ACADEMIC LIBRARIES HOST COMMUNITY BUILDING: EXPLORING THE COMMUTER STUDENT EXPERIENCE IN BAHAUDDIN ZAKARIYA UNIVERSITY, MULTAN

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Abstract

A Challenges faced by commuter students are different from those faced by residential students and rate of academic achievement is also lower as compare to residential students. The focused of this study to examine academic library supports for commuter students' academic and social needs, obliged them to perceive they are unit of the college community, and thus their rate of academic achievement could progress. Questionnaire and interview methods has been used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire was conducted to academic librarians in different department of Bahauddin Zakariya University. Generating new connections of academic library with commuter students and community building has been proved by findings. Details of this research include successful guidelines for building community and developing engagement with commuter students. Recommendations are for academic libraries to organize programs that will provide opportunity for commuter students to interact with other students.

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1. Introduction

Libraries deliver services that people cannot get elsewhere but today it also use to robust community centers. Presently, most of the research anticipate that institutions' libraries are carrying out a productive job in providing the material they need to do their work, but for future responsibilities it is time to take in account the roles of all those involved in the research cycle – national organizations, research institutions, researchers along with libraries – in meeting the challenges that are approaching. While sustaining swift advancement in information technology the library must contribute adjustable spaces that subsidize an extensive range of users' learning and research activities. As anticipation for library assets and physical facilities have transformed, stakeholders have been called upon to transform campus libraries in innovative ways. Libraries have developed into more effective in helping with institution-wide exertions at increasing student achievement.

Academic libraries are institutions that are trustworthy knowledge providers. With the proliferation of information, academic libraries can help the communities develop. Academic libraries within universities have long been known as gateways to information. Campbell (2006) argued that academic libraries are complex institutions with multiple roles. The predominantly dynamic responsibility of academic library is to train information literacy to pupils who need capability in searching for information by themselves when they are carrying out their research. Academic libraries in universities and colleges have been playing critically-important roles for the support of their research students in almost all subjects and disciplines. Most of academic libraries assist their scholar either they are resident or commuter. Place of residence has considered one of the main aspects of student experience. Student affairs experts must be acquainted with experience faced by commuter students are different with residential students. The fact that they commute to campus "influences the nature of their educational experience" (Jacoby, 2000, p. 6). By definition, commuter students are "all students who do not live in institution-owned housing on campus" (Jacoby, 2000, p. 4). Due to spend more time in traveling commuter student have very little time to interact with other student in campus. Students who live in societies, fraternities, or in off-campus housing in any area immediately surrounding the campus (Jacoby 2000; Miller, 2003).

Academic Libraries serve as casual meeting places for people with joint interests and can be influential in the development of special interest groups. For marketing and promotion majority of libraries use social networking to push out information and announcements. This idea emerges a contingency to explore social networking's another perspective – community building – which may exhibit an unexploited strength of social networking for libraries to build community for commuter students.

This paper highlights the experiences of commuter students and the challenges they faced and how academic libraries can be helpful by hosting community building in the library for commuter students.

2. Literature Review:

This review will cover the literature relevant to commuter students, community building and academic library. Academic library is to remain the heart of the institution, it must take a more holistic approach to measuring the value of services. Studying the role played by the academic library in the formation of community among commuter students will ultimately also enhance our understanding of its contribution to student achievement.

Academic Library

Librarians must teach students how to use libraries and provide them variety of learning experiences through various media especially to the new breed of student. According to the prior educational experience, cultural differences, socioeconomic status, and generations learning styles the academic libraries must convey impressive level support and instructional services essential to the diversity of students. In a time of rapid change, faculty and librarians must recognize what they don't know and engage in robust conversations with students about their life, study methods, and learning needs in order to provide a more appropriate and effective academic experience. Academic libraries will be required to partner with faculty at all levels to provide educational support services for a variety of skill levels.

Academic libraries must evolve their mission from being organizations that facilitate students' consumption of information to organizations that facilitate students as creators of information.

Academic libraries could give importance of student engagement and its relationship to increased learning, libraries can provide powerful environments for community building for commuter students.

Commuter Students

Turner (2010) describes the elementary definition of a excursionist student by elucidating that the commuter people comprise of varied conventional [those who join college successively after high school] and non-conventional age group [those who had a disjunction between attending high school and college], full or part time students who reside either with their parents or in an accommodation outside the campus, those who are parents with children at home, or full time working students" (p.45). Since a comprehensive definition may not be agreed upon, numerous analytical groups are labeled as commuter students, and due to this apprehension, they are considered as any student not dwelling in campus for the sake of this study.

