

## **LIS Research in Pakistan: An Analysis of Pakistan Library and Information Science Journal 1998-2007**

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### **Introduction**

Pakistan has a long history of library research which starts as early as 1916 when Asa Don Dickinson wrote the Punjab Library Primer for library training classes at the University of the Punjab, Lahore (Kaser, 1992). This was the first ever textbook written outside the United States in the field of Library Science. Since then this tradition has continued and LIS professionals have been regularly contributing to library and information science literature. A number of journals and magazines emerged in Pakistan from time to time but could not continue due to variety of problems.

*Pakistan Library & Information Science Journal (PLISJ)*, which was known as *Pakistan Library Bulletin (PLB)* till 2003, is the only journal in the field of library and information science which has survived despite the hardships of the time and is being continuously published by Library Promotion Bureau since 1968 (Khan & Samdani, 1997). It started as an irregular publication in 1966 but changed to a regular quarterly publication in September 1968 (Haider, 1988). Dr. G. A. Sabzwari was its founding chief editor and he is still performing this work. Mr. M. Adil Usmani also worked as its chief editor (Samdani, 1998). A total of 38 volumes (102 issues) of PLISJ/PLB have been published till December 2007.

PLISJ has played an important role in keeping the library professionals aware of latest national and international issues. It has also helped LIS community in Pakistan and abroad to disseminate their professional ideas and knowledge through their writings. It published special issues on different occasions to emphasize on the topics of current interest for Pakistani librarianship (Usmani, 1995). Articles published in PLISJ portrayed the changing situation of librarianship in Pakistan over the years. It is the major source of information for anyone who wants to know about librarianship in Pakistan during last four decades. Its progress was in line with the professional growth of the country. It faced problems when Pakistani librarianship was at its low pace and it flourished when Pakistani librarianship did well. Therefore, systematic analysis of PLISJ can reveal trends in Pakistani librarianship.

Analysis of PLISJ was considered essential to understand the trends in LIS research in Pakistan. An analysis of the subject covered and authorship characteristics of literature published in Pakistan Library & Information Science Journal during 1998-2007 have been presented in this study. Type of research publications, language of the articles and publication output of PLISJ has also been analyzed.

## Literature Review

A review of related literature reveals that a number of authors have presented the results of the analysis of library and information science literature in different countries. For example, Khan & Samdani (1997) analyzed the literature published in *Pakistan Library Bulletin* (PLB) during 1968-1997. They presented subject review of the literature along with authorship characteristics and analysis of citations. Major areas of interest for the authors of PLB, according to this study, were academic libraries, librarianship, information and computer technology, bibliography and bibliographical control.

Mahmood (1996) presented a statistical and subjective review of the status of Library and Information Services in Pakistan by analyzing journal articles written on Pakistani librarianship in foreign journals. Findings of this study show that the most popular subject among the authors on Pakistani Librarianship in foreign journals was Library and Information Science education. This study also presented various authorship characteristics for the articles included in the analysis.

Kajberg (1996) conducted a content analysis of Danish LIS serial literature to determine the subject focus of the literature from 1957-1986. Analysis of two non-research journals, *Bibliotek 70* and *Bogens Verden*, was conducted. The most popular subject area in the profession was Individual Libraries/National Library System, or the geographical viewpoint on libraries and library systems. Area of major concern in the profession was Cooperation, Networks, and Resource Sharing. This study reveals that theoretical aspects of librarianship and information science received little attention.

Tiew (2006) explored the authorship characteristics in *Sekitar Perpustakaan*, one of the LIS periodicals published from Malaysia, during 1994-2003. The results of this study discovered that 79% articles were written by single author and female authors dominated by contributing 65.74% articles.

Tiew, Abrizah & Kiran (2002) carried out a bibliometric examination of the articles published in *Malaysian Journal of Library and Information Science* during 1996-2000 and found that the percentage of multi-authored articles was slightly higher than the single authored articles. The most popular subject, according to this study, was scientific and professional publishing.

Alemna (1996) analyzed the articles published in *The African Journal of Library, Archives and Information Science* (AJLAIS) during 1990-1995 and found that the major areas of interest were information technology, rural libraries and status/image of librarians. The study noted an increase in publications from Africa and increase in number of female contributors.

Ocholla & Ocholla (2007) investigated the research in LIS in South Africa during 1993-2006 and observed that research collaboration through co-authorship was encouraging at 69 percent. According to the results of this study management, information retrieval and information services dominated the LIS research in South Africa.

