Exploring professional competencies of college librarians in Sahiwal division, Pakistan.

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Abstract

Purpose- The goal of this study was to investigate the professional competencies of private college librarians in the Sahiwal Division.

Research Methodology- In this study, a survey-based quantitative research strategy was employed. A questionnaire as a research tool was used to collect data from college librarians of Sahiwal Division. The population of the study comprised male and female professional librarians and library staff working at different private colleges in the Sahiwal Division. A total of 101 registered private colleges were selected as the population whereas the estimated number of library professionals in all these colleges came to 101 librarians. The convenience sampling technique was used in the study. The sample size calculated was 86 out of which only 81 (94.18%) respondents responded to the questionnaire with a response ratio of 94.18%.

Findings- The knowledge-based competencies of college libraries including evaluating the suitability of the software for digital projects, marketing library services using social media, knowledge of the software acquisition process, and building digital collection were rated high as librarians were reported experts to handle these operations. However, the professional librarians were low competent in organizing library materials, had knowledge of digital print preservation, and of the copyright laws in the digital environment. The study also reports that training and professional development programs are considered to be useful for an overall boost in competencies and for librarians to work confidently in their libraries. Moreover, college librarians strongly agreed that the factors that cause hindrances in the development of professional competency include a lack of research skills, lack of IT expertise, and incomprehensive syllabus being taught to the professionals (then students) at their respective departments. The hypothetical results showed that there is no significant difference between the mean of librarians' perceptions regarding professional competencies based on their gender. Similarly, no significant difference was found between the mean of librarians regarding the impact of training and development programs based on their gender. However, a significant difference exists between the mean of librarian factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians based on their gender.

Originality/value- This study is geographically limited to the private

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Introduction

Professional competencies play a key role in the better performance of a work to do in any field. We see that librarianship has always played a significant role to enlighten, enrich, and empower the society in the past. The drastic shift in academics led to some great challenges faced by the librarians in the COVID-19 pandemic era. However, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the closure of educational institutions all over the world. So, there had been a dramatic shift in education to be provided through online platforms. Hence, the demand for qualified librarian staff which is the legal requirement of the educational institution has increased over time. Librarians not only acquire, organize, and disseminate information but are alsoresponsible to fulfill the information needs effectively and efficiently. The study conducted by Abotalebi and Biglu (2017) placed particular emphasis on the abilities and information that special librarians working in medical libraries must possess. The management of information resources, information systems and technology, reference and information services, and research methodologies were all covered by these competencies. Hence, there is a need to possess a great deal of knowledge, skills, and competencies to perform a job more efficiently at libraries and information science (LIS). Due to the shift in application and working of libraries, the librarians now require improving their professional's competencies. The competences required performing the duties of librarians, record managers, information managers, archivists, and knowledge managers were identified by Fraser-Arnott (2017) after an analysis of the competencies of information professionals. Five categories—interpersonal and personal, organizational, managerial, and technical—were created to classify the competencies. According to the study's findings, information professionals were acting in a distinct capacity within the information management; as a result, these abilities may be directed to better prepare information professionals entering the field.

Information seeking behavior of students has changed due to advancements in ICTs, now they want to be provided with the exact information they need. In research conducted to find the core competencies to work effectively as a professional librarian, Robati and Singh (2013) found that IT skills, organizing information, and the development of reliable skills to perform research are important. Experts validate the competencies like gathering data, specialization of a particular subject of knowledge, organizing and publishing the

gathered information, and managing the researched knowledge. The librarians of this advanced era are also professionals of information and technology; they must possess an advanced level of knowledge and skills to be more productive. There is a fair share of literature present about the traits and competencies of people working as professional librarians. The corpus of knowledge, abilities, behaviours, proficiencies, and cognizance required to use ICTs to carry out a variety of professional tasks is referred to as digital competence, according to Ferrari (2012). Sharing and managing digital content are two examples of these duties. According to a meta-analysis by Sackett and Walmsley (2014) a number of fundamental personality characteristics, such as conscientiousness, agreeableness, emotional stability, and extraversion, are associated with both overall job performance and, in actuality, with the crucial components of task performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and employees' counterproductive work behavior. To develop and polish the skills training and development of staff has an integral part to play. The importance of training and development programs has been discussed in the literature very frequently. This study focuses on exploring the professional competencies of private college librarians in Sahiwal Division, Pakistan.

