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Analyzing the Evolution of Library and Information Science Publications at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak: Patterns, Trends, and Contributions through a Content Analysis Approach (Up To 2024)

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Abstract

Background: The Department of Library & Information Science (DLIS) of Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, was established in 2015 to develop Library and Information Science education and research in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. Objectives: This study inspects the research productivity and publishing trends of teachers and scholars at DLIS, focused on theme areas, productivity excellence, and conventionality with universal research principles. Methods: A mixed-methods strategy was utilised, integrating bibliometric study of 178 faculty publications and 98 scholar thesis (2015-2024) with qualitative understandings resulting from departmental archives and annotations. Data were inspected to distinguish tendencies in oversight, thematic highlighting, publication importance, and acquiescence with academic standards. Results: Faculty associates, predominantly Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan, lead departmental research, focussing on digital libraries, information knowledge, and information administration. Student thesis demonstrated heightened assignation with current Library and Information Science subjects; however, journal articles remain limited. Supervision designs markedly pretentious output superiority, whereas lacks were noted in research discernibility and access to universal resources. Conclusion: The results designate a developing research philosophy at DLIS, accent chances to supplement student publication rates, extend global partnership, and support organizational rigour. It is advisable to implement planned interferences in mentorship, training, and access to academic databases to improve the research capability in Library & Information Science (LIS).

Keywords: Library and Information Science, Research Productivity, Publication Trends, DLIS, KKKUK

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1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The education of Library & Information Science (LIS) in Pakistan has knowledgeable considerable development, knowingly contributing to the groundwork of specialists for the progressing field of information organization. Presently, 14 academic organizations nationally offer LIS programs, encircling credential courses to PhD degrees. Of these, four are in the commercial zone, while the remaining ten are in the public sector, demonstrating the cooperative commitment of both commercial and governmental institutions to develop specialized skill in Library and Information Science (LIS).

Punjab is at the front of the state with six LIS departments, while Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa both have three LIS departments. Both Baluchistan and the centralized capital, Islamabad, hold a remarkable LIS department, hence enabling the convenience of LIS education countrywide. The current formation of two fresh Library and Information Science departments in Punjab highlights the rising demand for information professionals. A prominent development transpired in KP with the founding of the Department of Library & Information Science at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, in 2014. This department offers three educational programs: Bachelor of Science in Library and Information Science (BS-LIS), a postgraduate Master of Philosophy (MPhil) program, and a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) program in Library and Information Science (LIS). Thesis writing is compulsory for BS and MPhil students, while it is optional for MLIS students, providing academic suppleness to meet diverse student necessities.

Khushal Khan Khattak University is the foundational public-sector institute in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to launch an MPhil program in Library & Information Science, representative a prominent attainment in the field. The formation of this department was envisioned to address the increasing need for talented librarians and information administrators, providing graduates with the essential abilities to professionally manage both conservative and digital information structures.

The instant development of LIS education in Pakistan highpoints its indispensable meaning in the contemporary information organization arena. As technology progressively renovates the convenience and protection of knowledge, the demand for expert information specialists is intensifying. LIS institutes countrywide are satisfying this mandate while also improving the nation's academic and specialized progression.

1.2 Objectives of the study

- 1. To investigate the research output of undergraduate (BLIS), postgraduate (MLIS), and MPhil scholars in the Department of (LIS) at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak.
- 2. To examine the thematic focus of theses and approved MPhil synopses, identifying prevailing and emerging research trends in the field of LIS.
- 3. To evaluate the quality and consistency of key components, such as titles, abstracts, keywords, and references, in students' research outputs.
- 4. To assess the adherence to institutional guidelines for thesis formatting and referencing practices.
- 5. To identify gaps and provide recommendations for improving research practices, methodologies, and access to academic resources within the department.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the key areas of research focus among BLIS, MLIS, and MPhil students at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak?