Zemon & Bahr (1998) examined the articles published by college librarians in two journals, *College & Research Libraries* and *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, during 1986-1996 and concluded that college librarians contributed less number of articles to professional literature than their counterparts in universities. Study shows that college librarians wrote less about technology, systems-related issues and cataloging. Roughly equal number of articles was contributed by both male and female authors.

Buttler (1999) conducted a citation analysis of 61 library science and information science dissertations to acquire knowledge about the Information Sources used in LIS doctoral research. Analysis showed that about 80% of citations were to single authors and that LIS scholars relied heavily on journal literature for their research.

## Objective

The objectives of this study, covering the period 1998-2007, were:

- To analyze LIS literature published in PLISJ so that areas of interest for LIS researchers and current trends may be explored.
- To examine authorship characteristics of LIS literature published in PLISJ.
- To know the publication output of PLISJ.
- To study the type of research and language of articles published in PLISJ.

## Significance

Professional development of a country in any field can be gauged through the literature produced in that field. As PLISJ published major part of LIS research output during the period of the study, analysis of this research output is important to understand status of LIS research in Pakistan. Results of this study will help the researchers to identify the prevailing trends and interests of LIS researchers in Pakistan. Areas of least interest can be focused for future research so that all areas of the profession can progress concurrently. Results for the growth of library and information science literature published in PLISJ will illustrate how library and information profession has progressed over the years in Pakistan.

Finally, some recommendations have been made for the promotion and encouragement of library and information science research in Pakistan on the basis of the findings of this study. These recommendations will help in improving the future LIS research in Pakistan.

## Methodology

A total of 236 articles from 30 issues of PLISJ (formerly PLB) were examined for subjects covered, geographic distribution of authors, country of origin of authors, collaboration among authors, and gender of authors. Research type, language of articles and publication output of PLISJ were also analyzed. An identification and coding frame was prepared for identification and reliable coding of articles to be analyzed. Data were then entered in SPSS software and analyzed to observe different characteristics of the published literature.

Different classification schemes including DDC, LC Classification, JITA and a number of classification schemes prepared by individuals for their studies were considered for subject categorization of the articles. It was noted that JITA provided comprehensive classification of different LIS subjects and at the same time it was found very simple. It was, therefore, decided to use JITA for subject categorization of articles in this study.

Porto & Marchitelli (2006) explain that JITA is the acronym of the names of authors (Jose Manuel Barrueco Cruz, Imma Subirats Coll, Thomas Krichel and Antonella De Robbio) of the scheme. It is a specialized scheme for LIS field and was created to classify the documents of E-LIS (E-prints in Library and Information Science). In this scheme LIS subjects have been divided into 12 main categories which are further divided into more than 120 sub categories.

## Limits of the Study

This study was limited to subjects covered and authorship characteristics of the literature published in PLISJ during 1998-2007. Besides this, type of research, language of the articles and publication out of PLISJ were also examined. News & Views, book reviews, and editorials were not included in the study.

## Results and Discussion

Analysis of data discovered some interesting trends in LIS research in Pakistan. It was observed that fewer articles were published during 1998-2002 and mostly combined issues were published whereas number of articles increased and publication of the issues was regular during 2003-2007. On average, 7.87 articles per issue and 23.60 articles per year were published during the period under study. Other results and a brief discussion are presented in the following paragraphs.

Table 1. Ranked List of Subjects Covered in PLISJ (1998-2007)

Rank	Subject Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Industry, profession and education	93	39.4
2	Libraries as physical collections	42	17.8
3	Information technology and library technology	24	10.2
4	Theoretical and general aspects of libraries and information	15	6.4
5	Users, literacy and reading	14	5.9
6	Information sources, supports, channels	10	4.2
7	Technical services in libraries, archives, museum	9	3.8
8	Information treatment for information services	8	3.4
8	Management	8	3.4
9	Publishing and legal issues	7	3.0
10	Information use and sociology of information	5	2.1
11	Housing technologies	1	0.4
	Total	236	100.0

Table 1 shows that the most popular subject category among the authors of PLISJ is "Industry, profession and education" with 93 articles out of 236 (39.4%) followed by "Libraries as physical collections" with 42 articles (17.8%) and "Information technology and library technology" with 24 articles (10.2%). Other categories received little attention of the authors. These results are similar to the results of the study conducted by Mahmood (1996) where "Library and Information Science education" was found as the most popular subject.

