolved from Croatian library collaboration (Abram, 2017). Draga's name appears on each of these scientific endeavors' published editions. Researchers surveyed public college libraries in Portugal and Finland to learn more about sustainable library practices (Waters et al., 2021). Most of the survey's questions were on the library's green policies and practices. Both studies covered environmental management, financial management, the library's environmental impact, environmental communication, and eco-literacy. Although academic librarians have a low perception and literacy of green libraries and environmental sustainability issues, Akbulut et al. (2018) discovered that librarians had positive attitudes toward actions that promoted education and literacy. Ghorbani, Babalhavaeji, and Nooshinfard (2016) interviewed twelve experts in library and information science and sustainability to lay the groundwork for long-term success in the Iranian library system. The goal was to lay the groundwork for the long-term expansion of Iran's library system. The authors created a framework for sustainable library administration divided into three parts: the context, the circumstances that cause the cause, and the intervening variables. To make libraries more environmentally friendly, Ayesha, K., and Batool, Hina (2020) conclude that simply asking librarians to change their practices is insufficient; rather, a well-thought-out policy is required.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to investigate

1. To examine the role of public sector college libraries in eco-literacy.
2. To identify the demographic factors related to eco-literacy
3. To assess college teachers' and librarians' perception of public sector college libraries' participation in eco-literacy.

Research Methodology

Research Design

To that aim, this study investigates what role, if any, public college libraries may have in raising eco-literacy. We used a descriptive method in this investigation. The survey method was employed to collect information since it was realistic given the population's size and stability and the requirement to generalize the study's results as much as possible.

To obtain data for the descriptive research, which detailed and assessed demographic information, surveys were performed with college administrators and librarians (Felleman-Fattal, 2017). Cross tabulation chi square are used to obtain a representative cross-section of the population's views and sentiments on a current issue through a survey. This is necessary so that the results of the researcher may be applied to a larger population (Van Beynen et al., 2018).

Research Procedure

Gathering data that explain actions, organizing it into a table, and analyzing it is what descriptive research entails. It frequently employs visual aids such as charts and graphs to assist the reader in comprehending the material. Quantitative research is divided into two categories: studies aimed at discovering conclusions and studies aimed at determining the potential role of public sector college libraries in eco-literacy.

The researcher investigated the potential role of public sector college libraries in eco-literacy in the current study. Respondents were approached physically (where possible), but in some cases, respondents were contacted via online sources such as email and an online questionnaire survey.

Population of Study

According to Denmis (2004), a population is a collection of individuals who share at least one characteristic that distinguishes them from others. A population is a group of people who

share a trait. This study aimed to determine how public college libraries might help with eco-literacy. To that purpose, the study's population consisted of all academics and librarians employed by public colleges in the Bahawalpur Division.

Sampling and Sample

Choosing whom to survey is an important aspect of any research. A "sample" is used to choose persons to answer questions. A sample is a subset of a bigger group of people (also called a population). A representative sample is a subset

of the complete population taken. A sample, in general, is a subset or representation of a greater total. Researchers employed a method known as convenience sampling to get an accurate representation of the population as a whole. Because Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) determined that a sample size of 363 was appropriate for a population of up to 7,500 persons, 300 teachers and librarians were chosen from the following three college districts.

1. Bahawalpur
2. Rahim Yar Khan
3. Bahawalnagar

Research Findings

Demographic Information

Table 1

Demographic

		Frequency	%
Gender	Female	20	8.0
	Male	280	92.0
	Total	300	100.0
Age	21 to 25 Years	30	10.0
	26 to 30Years	225	75.0
	31 to 35Years	45	15.0
	Total	300	100.0
Profession	Teacher	225	75.0
	Librarians	75	25.0
Income	Below 50000	30	10.0
	50000 to 75000	75	25.0
	75000 to 100000	135	45.0
	100000 to 125000	45	15.0
	Above 125000	15	5.0
	Total	300	100.0

According to the previous pages, a total of 300 people were surveyed; 180 people completed the survey, with 120 of them being women. Table 1 describes the sample distribution per age group in detail. There were 120 respondents between the ages of 21 and 25, 135 between the ages of 26 and 30, and 45 above the age of 30.

Approximately 45 percent of the sample (or 135 respondents) indicated yearly earnings of between Rs 35,000 and Rs 55,000. The sample may be divided into five groups based on their usual income. Twenty-five percent of the sample (75 persons) earned less than Rs 35000/- per year. Only 30 responses could be classified as

having a greater income. 15% of the whole sample consisted of persons whose monthly income ranged between Rs 75000/- and Rs

100000/- (15 respondents), whereas 5% earned more than Rs 100000/- . (15 respondents).