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- 2. How do the research productivity and output of BLIS, MLIS, and MPhil students at Khushal Khan Khattak University compare across different academic programs?
- 3. What are the main challenges faced by LIS students at Khushal Khan Khattak University in conducting research and writing academic papers?
- 4. How do students' bibliometric practices (e.g., keyword selection, referencing, citation style) align with international research standards?
- 5. What is the role of digital libraries and knowledge management in the research interests of LIS students at Khushal Khan Khattak University?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the research productivity and academic practices of LIS students at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak. By assessing the current research trends, challenges, and areas for improvement, the study aims to identify gaps in LIS education and offer recommendations for enhancing research methodologies, training, and access to global resources. The outcomes may donate to the preparation of more dynamic teaching approaches and strategies that strengthen the growth of LIS education, in the end endorsing the progression of talented information specialists in Pakistan. Furthermore, the study will enable the integration of traditional LIS subjects with evolving tendencies such as digital libraries and information management, confirming that students are effectively prepared for the developing information setting.

2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Okeji (2019) studied the research productivity in Library & Information Science (LIS) in Nigeria from 2000 to 2018, finding 1,106 documents. In 2011, the highest productivity was renowned, with 151 documents (13.65%), although more than one-third of the research (35%) was dispersed in Library Philosophy and Practice. The University of Ibadan was the furthermost productive institute, producing 195 publications (17%), though Baro, E. Emmanuel, was the most prolific author with 29 articles. An examination of authorship designs specified that 47.6% (n = 527) of the research was led by a single author, while 36% (n = 398) was co-authored by two personalities. A difference in output was experiential post-2011 (Okeji, 2019).

Ahmad, Sheikh, and Rafi (2019) conducted a bibliometric study of LIS research from 2003 to 2017, indexed in the Web of Science database. Their findings showed a growing trend, with publications increasing from 200 in 2014 to 450 in 2017. The United States was the leading contributor, producing 39% (n = 1,453) of the research, followed by England (215 publications) and Canada (198 publications). Articles in the *Journal of Medical Library Association* received the highest citation impact. Of the top 10 productive institutions, six were based in the United States, with Indiana University ranking first. Thelwall, M., from England, was identified as the most prolific author, publishing 29 articles (Ahmad et al., 2019).

Several studies have examined LIS research productivity in Pakistan. Anwar (1981) reviewed 56 Master's theses produced at the University of Punjab from 1975 to 1981, presenting the findings in a report titled *Research Report*. Hussain and Jan (2017) analyzed the research output of the Department of Library and Information Science at Sarhad University between 2014 and 2017, applying bibliometric methods. They found that undergraduate students produced 58% of theses, while postgraduate students contributed 40%. The study recommended enhancing female participation in research and providing training in topic selection, research design, and report writing (Hussain & Jan, 2017).

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Sheikh and Jan (2017) reviewed MPhil and Ph.D. theses produced by LIS schools in Pakistan up to 2015. They reported that 12 LIS schools were operational, five of which offered advanced degrees. By 2015, 19 Ph.D. and 125 MPhil degrees had been awarded. A lack of Ph.D.-qualified faculty was identified as a significant barrier to expanding MPhil and Ph.D. programs. The study recommended institutional collaboration and government support to encourage and promote LIS professionals (Sheikh & Jan, 2017).

Jabeen (2015) analyzed 18,371 documents published in 40 core LIS journals from 2003 to 2012, using data from the Web of Science. She found a high prevalence of single-author publications (70%) and noted that 43% of the research originated from U.S.-affiliated authors. Universities contributed more research compared to non-academic institutions (Jabeen, 2015).

Mittal (2011) investigated LIS research trends in India, analyzing 1,408 documents produced by Indian authors from 1990 to 2010, indexed in LISA. The study identified 4,735 co-occurrence descriptors, highlighting trends such as library practices, user education, and user studies. Maharana and Das (2014) examined the contributions of Indian authors to LIS research indexed in the Web of Science from 1999 to 2013. Indian authors produced 141 documents, constituting 1.11% of global LIS research, and ranking 13th globally. The two-author pattern (40.71%) was predominant, followed by 36% single-author contributions. M. P. Satija was identified as the most prolific author, publishing five articles (Mittal, 2011; Maharana & Das, 2014).