Literature Review

The published literature review demonstrates that many studies have investigated the competencies of LIS professionals at local and international levels. Some relevant studies are discussed in this section. Shah, Shah and Jbeen (2022) investigated the initiatives taken by LIS specialists in Pakistan. They examined the skills required to LIS (library and information science) practitioners in the modern era. Their findings emphasized on the value of several competencies for librarians and information educators, including subject-matter expertise, information technology expertise, instructional expertise, research expertise, as well as managerial, leadership, and social competencies. Additionally, it was stressed that companies and education both need to support LIS professionals' requirement for a diverse set of skills. In another recent study Muzamil and Nabeel (2021) identified the employability skills necessary for LIS professionals to work successfully in specialized libraries in India. Their research discovered that while new scientific and technical skills are in high demand due to the changing nature of librarianship, recent LIS graduates lack these desired skills. There are many reasons why people lack the necessary skills, but the majority of professionals believe that the LIS curriculum and training offered in the nation's LIS schools fall short in terms of equipping students with the skills they will need in the workplace and that the courses

are irrelevant to the new, evolving interfaces of libraries and information centers. Yadav (2022) identified the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities for the LIS professionals. He specified the following five broad areas of KSAs: data management, research, soft skills, and traditional library abilities. He discovered that the importance of computer literacy, library automation, and library digitalization is shared among LIS professionals. The outcomes also highlighted how crucial "soft skills" are for LIS professionals. It was allegedly only necessary to have prior understanding of foreign languages, technical services, and library liaison services to work in special libraries. In another study Yadav (2022) determined the fundamental abilities and knowledge required by potential employers for library and information science (LIS) jobs in India. He identified that academic and education libraries in the public sector are the biggest employers of LIS specialists. Work experience linked to a candidate's profession is one of the most common requirements of employers. According to the findings, libraries place the most value on soft skills, managerial abilities, technical skills, and computer literacy. The main duties of top-level positions include library administration, library supervision, and book and journal acquisition.

Khan and Parveen (2020) carried out a research study on the qualifications of librarians employed in specialized libraries. According to their conclusions, Punjab special library librarians possessed intermediate-level skills as required by the Special Libraries Association. They however, possess some strong interpersonal and fundamental professional skills. The study places a strong emphasis on the training needs of librarians who work with special libraries in order for them to develop the necessary abilities. Kathleen et al. (2020) reported the importance of leadership skills for a librarian. The research finding showed that the important elements of leadership skills among librarians are 1) emotionally intelligent and 2) capable of surviving in dynamic environments that are affected by rapid change. They should know different leadership styles and they should be capable of making a good decision. The good librarian leaders are those who understand the vital role of research libraries at all times. Khan, Mustafa, and Usman (2022) reviewed a study on the usage of cutting-edge techniques for marketing and the library services in university libraries Lahore, Pakistan. Their findings indicated that librarians used social media tools to advertise library services and strengthen the bond between staff and clients. Librarians also employed electronic mailings to alert users about recently added services, offering electronic access to information, sending a representative to engage in institutional events, and employing flyers and posters are other methods of library

promotion.