Management (3.4%); Publishing and legal issues (3.0%); Information use and sociology of information (2.1%) and Housing technologies (0.4%) were found to be the subjects of least interest for authors of the journal. This result shows a trend opposite to the one observed by Ocholla & Ocholla (2007). They found management as the dominant area of LIS research in South Africa.

The result of this study illustrates that PLISJ authors are writing comprehensively about their profession so that fellow professionals remain aware of different developments in the profession. Result for "Information technology and library technology" (10.2%) is not very much encouraging in the age of information and communication technologies. Information technology was found as the most popular subject in the study conducted by Alemna (1996). However, when we compare these results to the results presented by Khan & Samdani (1997), we see almost 200% increase (10.2% from 5.13%) in this category of literature which is very encouraging.

Table 2 shows that most contributions to PLISJ (69.9%) came from the Asian countries followed by authors from North America (5.1%). One article was jointly written by authors from Asia and Europe. The journal could not get much attention of the authors from other parts of the world. Geographic details for authors of 54 articles (22.9%) were not available.

Table 2. Geographic Distribution of Authors

Geographic Area	Frequency	Percentage
Asia	165	69.9
North America	12	5.1
Europe	4	1.7
Asia and Europe	1	0.4
Not available	54	22.9
Total	236	100.0

Table 3. Country of Origin of the Authors

Country	Frequency	Percentage
Pakistan	158	66.9
USA	10	4.2
Saudi Arabia	5	2.1
U.K.	4	1.7
Canada	2	0.8
Kuwait	1	0.4
Bangladesh	1	0.4
Pakistan and U.K.	1	0.4
Not available	54	22.9
Total	236	100.0

When we go into further details for authors' location (Table 3), we find that Pakistani authors are dominant in PLISJ with 158 articles (66.9%) followed by American authors (4.2%). This trend is due to the fact that PLISJ is a Pakistani journal and it supports Pakistani LIS researchers in publishing. This trend was supported by the study of Ocholla & Ocholla (2007) which reported that South African authors largely published in local journals.

When we analyze the state of collaboration among authors of PLISJ (Table 4), we observe that they prefer individual work as 209 articles (88.6%) out of total 236 were written by a single author. Only 17 articles (7.2%) were jointly written by two authors. At five occasions (2.1%) authorship details were not available.

Table 4. State of Collaboration among Authors Contributing to PLISJ

Number of Collaborating Authors	Frequency	Percentage
Single Author	209	88.6
Two Authors	17	7.2
Three Authors	4	1.7
Four Authors	1	0.4
Not Known	5	2.1
Total	236	100.0

This trend of working single-handedly is in conformity with the results of previous studies like Tiew (2006) and Buttlar (1999). It also does not seem very strange keeping in view that male-female interaction is not very common in higher education institutions in Pakistan.

Analysis revealed that male authors dominated the LIS research scene in Pakistan with 144 (61%) contributions (Table 5). Both male and female authors joined hands to write only nine articles (3.8%). Gender of the author could not be determined for seven articles (3.0%). Five articles were found without author details while this author was unable to determine the gender of two authors due to unfamiliar names.

Table 5. Articles Contributed on the Basis of Author's Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	144	61.0
Female	76	32.2
Both (Male & Female)	9	3.8
Cannot determine	7	3.0
Total	236	100.0

Comparison of this result with that of Khan & Samdani (1997) reveals that contribution to PLISJ from female authors has increased considerably (from 8.89% to 32.2%). It highlights that female LIS professionals are now taking active part in research activities resulting in increased number of publications from them. These results are in accordance with the findings of Alemna (1996).

Tiew (2006) found results opposite to the results of this study i.e. female author contributed more than male authors in Malaysian journal *Sekitar Perpustakaan*. However, he acknowledged that his finding differ much from the previous studies. Buttlar (1999) also observed results similar to this study.

Major part of PLISJ comprises of descriptive articles (Table 6) with 144 articles (61%) followed by historical research based articles (17.8%). Writings based on empirical research accounted for 12.3% only. These findings differ a great deal from that of Tiew et al (2002) where 69.74% of articles were research oriented.