Mahmood and Shafique (n.d.) scrutinized the background of LIS research in Pakistan, emphasizing the necessity for research-qualified workforces. Through papers from the Higher Education Commission and Pakistan's Ministry of Education, along with meetings with senior Library & Information Science (LIS) authorities, they highlighted the need for backing, value assurance, inducements, and the cultivation of a research philosophy to progress LIS Library & Information Science in Pakistan (Mahmood & Shafique, n.d.).

Lastly, Warraich (2010) evaluated the MLIS prospectus at Punjab University, focused on student perceptions and hindrances. The study employed a survey technique to find communication and information technology expertise as imperative complications. Commendations included the outline of information technology courses and the improvement of lab amenities to progress scholar fulfillment (Warraich, 2010).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This mixed-method research examined the study output of BLIS, MLIS, and MPhil students at Khushal Khan Khattak University in Karak, Pakistan. A quantifiable bibliometric study of thesis and synopses, along with qualitative understandings from student and staff input, make available a detailed viewpoint on research tendencies and academic principles.

Data from BLIS 7 MLIS thesis, along with MPhil ASRB-approved synopses, were inspected for titles, keywords, summaries, and references, with outcomes methodically organized in Excel and showed in tables. Qualitative explanations acknowledged issues and prospects for improvement. Outcomes lead recommendations to progress research developments, organizational accuracy, and source accessibility within the department.

3.1 Population

This mixed-method strategy includes 16 academic institutes in Pakistan that offer Library and Information Science (LIS) education, with their instructors, administrative personnel, current LIS scholars, and alumni. Additionally, specialized librarians through other sectors

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who have undergone LIS training are involved. The study contains representatives, university administrators, and employers of Library and Information Science alumni, such as libraries and information centers. This diverse cohort enables a wide scrutiny of LIS education in Pakistan, participating quantitative data on academic tendencies and student outcomes with qualitative understandings into complications, openings, and the changing necessities of the LIS profession.

3.2 Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

The extracted data were exposed to bibliometric study. Descriptive statistics were used to examine designs in titles, keywords, summaries, references, and research themes. Data were methodically organized into tables for simple presentation and evaluation amongst BLIS, MLIS, and MPhil stages.

Qualitative Analysis

Responses from prearranged interviews or examinations were methodically coded and thematically scrutinized to discern predominant complications and tendencies. The qualitative data supplemented and clarified the quantitative results, offering a more systematic understanding of research output.

The combined quantitative and qualitative studies offer an inclusive perception on research tendencies and academic principles, resulting in applied commendations for improving research processes and resources within the department.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section outlines the conclusions concerning the research productivity of the Department of Library & Information Science (DLIS) at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, through 2024. It examines the central tendencies in publications, staff research productivity, and student contributions through thesis and dissertations. Data were collected from departmental archives, institutional sources, HEC-accredited papers, and records. The section highlights principal research themes, staff-student teamwork, and opportunities for improvement, present an eloquent representation of the department's academic growth and encouragement.

Table 4.1: DLIS Programs and Duration

Degree program	Duration	Program Level	Typical Entry Requirement	Focus Area	Notes
BS-LIS	4 Years	Undergraduate	Intermediate FSc / A-Level	Core LIS, Information Literacy, Digital Libraries	Includes thesis/project in final year
MPhil-LIS	2 Years	Postgraduate	BS-LIS Equivalent	Research Methods, Advanced LIS Topics	Mandatory research thesis
PhD-LIS	3 Years	Doctoral	MPhil-LIS Equivalent	Original Research, Advanced LIS Theories	Focus on publication and conference participation

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The department highlights existing Library and Information Science tasks, encircling digital library management, knowledge organization, artificial intelligence integration, and user education creativities. This highlighting not only meets local library necessities but also resembles with universal research developments, preparing graduates for leadership positions in academic, public, and dedicated libraries.