Anwar and Zhiwei (2019) conduct a study on future librarians' competencies and skills. The results of this study demonstrate that some critical abilities, capabilities, and information pertaining to the issue of library organization are still inadequate among LIS professionals. This would imply that the librarians need to have all the necessary knowledge and abilities to run their libraries. As a professionally competent, a person is only able to work successfully if hehas the required knowledge and skill to perform the task required in his profession. This argument was reported in a survey conducted by Choi and Rasmussen (2009) in which the respondents were asked about the aspect of their position for which they areprepared least as a professional librarian. The results indicated that many respondents lacked the knowledge related to web technologies and usage of vocabulary to communicate properly. The findings showed that library professionals should require knowledge about different dimensions of digital library and technology. Different studies at the university and college level have been conducted in Pakistan to date to analyze the required competencies among librarians. The skills required to use digital devices for example laptops, cameras, different kinds of digital printers, multimedia technology, and the skill to read barcodes were examined among the librarians of Karachi. Results showed that respondents were competent enough to use these devices (Ansari, 2013).

On the other hand, in a research conducted by Khan and Bhatti (2017) revealed that professionals working in libraries of Pakistan have only a basic level of knowledge and skills to work in digital libraries. Similarly, another research carried by Ahmed and Rehman (2016) among the librarians of KPK found that respondents were not competent enough to use different software, application and they unsatisfactorily handled digital data. From different researches, it has been concluded that librarians sometimes lack enough knowledge and skills required to handle their duties. It is important to analyze the important competencies mentioned in the literature. The competency of active learning and adaptation has been emphasized inresearch conducted by Kathleen et al. (2020). They reported that a library professional should have 1) the knowledge of ways to locate information, 2) analytical evaluation of the problem and gathering different knowledge to create new concepts. Moreover, he should be aware of new trends and changes in an environment including the ability to foresee the future possible trends in knowledge. The handling of online data requires library professionals to hold a strong grip on IT skills. As the technology evolved with time the skills required to keep track of online information have also changed but unfortunately, a large number of librarians have an only basic

knowledge. A finding of a small study conducted by Ayoku and Okafor (2015) states that most of the respondents have only a little knowledge to use Microsoft word and mail services. The skill and knowledge required to use search engines and directories were found least among the respondents. A librarian is normally expected to possess strong leadership skills. Different researchers have discussed the leadership skills of librarians. Calarco et al. (2016) in their research found that present era librarians have good managerial skills. They are capable of developing innovative research plans and develop unique ideas for research collaboration. Every profession including librarianship requires the person to be professionally competent that might requires certain personality traits. As the time challenges are changing with exponential rates a professional competent must evolve his or her personality traits to overcome these hurdles. The use of technology is as important for librarianship as having the competency of knowledge management and information organizer. It is believed that with rational thinking and effective communication skills, librarians can overcome all kind of impulsive thoughts and emotions which include stress, emotions, and change (Bano, Mehraj, and Rehman, 2019). Machala and Hovart (2010) gave importance to the lifelong learning idea. The research discussed that library professionals learn throughout their lives to sustain and improve their corecompetencies. Moreover, they argued that the vital skills needed for librarians are to provide customer-oriented services. Leo (2018) argued that libraries undergo continual professional development (CPD) programs and the managers invest in these programs because they are motivated and have high morale. They want to get rewards and recognition, career development, and advancement, and team development. Mentoring is an advanced CPD tool that is effective for all the faculty of the organization. When a person is promoted to a new position in an organization he might need some mentoring to settle in. In some organizations, there are programs for mentoring where one member of staff who has expertise and experiences helps to develop another member of staff to develop mentee (Hussey & Campbell, 2017; Hodges, 2017).

Khan, Khan, and Khan (2011) argued that it's crucial to understand that training and development programs are a necessity. Furthermore, it was discussed that development programs are important to organizational success because it enhances and affects positively the performance of its workers. With the development of technology educational professionals were required to enhance their skill and knowledge of IT. Researchers have been performing different studies to evaluate this need for three decades. Heinrichs and Heinrichs and Lim (2009) have stated in the results of their research that now professionals are required to get training to

develop their web designing, multimedia, and database management skills. Librarians now have to maintain the information flow through digital means. The respondents of the research showed their willingness to acquire skills in using social media networks, the web, and other online activities. Collection management is a very vital professional skill of archivists. The research conducted by Ameen (2009) in libraries of Pakistan found that people working in Pakistani libraries are using hybrid resources by following the digital literacy trends. But they lack managing the printed and electronic collections. Professionals cannot improve this skill through formal education. Training and development programs have become a necessity to acquire this skill. Communication of librarian staff with their users is an unavoidable task. Providing training to improve communication skills will help professionals to smoothly communicate with their clients (Aliu and Eneh, 2011).