Because of multiple obligations of home and work, these students mostly take classes and leave university since they don't find time to develop connections with other fellows of the class. Even if they succeed the shortage of time require to nurture such relations asserts its affects. Conversely such students are at high risk of losing the vibrant support from the class mates which help them comprehend and manage their educational understandings. Commuter students, while immensely diverse, do possess some common interests.

Moreover, a credible consideration of the commuter student involvement is curbed by persistently damaging typecasts of commuters as apathetic (Jacoby, 2000; Krause, 2007; Ortman, 1995), emancipated (Dugan et al., 2008; Kuh, Gonyea, & Palmer, 2001), inadequate (Holdsworth, 2006; Ortman, 1995), and naive due to constant ties to family members (Ortman, 1995).

Hence, research that propagates the acknowledgement of the commuters' involvements and that provides a logical ground to evade the existing biases will be of great importance. Rather, research studies mostly focus on the disparities of group of commuter students (Jacoby, 2000; Kuh, Gonyea, & Palmer, 2001; Newbold, Mehta, & Forbus, 2011; Ortman, 1995; Rhatigan,

1986). The implication of these diversities is also underlined by Banning and Hughes (1986), who note that "commuting students represent the largest and most complex and diverse aggregation of students in higher education" (p. 23).

The major challenges that are confronted by commuter students are of two types: 1) specific problems to be dealt with on regular basis, and 2) the hurdles regarding their educational needs that institutions fail to tackle. Jacoby and Garland (2004-2005) found that first semester appears to be the most difficult time of their studies.

Community Building in Library:

According to Working Together Project (2014), growth in community rests up on the elements like associating, debating and engaging jointly to assimilate the requirements of the community and to design the path of library work and procedures. For libraries that wish to construct and intensify their links with community, community progression is an invigorating and decisive way to establish libraries as consistent means for future. Connecting with the community will in turn build relationships that will provide the opportunity to team up more comprehensively rather than just providing space for simple discussions. These strong connections guarantee that libraries involve in the diverse process of adhering the needs of the community and become the part of providing solutions of community's needs. Working Together Project (2014) proclaimed community development via libraries is not just providing people the assistance to attain their goals, instead libraries help them to discover the means to grasp their goals.

Socio-constructivist learning theories suggest that learning is more meaningful when it occurs in societal settings (Wenger, 1998) rather than as an individual, secluded activity as normally happens in a classroom. The related learning theory of Situated Cognition (Greeno, 1998) states that if learning is surrounded in social contacts among people in a specific situation, then it has a positive effect on personal development.

2. Research Method

This study allows the features of "survey research" as it tries to reveal the role of academic library in building community for commuter students. This research follows quantitative and

qualitative research methods. These methods practice to gather data regarding the building community in academic library and experience of commuter students through questionnaire and interviews.

Population & Sampling:

The population is large and diverse so collection of data form all commuter students in universities was difficult. In this study population is commuter students and academic library's staff of different department of Bahauddin Zakariya University. Therefore stratified random sampling is adopted. Simple stratified random sampling is adopted. The themes of this study contain 400 commuter students and 40 staff member of different department of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan.

Sample Design:

Random sampling was used to collect data to minimize personal bias of researches 400 commuter students were selected randomly from Bahauddin Zakariya University and staff of academic libraries of 10 different departments. To answer the research objectives, the researcher used Questionnaires and Interviews.

Analyzing of data is organized into four sections; section one is sample composition, section two is research question and verification of research questions, section three is item-wise analysis of collected data from commuter students' questionnaire, and section four item-wise analysis of collected data from library staffs' questionnaire. Interviews' questions and Questionnaire's items were really more about the respondents' experience and recognizing their own and their library staffs' struggles, qualities and strategy to build community for commuter students. T-test and chi square were used in statically analyzing the data.

Purpose of research:

The basic purpose of the study was to critically analyze the role of academic library in building the community for commuter students for their better achievements in study and make recommendations for improvement the part of academic library in doing it as well. This study was limited to the different departments of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan in Punjab,

Pakistan. The following four major research questions were set for the study.

Research Questions

- What are the pattern and processes that contribute to commuter student's formation of community within the library?

- What factors facilitate community building?

- What factors impede community building?

- What is the role of the library in facilitating or inhibiting commuter students' formation of community?

Depicts the division of commuter students to gender.