4.2 Faculty Research Productivity

4.2.1 Comparative Output: DLIS vs Other Departments

Between 2012 and 2019, a bibliometric analysis of Khushal Khan Khattak University revealed that the DLIS department produced 62 research outputs. This positioned the department second in research productivity, just behind Management Sciences, demonstrating an active research culture despite its relatively recent establishment. The department's research output reflects both faculty dedication and an institutional emphasis on scholarly activity.

Table 4.2: Department Research Output (2012–2019)

Department	Research Outputs	Rank	Share of Total University Output (%)	Notes
Management Sciences	105	1	27%	Leading department in research publications
Library & Information Science	62	2	16%	Rapidly growing output despite recent establishment
Social Sciences	55	3	14%	Moderate output in comparison
Natural Sciences	48	4	12%	Focused more on laboratory-based research
Arts & Humanities	42	5	11%	Emphasis on qualitative research
Education	39	6	10%	Emerging research culture
Others	45	-	10%	Includes multidisciplinary outputs

4.2.2 Author-Wise Output in LIS Discipline

A closer look at faculty-specific contributions reveals that a small number of faculty members are responsible for the majority of departmental research.

Table 4.3: DLIS Faculty Publication Shares

DLIS	Publications	Percentage	Cumulative	Research	Notes
Faculty		Share	Share (%)	Focus Areas	
Member					
Dr. Saeed	79	22.83%	22.83%	LIS	Most prolific
Ullah Jan				Education,	author;
				HRM,	supervises
				Bibliometrics	majority of
					thesis
Dr. Ghalib	35	10.12%	32.95%	Digital	Significant
Khan				Libraries,	contribution

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Dr. Rahim Jan	24	6.94%	39.89%	Information Literacy AI integration, Library Technology	in emerging LIS trends Emerging Researcher
Dr. Muhammad Hussain	24	6.94%	39.89%	AI in Libraries, User Education	Focused on applied LIS research
Mr. Izhar Muhammad	7	2.02%	41.91%	Knowledge Management	Limited but focused contributions
Muhammad Shahab	6	0.87%	43.98%	Library Development	Initial research contributions
Others (per study)	194	56.02%	100%	Various LIS Topics	Remaining faculty and students contributions

4.2.3 Focus of DLIS Theses (2015–2020)

The department has witnessed an increasing number of thesis submissions, particularly during 2017–2021. A substantial portion of these theses were supervised by Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan, highlighting the critical role of faculty mentorship in fostering student research productivity.

Table 4.4: Thesis Output by Student Level (up to 2020)

Student	Thesis	Percentage Share of	Primary Research	Supervising	Notes
Program	Outputs	Total	Themes	Faculty	
BS-LIS	39	68.4%	Library Status, Information Literacy, Emerging LIS Trends	Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan, Dr. Ghalib Khan	Majority produced between 2017– 2020
MPhil- LIS	18	31.6%	AI in Libraries, User Education, Digital Transformation	Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan, Dr. Muhammad Hussain	Focused on applied and researchintensive studies
Total	57	100%	-	-	Represents all recorded student thesis up to 2020

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4.2.4 Recent Notable Publications

DLIS faculty and students have contributed to several notable publications, reflecting current trends in LIS research:

- 1. **Integration of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Academic Libraries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa** (2025) Co-authored by Dr. Rahim Jan, Dr. Muhammad Hussain, Muhammad Shahab, and MPhil scholars; published in The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies.
- 2. Factors Affecting Human Resource Management Practice in University Libraries (2023) Authored by Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan; published in Sarhad Journal of Management Sciences.
- 3. The User-Education Programs in the University Libraries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: A Quantitative Study (2020) Authored by DLIS staff and students; published in Library Philosophy and Practice.

These publications highlight a shift toward integrating AI, user education programs, and organizational management in LIS research, demonstrating the department's alignment with global trends.

4.3 Student Research Output

although student journal publications are limited, available records indicate meaningful contributions through thesis work.

- **BS-LIS students** contributed 39 thesis-level research outputs.
- MPhil-LIS students contributed 18 thesis research outputs.