Cardwell (2009) researched the level of skills that librarian staff had been compared with the levels of skills that they required. This study helped the professionals to analyze the current librarian's roles and their performance with future roles and to develop more focused and enhanced development programs. To determine if university librarians were suitable for working in digital contexts, Ayoku and Okafor (2015) looked into their information technology skills. The findings of their study disclosed that a majority of participants were able to use email and word processing applications. However, there was a lack of expertise with how search engines and directories operated. The main requirements for running any organization in the digital age are skills. The two essential pillars of any individual professional who improves and creates life easier are the 21st-century capabilities and abilities. Building the professional staffs' competence is made possible by libraries and other nonprofit organizations. ICTs are also playing a crucial role in changing the library's overall services and structure in the digital age. To effectively manage the library, these things require expertise in the related fields where a librarian addresses those issues. Frost (2018) discussed in the research about the training programs and mentioned that training and development programs strengthen and improve skills and bring the performance of workers to the same level. These improved skills help the staff to perform better in their entire organization. Gabcanova (2012) researched to evaluate the effectiveness of these training programs. The researcher argued that lifetime learning is healthier and key to a successful life for information professionals. Learning new knowledge and skill is an essential element of the librarian's profession in this era of information. LIS professionals continuously face a lot of challenges in their professional field. These factors hinder the maximum

possible outcomes of their work. Transformational policies help to cope with these ultimatums. Hence LIS professionals are required to learn and evolve their skills and competencies to fill the gaps created due to the intense bombardment of knowledge every day (Singh and Malhan, 2012). Corrall, Kennan, and Afzal (2014) reported that knowledge related to a specific discipline, research methods, management of data, ICT skills, etc. are slightly important, and lack of this knowledge cause hinderers to the effective development of information professionals. Lack of professional training affects the performance of employees. The research finding indicates that if a professional is competent enough he benefits both the individual and the institution in which he serves.

Statement of the Problem

The development and progress of any library is dependent upon the professional competencies of librarians that how far they can meet the standards of professional practices. Professionals having insight into the needs of users, the problems of the organization, and the experience of working in such a library are the best source of ascertaining the professional competencies expected to work in a library. Looking into the importance of college libraries and the role they play in the provision of information, it has become very important to see the status of the professional competencies that these college librarians possess to run their libraries more effectively and efficiently. In the Pakistani scenario, most of the studies have been conducted to find out the ICT competencies among librarians while very few studies are available to examine the professional competencies of librarians. The current study is designed to find out the professional competencies, skills needed, and to explore the problems faced by college librarians of the Sahiwal Division in this regard.

Research Questions

Four research questions were framed for this research:

RQ1. What professional competencies such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes are needed to work in college libraries?

RQ2. What is the difference in the perceptions of librarians regarding professional competencies, factors hindering, and impact of training and development programs based on their gender?

RQ3. What is the impact of training and development programs on the college librarian's competencies?

RQ4. What are the factors hindering the development of the professional competencies of college librarians?

Research Hypotheses

H1.   There is a significant difference between the mean of librarian's perceptions regarding professional competencies based on their gender.

H2.   There is a significant difference between the mean of impact of training and   development programs on librarian's competencies based on their gender.

H3.   There is a significant difference between the mean of factors hindering the development of professional competency of librarians based on their gender.