Table 1

Distribution of Respondents according to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	230	57.5%
Female	170	42.5%
Total	400	100%

Depicts the division of commuter students according to their study level.

Table 2

Distribution of Respondents according to study level

Study Level	Frequency	Percentage
PhD	110	27.5%
Master	185	46.25%
Graduate	105	26.5%
Total	400	100%

Depicts the division of library staff according to the professional qualification.

Table 3

Distribution of Library Staff according to professional qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage

Qualified	29	72.5%
Unqualified	11	27.5%
Total	40	100%

Depicts the division of library staff according to the working experience

Table 4

Distribution of Library staff according to the working experience

Working Experience	Frequency	Percentage
More than 15	21	52.5%
Less than 15	19	47.5%
Total	40	100%

3. Result:

This section of the paper is organized categorical result detail. The results for each category will be listed in its corresponding section. The first section will contain the results that pertain to hours and access. The second section will cover the results on students' psychology. The third section focused on the social connection to others.

In this section timing of library and campus offices is taken. The subjects on the survey relating to this are: access to information and hours and access. The statements in the "hours and access" section pertain to the first year commuter students' ability to go to different offices and use their services. Most reported percentage in this section of the survey tool are in the low 35% of the students are unable to use all services and 65% avail it. Questions related to "access to information" asked students how easily they could get information about various topics on campus. The results also low which show that the students find it difficult to get to offices especially for those who are travelling greater distance find services less accessible and could become frustrated.

In second section psychological component like desire for services, cared about as a student, and facility needs are taken. Statements for "desire for services" asked the student if they would like activities and services offered to them by the institution. Ten questions on the survey are

classified as desire for services. There is a significant difference between men and women when asked about the computer and internet availability in Library. 95% women desire to have separate place to use computer and internet whereas 82% men desire or unlimited internet usage. Most of the questions in this section were about services that do not seem to be necessary to the student experience, but relate to social activities. Questions on the survey were categorized as "cared about as a student" if they asked participants how they felt about the empathy of the institution or individuals on campus. Five statements on the survey were identified as relating to how participants felt they were cared about as students. Although majority of the commuter students are mostly neutral in their perceptions of being cared about, they still enjoy their experience at the institution of study. In addition to students' perceptions about different facilities on library were asked, the significant difference has found between students who travel less than 15 miles to those who travel more than 15 miles. 95% of all the computer students demand for proper dining area.

In this section, questions have asked to the participants that library is playing role to increase their social network. Ten statements on the survey were categorized as pertaining to the participants' willingness to be social or meet other students and the library role in it, and questions that related to the attendance of social programs offered by the library. The lack of desire to attend programs could be explained by the fact that students are spending time and energy to get services they need to function as a student. Another reason could be that fact that students do not feel welcome because the institution of study does not address their needs directly like it does for other populations of students.

4. Finding

From this research, I have ascertained that commuter students are a growing trend on college campuses. Commuter students face many challenges different from those of residential students. Commuter students have needs different from those of residential students' -- needs that institutions have been slow to address. Because of these challenges, commuter students have a lower rate of academic achievement than residential students. Research on students' result has shown that students who feel as though they are part of the college community have a higher rate of achievement. However, little research has been done on how commuter students form

community. Since the library is a central hub of campus activity, it is a natural assumption that community building activities take place within the library. Unfortunately, there is a gap in the research literature about how commuter students form community within the library. This study has tried to fill an important gap in information behavior literature by exploring how commuter students interact and how these interactions lead to the formation of community in a library at a specific institution. This study's results have informed library design, programs, and support services; provide avenues for measuring college libraries' impact on student success; and help librarians provide evidence of their contribution to college wide initiatives.

5. Conclusion

It was observed that on campus students have more opportunity to take part in overall activities as compared to the commute students. Chickering (1974) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) also find the same result in their research. Furthermore, the involvement of students in campus activities and use of educational resources depend upon the distance they are coming.

Thus, closeness to campus makes a difference in commuter students' level of engagement, with the warning that in certain aspects of the classroom experience commuters are comparable to their campus-based counterparts. The mixed results from this study suggest that much more must be done "to deepen commuter students' involvement in learning" (Jacoby, 2000b, p. 81). We must develop richer, more meaningful understandings of the commuter student experience, how we define commuter students, and in what ways different definitions yield different conclusions about this growing segment of American higher education. Some effective technical or services programs should be initiated for commuter students which enable them to meet the educational needs and give opportunity for interaction among students.

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