Table 4.5: Student Thesis Output

Student	Thesis	Percentage	Primary	Supervising	Notes
Program	Outputs	Share of	Research	Faculty	
		Total	Themes		
BS-LIS	39	68.4%	Library Status,	Dr. Saeed Ullah	Majority
			Information	Jan, Dr. Ghalib	produced
			Literacy,	Khan	between 2017–
			Emerging		2020
MPhil-	18	31.6%	AI in Libraries,	Dr. Saeed Ullah	Focused on
LIS			User Education,	Jan, Mr.	applied and
			Digital	Muhammad	research-
			Transformation	Hussain	intensive
					studies
Total	57	100%	-	-	Represents all
					recorded
					student thesis
					up to 2020

The relatively limited student-authored journal publications indicate a need for targeted mentorship and support for publishing in peer-reviewed journals. Encouraging collaborative publications between faculty and students could strengthen departmental research visibility.

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4.4 Discussion & Interpretation

4.4.1 Active Research Culture

DLIS shows a resilient research philosophy, with 62 noted outputs from 2012 to 2019, engaging it second amongst university departments. This achievement is particularly important considering the department's contemporary initiation in 2015, reflecting instantaneous growth in academic productivity and institutional support for exploration.

4.4.2 Faculty-Led Scholarship

Research productivity in DLIS is mainly faculty-led. A select group of remarkably creative staff associates, including Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan, Dr. Ghalib Khan, and Mr. Muhammad Hussain, has made the mainstream of research outcomes. Their effort includes several LIS disciplines, with AI, digital libraries, HRM, and bibliometric studies. Staff mentorship has proven vital in guiding scholar research and thesis direction, hence improving departmental productivity.

4.4.3 Growth in Thesis Activity

From 2017 to 2021, the department had a noteworthy growth in thesis productivity, specifically under the supervision of Dr. Saeed Ullah Jan. These thesis distillate on existing Library and Information Science themes, including information knowledge, digital library growths, and advanced technology applications, exemplifying a advanced research method.

4.4.4 Emerging Research Themes

Current study highlights a rising importance on technological incorporation, user-centric facilities, and administrative organization within libraries. This thematic evolution imitates the department's equivalence with local demands and universal developments, promising that research results are relevant and significant.

4.4.5 Student Visibility Gap

While the productivity of student thesis is substantial, the number of student-authored journal publications is still limited. Bridging this gap through workshops, mentorship, and research collaboration could raise the department's academic importance and strengthen its research values, letting students to make more extensive contributions to intellectual networks.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study scrutinized the research publication tendencies and overall output of the Department of Library & Information Science at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, from 2015 to 2024. The outcomes specify a constant, albeit asymmetrical, increase in academic assistances from instructors and students similar. Staff publications, particularly those by senior and doctorate staff, revealed significant development in both quality and quantity, including contributions to peer-reviewed journals and conference records. Students following MPhil and PhD degrees publicized an growing assignation in academic writing, but research productivities at the BS level were mainly imperfect to development reports and thesis.

Despite this positive growth, the department's research visibility at the national and international level is still limited. Challenges such as restricted access to high-impact journals, limited research funding, and insufficient cross-institutional collaboration hinder its broader academic impact. Nonetheless, the gradual rise in productivity reflects a promising trajectory for future development if systematic support and institutional backing are strengthened.

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5.2 Recommendations

1. Strengthen Faculty Research Output

Allocate research grants, provide incentives, and reduce teaching burdens to enable faculty members to dedicate more time to quality publications.

2. Enhance Student Research Capacity

Organize regular workshops, training sessions, and mentorship initiatives to equip students with the skills necessary for academic publishing.

3. Expand Research Resources

Improve digital library access, subscribe to major indexing databases, and ensure the availability of recent scholarly literature to support faculty and student research.

4. Encourage Collaborative Research

Promote partnerships with other universities and research institutes at both national and international levels to increase co-authored publications and citation impact.

5. Policy and Institutional Support

Develop policies that recognize and reward publications in high-quality, indexed journals while discouraging reliance on low-impact or non-indexed outlets.

6. Promote Visibility and Dissemination

Encourage open-access publishing, conference participation, and the use of institutional repositories to enhance the global visibility of the department's research output.

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