Research Design

A quantitative research method was used in this research study. Cresswell (2013) discussed that the "quantitative research approach is suitable to determine the beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes of individuals towards any particular phenomena". To collect data from the desired population survey research method was used. Literature review revealed that many previous studies used the same technique to conduct the study. The population of this research was comprised of male and female professional librarians working at different private colleges in the Sahiwal Division. A total of 101 registered private colleges were taken as population of the entire study. The estimated library professionals in all these colleges were 86.

Based on the study's research questions, a structured questionnaire was developed by consulting the published literature on the topic. Special help was taken from the studies of Ahmed & Rehman (2016) and Ameen (2009). In order to check the validity of the questionnaire, it was shared with some subject experts in the field of Library and Information Sciences. The subject experts pointed out some minor mistakes in the initial draft of the questionnaire which were addressed by the researchers. The reliability of the tool was checked by using the Cronbachs Alpha test. The value of the Cronbachs Alpha test was .708 which is considered to be good by the researchers. The questionnaire was consisted on two parts. The first part of the questionnaire focused on the respondents' demographic information, such as gender, age, experience, and institution type. The second part of the questionnaire was based on questions regarding (a) professional competencies such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to work, (b) impact of training and development programs on the college librarians, and (c) factors hindering the

development of professional competency of college librarians. In the statements Likert- point scale and dichotomous scales were used to measure the responses of the respondents. The total population of the study was 86 of which 81 respondents responded to the questionnaire completely with a response rate of 94.18%. The SPSS 22nd edition was used to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive as well as inferential statistics were employed to calculate the results and to check the association between the variables. To determine whether there was a correlation between the variables mentioned in the study's research questions, inferential statistics like the Independent Samples t-test were used. The results were presented in the Tables format.

Results of the Study

The distributed instrument's results and analysis are reported in this section. Each questionnaire component's mean and standard deviation scores are also addressed.

Professional Competencies Based on Knowledge

The table 1 shows the mean scores of the statements regarding knowledge-based competencies of LIS Professionals. Four competencies out of ten assertions scored higher than the mean of 3.00, according to the results. These include "evaluating suitability of software for digital projects" (M = 3.57, SD = 1.405), "Marketing library services using social media" (M = 3.51, SD = 1.769), "Knowledge of software acquisition process" (M = 3.32, SD = 1.687), and building digital collection" (M = 3.27, SD = 1.475). However, indexing electronic resources, IT management competency for library system competency, and handling references and bibliography management was responded as low in competency as librarians were moderately competent in these skills. Moreover, the competencies such as organizing library materials, knowledge of digital and print preservation, and knowledge of copyright laws in the digital environment was also responded as low by the professional librarians.

Table 1: Professional Competencies Based on Knowledge

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Evaluating suitability of software for digital projects	3.57	1.405
Marketing library services using social media	3.51	1.769
Knowledge of software acquisition process	3.32	1.687
Building digital collections	3.27	1.475

Indexing electronic resources	2.70	1.561
IT management competency for library system competency	2.57	1.36
Handle references and bibliography management	2.30	1.662
Organizing library materials	1.93	1.149
Knowledge of digital and print preservation	1.89	1.061
Knowledge of copyright laws in the digital environment	1.85	1.276

Skills Based Competencies

The mean scores for the statements pertaining to the skill-based abilities of librarians are displayed in table 2 below. The findings indicate that two of the five statements scored higher than the average of 3.00. These include "application of new technologies into library services" (M = 3.57, SD = 1.491), "Digitization skills" (M = 3.02, SD = 1.440). However, the competencies such as "skills of using different social media" (M = 2.30, SD = 1.569), "skills in information retrieval techniques", and "database search skills" mean scores below then 2.00. Moreover, the findings show that respondents were less competent about new emerging technologies but had basic competencies about managing libraries.