Table 6. Articles Published by Type of Research

Type of Research	Frequency	Percentage
Descriptive	144	61.0
Historical	42	17.8
Empirical	29	12.3
Case Study	21	8.9
Total	236	100.0

Comparison of these results with that of Khan & Samdani (1997) shows that percentage of descriptive writings in PLISJ has decreased (from 77.27% to 61%) in last decade while percentage of articles based on empirical research has increased (from 4.15% to 12.3%). It is definitely a healthy sign for LIS profession in Pakistan and needs to continue in future also. Proportion of case studies has decreased (from 13.43% to 8.9%) during the last decade.

PLISJ published articles in English and Urdu languages. Two third (65.7%) of them were in English while one third (34.3%) were in Urdu (Table 7). This trend is due to the reason that medium of instruction at higher education level in Pakistan is English and most of LIS literature available in Pakistan is also in English language. Though it is the second official language of Pakistan but most of the office work is done in it. Therefore, authors feel comfortable to write in English.

Table 7. Distribution of Articles Published by Language

Language	Frequency	Percentage
English	155	65.7
Urdu	81	34.3
Total	236	100.0

The comparison of the result with that of Khan & Samdani (1997) discloses that percentage of articles published in PLISJ in Urdu (Pakistan's national language) in last 10 years has increased from 23.51% to 34.3%.

PLISJ published a total of 236 articles during 1998-2007 at the rate of 7.87 articles per issue and 23.6 articles per year (Table 8). It published 67 articles in 10 issues during first five years of the study (1998-2002) while 169 articles were published in 20 issues during last five years (2003-2007). A sharp increase was observed during last two years which accounted for 85 articles (36%).

This result is fairly understandable because LIS profession in Pakistan is facing a number of problems and research is not an easy job here. These problems have been discussed in detail by Haider (1978), Anwar (1981) and Asghar (1992). However, sharp increase in articles contributed to PLISJ may be attributed to the efforts of Higher Education Commission (HEC) to promote research culture in Pakistan and the commencement of M. Phil and PhD programs at University of the Punjab in Lahore and University of Karachi in Karachi.

Table 8

#### Publication Output of PLISJ (1998-2007)

Year of Publication	Frequency	Percentage
1998	10	4.2
1999	13	5.5
2000	18	7.6
2001	14	5.9
2002	12	5.1
2003	31	13.1
2004	26	11.0
2005	27	11.4
2006	48	20.3
2007	37	15.7
Total	236	100.0

## Conclusion

The results of this study provide insight into different characteristics of literature published in PLISJ during 1998-2007. On the basis of these results we can conclude that the most popular subject area for the authors of PLISJ is "Industry, profession and education" and they are now contributing more articles on Information technology. Housing technologies (Resources Centre, Library archive and museum buildings, Furniture, Vehicles and Safety etc) is the most neglected area of LIS research in Pakistan.

Mostly Asian authors, predominantly Pakistanis, contribute to the journal. The state of collaboration among authors of PLISJ is not very encouraging as majority of the authors prefer to work in isolation. Male authors lead the LIS research scene but contributions from female authors have increased. Descriptive articles still represent major part of PLISJ but articles based on empirical research have increased. Mostly, articles written in English language are published in the journal but number of articles written in Urdu has improved.

PLISJ published fewer articles during 1998-2002 and its publication was not regular as two issues were combined for whole of this period. However, situation changed during last five years and publication of the journal is regular now with sharp increase in the number of articles published. There are variations in details of information about authors as information was either missing, not provided or intentionally left by authors.

## Recommendations

- Working and future Pakistani LIS professionals should be trained in research methodology and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) so that they can actively participate in research activities.
- Research facilities and environment, which is conducive for research, should be provided to promote LIS research in Pakistan.
- LIS researchers, especially faculty members, should also pay attention to the neglected areas of research like Management, Publishing and legal issues, Information use and sociology of information, and Housing technologies.
- Team work should be encouraged by LIS faculty through assigning group projects so that habit of collaboration is developed among future LIS professionals.
- Publicity of PLISJ should be done actively to attract authors from other parts of the world. Launching of the journal website may be helpful in this regard.
- Despite the fact that contribution to LIS literature from female professionals has increased, they need to be encouraged by providing them incentives to take part in research activities.
- Emphasis on practical research should be increased in LIS schools so that future professionals are trained for such research activities.
- LIS professionals in Pakistan should consider their national language also for dissemination of their knowledge and ideas while PLISJ should encourage writing of articles in Urdu by providing more space for them.
- PLISJ should provide detailed information about authors. It will certainly help readers to know about the background of authors. It will also facilitate future analysis of literature published in the journal.

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