Table 2

Cross-tabulation between Gender and Income

Income	Gender		Total	Test of Association	
	Male	Female		Chi-Square	P-value
Below 50000	26	4	30		
50000 to 75000	70	5	75		
75000 to 100000	128	7	135		
100000 to 125000	42	3	45	3.966	0.554
Above 125000	14	1	15		
Total	280	20	300		

The above table depicts the cross-tabulation between the gender and education level of respondents and chi-square testing for the significance of association among the attributes

of tabulated variables. The Chi-square testing process is used to check the significance of association among both variables, and the chi-square value is 3.966.

Table 3

Cross-tabulation between Gender and Age

Age	Gender		Total	Test of Association	
	Male	Female		Chi-Square	P-value
21 to 25 Years	19	8	27		
26 to 30Years	73	5	78		
31 to 35Years	188	7	195	3.966	0.554
Total	280	20	300		

The above table depicts the cross-tabulation between gender and age groups of respondents and chi-square testing for the significance of association among the attributes of tabulated

variables. The Chi-square testing process is used to check the significance of association among both variables, and the chi-square value is 2.707, and the test is not significant.

Table 4

Cross-tabulation between Gender and Profession

Profession	Gender		Total	Test of Association	
	Male	Female		Chi-Square	P-value
Teachers	208	17	225		
Librarians	72	3	75	2.707	0.008
Total	280	20	300		

The above table depicts the cross-tabulation between gender and Covid 19 Infected students and chi-square testing for the significance of association among the attributes of tabulated variables. The Chi-square testing process is used to check the significance of association among both variables, and the chi-square value is 5.992. The test is significant at a 5% significance level.

Conclusion

The public college library is dedicated to serving the needs of its customers by providing a range of services both inside the library and in the surrounding community. A public college library's principal aim is to encourage leisure reading among its clients and the local community. As a result, the library must make its services more accessible to persons who have difficulty reading. This might help anybody who has difficulty reading. Books, magazines, and other publications are only some media available to library visitors. One example is distributing content to a large audience in several mediums (such as books or digital files). Adult literacy programs, lifelong learning, community, and cultural participation, leisure reading, and other activities may be established in public college libraries to assist them in playing an important role in the community. Public college libraries, like other institutions, have a responsibility to guarantee that all members of the public have open and unfettered access to materials of local significance. This function needs the ability to retrieve information. Information literacy education programs are highly recommended for students of all ages and abilities. There are no age, gender, or physical ability restrictions in any of America's public college libraries. The public college library gives community people access to more information. To put it another way, a public college library has the potential to level the playing field between those who have convenient access to information and those who do not.

Future Implications

The British colonial government built public college libraries inside their colony's boundaries, but only the most literate members of the local populace were permitted to use them. During that period in Pakistan, the government's decision to limit ordinary people's access to public college libraries led directly to the country's growing economic imbalance between the country's elite and lower classes. As a result of this decision, the number of people living in the upper-income groups increased. When Pakistan attained independence in 1947, the nation had just two libraries: the Punjab College Library and the Punjab Public College Library. Both of these libraries and archives are most likely in Punjab. Both libraries have been relocated to Lahore. According to an online poll, Pakistan has 77 distinct public college libraries dispersed throughout the country's various metropolises. The public college libraries in Pakistan are now in disrepair due to significant budget cutbacks and little government assistance. There has been much progress, but most people in this area still have a long way to go regarding library culture, and the government should take note of this.

In Pakistan, there are issues with publicly funded college libraries. A lack of funding, an outdated collection, an unreliable energy supply, an inadequate building, a lack of furniture and shelving, a shortage of trained staff, and outdated information technology are among the issues confronting the library.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

1. The curriculum may be changed by eliminating or replacing old or irrelevant information.
2. A public college library's website is an excellent means for communicating marketing information, such as instructions for certain collections, activities, and services.
3. Legislation governing the supply, pricing, and accessibility of services might be enacted.

4. Create a single, unified website to better inform the public about the resources available at different public college libraries and how they relate to one another.
5. Public college library administration has the potential to become more transparent and self-sufficient.
6. Large libraries should provide a children's reading space and stock items corresponding to the local curriculum.
7. A public college library is an excellent option if you want to read but cannot afford it. Readers may explore unexplored intellectual terrain by using the facilities of a public college library.

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