Table 2: Skills Based Competencies

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Application of new technologies into library services	3.57	1.491
Digitization skills	3.02	1.440
Skills of using different social media	2.30	1.569
Skills in information retrieval techniques	1.89	1.095
Database search skills	1.21	0.410

Training and Development Programs

The table 3 displays the mean scores of the statements regarding training and development programs. The results shows that respondents agreed with the statements as all six statements mean scores were above than 3.00. These include "learn marketing and

promotion of library services" (M = 3.44, SD = 1.652), "ensure positive user experiences" (M = 3.43, SD = 1.670), and "enhance knowledge of IT management" (M = 3.41, SD = 1.587), "explore new dimensions of research in Library sciences" (M = 3.37, SD = 1.558), become user-oriented" (M = 3.33, SD = 1.474), and "enhance professional & interpersonal skills" (M = 3.33, SD = 1.474), Which shows that these programs helps to learn marketing and promotion of library services, ensurepositive user experiences, enhance knowledge of IT management, explore new dimensions of research in library sciences, become user-oriented and enhance professional & interpersonal skills.

Table 3: Training and Development Programs

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learn marketing and promotion of library services	3.44	1.652
Ensure positive user experiences	3.43	1.670
Enhance knowledge of IT management	3.41	1.587
Explore new dimensions of research in Library sciences	3.37	1.558
Become user-oriented	3.33	1.474
Enhance professional & interpersonal skills	3.33	1.474

Factors Affecting in Development of ProfessionalCompetencies

The table 4 displays the means score of the statement's regarding factors affecting in the development of professional competencies of LIS professionals. The results shows that respondents of the study agreed and strongly agreed that lack of research skills, lack of IT expertise, poor quality of LIS courses taught, lack of teamwork, lack of flexibility/adaptability, lack of fund allocated to support library professionals training, lack of knowledge regarding new technologies in libraries, and lack of professional training programs affect in the development of professional competency with mean scores i.e.(4.37, 4.31, 4.30, 4.15, 3.99,3.68, 3.53 and 3.46) respectively.

Table 4: Factors affecting in development of professional competency

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Lack of research skills	4.37	2.453
Lack of IT expertise	4.31	2.402
Poor quality of LIS courses taught	4.30	2.624
Lack of teamwork	4.15	2.397
Lack of flexibility/adaptability	3.99	2.078
Lack of fund allocated to support library professionals training	3.68	2.047
Lack of knowledge regarding new technologies in libraries	3.53	1.923
Lack of professional training programs	3.46	1.759

Hypothetical Analysis

Three hypotheses were framed in this study based on mean difference in the perceptions regarding professional competencies, factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians, and to find the impact of training and development programs based on the gender. The test applied on all three hypotheses was Independent Samples t-test because the grouping variables assumed in the hypotheses was 2 that are male and female. The significant Alpha value assumed was 0.05. According to Alpha value, if the value of the independent samples t-test will be less than 0.05, then the hypothesis will be accepted and if the value found will be greater than 0.05 then the hypothesis will be rejected.

Independent Samples t-Test for Hypothesis 1

The hypothesis based on perception regarding professional competency was formulated as below:

H1: There is a significant difference between the mean of librarian's perceptions regarding professional competencies based on their gender.

The results of the Independent Samples t-Test given in Table 5 shows that the p-value obtained is .027 which is less than 0.05 which means that the hypothesis H1 has accepted. Hence was say that a significant difference exist between the mean of librarian's perceptions regarding professional competencies based on their gender

Table 5: Independent Samples T-Test for Hypothesis 1

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
							95% Confidence Interval of the Differences	
F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig.(2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
1.201	0.28	-2.26	79	0.027	-0.222	0.098	-0.42	-0.027
		-2.33	73.565	0.022	-0.222	0.095	-0.41	-0.033

Notes: Levene's test: The difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Independent Samples t-Test for Hypothesis 2

The hypothesis based on perception regarding difference regarding the impact of training and development programs is formulated as below:

H2: There is a significant difference between the mean of librarian's regarding the impact of training and development programs based on the gender. The results o f t h e Independent Samples t-Test given in Table 6 shows that the p-value obtained is .042 which is less than 0.05 which means that our hypothesis H2 has accepted. Hence, we can say that there is a significant difference between the means of librarian's regarding the impact of training and development programs based on the gender**.**

Table 6: Independent Samples t-Test for Hypothesis 2

Levene's Testfor Equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
				Sig. (2 tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
F	Sig.	t	Df				Lower	Upper
18.210	.000	2.064	79	.042	.290	.140	.010	.569
		2.326	76.366	.023	.290	.125	.042	.538

Notes: Levene's test: The difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Independent Samples t-Test for Hypothesis 3

The hypothesis based on perceptions regarding difference in factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians is formulated as below: .

H3: There is a significant difference between the mean of librarian's factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians based on their gender. The results of the Independent Samples t-Test given in Table 7 shows that the p-value obtained is .290 which is greater than 0.05 that means that our hypothesis H3 has rejected.

Hence, we can say that H0 there is no significant difference between the mean of librarian's factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians based on their gender.

Table 7: Independent Samples t-Test for Hypothesis 3

Levene's Test for Equalityof Variances				t-test for Equality of Means				
							95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
				Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference		
F	Sig.	T	Df				Lower	Upper
6.047	.016	1.065	79.00	.290	.054	.051	-.047	.155
		1.156	78.955	.251	.054	.047	-.039	.147

Notes: Levene's test: The difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Finding Related to Research Hypotheses of the Study

Three hypotheses were constructed for the study. The results for each hypothesis are mentioned as follows:

H1:   There is a significant difference between the mean of librarian's perceptions regarding professional competencies based on their gender.

H2:   There is a significant difference between the mean of librarian's regarding the impact of training and development programs based on the gender.

H3:   There is no significant difference between the mean of librarian's factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians based on their gender.

Discussion

This study is focused to find the status of professional competencies of college librarians in the Sahiwal division. As the literacy rate in our country is not up to the mark; the role of having libraries become more and more important for disbursing information to the academicians. Different studies at the university and college level have been conducted in Pakistan to date to analyze the required competencies among librarians. The skill required to use digital devices for example laptops, cameras, different kinds of digital printers, multimedia technology, and the skill to read barcodes were examined among the librarians of Karachi. Results showed that respondents were competent enough to use these devices (Ansari, 2013).

According to the current study's findings, evaluating suitability of software for digital projects, promoting library services via social media, understanding the software acquisition process, and developing a digital collection received favorable responses. However, indexing electronic resources, IT management competency for library system competency, and handling references and bibliography management were responded low in competency as librarians were moderately competent in these areas. Moreover, the competencies such that organizing library materials, knowledge of digital and print preservation, and knowledge of copyright laws in the digital environment was responded very low in competency as the professional librarians were very low in these operations. However, the competencies such that skills of using different social media, skills in information retrieval techniques, and database search skills were rated as high. Moreover, the findings show that respondents were less competent about new emerging technologies but had basic competencies about managing libraries. Hovart and Machala (2010) gave importance to the lifelong learning idea. The research discussed that library professionals learn throughout their lives to sustain and improve their core competencies. Moreover, they argued that the vital skills needed for librarians are to provide customer-oriented services. Han (2011) argued that it's crucial to understand that training and development programs are a necessity. Furthermore, it was discussed that development programs are important to organizational success because it enhances and affects positively the performance of its workers.

The study's findings also revealed that respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the statements that these training and development programs helped to learn marketing and promotion of library services, ensured positive user experiences, enhanced knowledge of IT management, explored new dimensions of research in library sciences, become user-oriented and enhance professional &

interpersonal skills. The previous study is also confirmed that the LIS professionals are required to learn and evolve their skills and competencies to fill the gaps created due to the intense bombardment of knowledge every day (Singh and Malhan, 2012). The study of Corrall, Kennan, and Afzal (2014) also confirmed that knowledge related to a specific discipline, research methods, management of data, ICT skills, etc. are slightly important, and lack of this knowledge cause hinderers to the effective development of information professionals. The respondents were asked about different factors which resulted that they agreed and strongly agreed that lack of research skills, lack of IT expertise, poor quality of LIS courses taught, lack of teamwork, lack of flexibility/adaptability, lackof fund allocated to support library professionals training, lack of knowledge regarding new technologies in libraries, and lack of professional training programs affect in the development of professional competency.

The hypothetical results showed that there is a significant difference between the mean of librarian's perceptions regarding professional competencies based on their gender. Similarly, a significant difference was found between the mean of librarian's regarding the impact of training and development programs based on the gender. However, no significant difference found between the mean of librarian's factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians based on their gender. The first objective of the study was to find the perception of college librarians regarding professional competencies such as knowledge and skills needed to work. The results shows that evaluating suitability of software for digital projects, marketing library services using social media, knowledge of software acquisition process, and building digital collection were responded as uncertain response. However, indexing electronic resources, IT management competency for library system competency, and handling references and bibliography management was responded as they were moderately competent. Moreover, the competencies such that organizing library materials, knowledge of digital and print preservation, and knowledge of copyright laws in the digital environment was responded as the professional librarians were highly competent. Moreover, the results show that the competencies such that application of new technologies into library services and digitization skills very rated as low. However, the competencies such that skills of using different social media, skills in information retrieval techniques, and database search skills were rated as high. Moreover, the findings show that respondents were less competent about new emerging technologies but had basic competencies about managing libraries.

The second objective of the study was to find the impact of training and development programs on the college librarians of the Sahiwal Division. The results concluded that training and professional development programs were considered to be useful for overall smooth working of librarians in their libraries. The results shows that respondents strongly agreed with the statements that these training and development programs helped to learn marketing and promotion of library services, ensured positive user experiences, enhanced knowledge of IT management, explored new dimensions of research in library sciences, become user-oriented and enhance professional & interpersonal skills. The third objective was based on the factors hindering the development of the professional competency of college librarians. The statistical results showed that respondents of the entire study agreed and strongly agreed that lack of research skills, lack of IT expertise, poor quality of LIS courses taught, lack of teamwork, lack of flexibility/adaptability, lack of fund allocated to support library professionals training, lack of knowledge regarding new technologies in libraries, and lack of professional training programs affect in the development of professional competency.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that college librarians possess a high level of knowledge-based competencies, including determining whether software is appropriate for digital projects, marketing library services via social media, understanding the software acquisition process, and developing digital collections. However, the professional librarians were low competent in organizing library materials, had knowledge of digital and print preservation, and had knowledge of copyright laws in the digital environment. The study also concludes that training and professional development programs are considered to be useful for overall boost in competencies and smooth working of librarians in their libraries. Moreover, college librarians strongly agreed that the factors that cause hindrance in development of the   professional competency include a lack of research skills, lack of IT expertise, and poor quality of LIS courses taught. The hypothetical results showed that a significant difference exists between the mean of librarian's perceptions regarding professional competencies based on their gender. Similarly, a significant difference was found between the mean of librarian's regarding the impact of training and development programs based on their gender. However, no significant difference exists between the mean of librarian's factors hindering the development of professional competency of college librarians based on their gender.

In light of the results of this research, the following recommendations are made for uplifting the knowledge and skills of college librarians:

- Information literacy workshops should be conducted by library professional associations to enhance the professional capabilities of college librarians. This step will yield to boost the professional skills of the college librarians in Pakistan.
- For enhancing the knowledge of practicing librarians the administrative authorities of respective colleges should manage training workshops for the college librarians so that they can perform well in building their academic career and become user oriented professionals.
- Library professionals should manage a query desk in their respective libraries where they can solved the queries of users through their available resources they should manage the subject guides, so that the required needs of patrons could be fulfilled without any hurdle.
- In order to support the professional growth of librarians in academic libraries throughout Pakistan, the Pakistan Library Association should offer skills-development programmes.

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