

Copyright Awareness In The Digital Age: An Exploratory Study Of Chief Librarians' Knowledge And Understanding

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Abstract

Purpose – To assess the awareness and preparedness of copyright related matters among the Chief/Head librarians of the public and private sector universities situated in the geographic area of Punjab and the federal area was the purpose of the current study. The study also focuses on discovering the favorite information sources, the participants use to refresh their knowledge concerning copyright laws and issues.

Methodology – A quantitative approach was used in the current study. Data was collected through a questionnaire. The population consisted of the Chief/Head librarians of public and private sector universities of Punjab and the federal area. The data was analyzed by using the software SPSS, descriptively.

Findings – The outcomes of the present study indicates that the awareness level of the respondents was moderate and it needs to be improved extensively. It was also learned from the study that the participants lack the training to deal with the copyright related issues faced in the libraries. The study also illustrated that social media was the source of information that was mostly used by the participants to enhance their knowledge regarding copyright issues.

Limitations – The present research study deals only with the Head librarians of universities of Punjab and the Federal area, consequently, its results cannot be applied to the library professionals all over Pakistan.

Practical Implications – the current research will assist in knowing the understanding and awareness level of the chief/head librarians about copyright related issues/laws. The study will also convince the management of the universities to provide training opportunities to the librarians relating to copyright issues.

Keywords – chief librarians (CLs), copyright, information sources, awareness, preparedness, Punjab (Pakistan)

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Introduction

Copyright is the protection of original works of creators as soon as the creator fixes the work in a physical form of expression. Copyright law includes various types of works like books, sound recordings, illustrations, musical compositions, paintings, computer programs, photographs, blog posts, poems, movies, plays, and so much more (Office, 2023b). Copyright can also be defined as the legal right of the possessor of intellectual property. In simplest terms “copyright is the right to copy”. This means that the original owners of products and to which they authorize the exclusive right to reproduce the work (Investopedia, 2023)

Expressions in varied arrangements are as old as humanity and have functioned as medium of communication, certification, and recording of feelings, actions, and opinions. Societal advancement and superiority in technologies have not only caused irrevocable changes in the natural surroundings and methods of expression, but also the different apparatuses and means for their fixing and communication. Printing, camera work, soundtrack & communication of sound and telegraphy were the initial disrupting hi-tech advances. The last few years have practiced exceptional advancement in technologies related to replica, storage, broadcast and conversion of information in digital arrangement. All such expansions have jointly broadened the opportunities for innovative expressions comprising their archiving, revisions, communication, storage, and use (Ganguli et al., 2021).

In recent years the higher education sector in Pakistan has grown rapidly and so has increased the need for reading materials in educational institutions. The textbook boards are trying to overcome the deficiency at the school level however; there is a dearth of books on professional subjects such as engineering, medicine, business, etc. Haider in his study of acquiring foreign materials in Pakistan noted that to meet the educational requirements of local institutions 90% of books are imported from abroad especially from UK and USA (Haider, 1993). The high inflation rate and poor economic condition of the people made it almost impossible for students and researchers to purchase costly books. In these circumstances it becomes difficult to implement copyright and piracy laws in the country, and there is a threat of an increase in the practice of photocopying books and publishing pirated editions. Role of the library professionals is vital in curbing these illegal activities and implementing the copyright laws in libraries. For proper implementation of copyright laws in libraries library professionals need to be educated and trained in dealing the legal issues like copyright. Similarly a study conducted by Lewin-Lane *et al.* (2018) confirms the continuously increasing workload on librarians regarding legal issues. It is also revealed that the tendency in future librarian's work will contain legal assistance to users and therefore knowledge of legal issues for library professionals is of key importance.

Internationally, various researchers have gauged the copyright laws and the role of the librarians regarding their understanding and implementation. In the Pakistani context, a meager quantity of studies is available on this topic. However, no study has been conducted to examine the awareness and preparedness level of the university CLs regarding copyright issues.

Literature Review

Copyright

According to IFLA Copyright is the exclusive right of the person to permit definite acts (such as reproduction, publication, public performance, adaptation, etc.) in relation to his/her creative effort of authorship. The author of the work usually possesses the copyright, at least primarily. However, copyright is frequently sold or dispensed, in complete or partially, to a recording studio, filmmaker, commercial publisher, or anyone who will utilize the work for

business purposes. Consequently, copyright frequently benefits business interests more than individual authors (IFLA, 2023).

Copyright includes the economic and moral rights of creators (Urs, 2004; WIPO, 2016). The most significant moral right is author's right to get full recognition and acknowledgment for the use of their works (Berlinck, 2011). But in the present era, the matter of author's moral rights is normally out of question; rather, economic rights are in the limelight of this debate (WIPO, 2016).

Copyright and Libraries

Copyright law is a critical part of many librarian's daily work, as it helps to protect the rights of the owner of an original work. For instance, the doctrine of first sale gives buyers certain rights when it comes to physical copies of books, music, and other works they have purchased. Moreover, copyright provisions also influence services such as interlibrary loan, reserves, and photocopying. As technology continues to evolve, the law has to be re-interpreted to account for new formats, which can add complexity and ambiguity. Fair use is a particularly persistent issue for libraries, as it is necessary to decide whether or not permission is needed to use a work or part of a work. A notable example of this is the 2008 lawsuit between Georgia State University and Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, and SAGE Publications. The judge ultimately determined that the university was covered by fair use, but did not set a standard for e-reserves (Jaschik & from, 2012).

Albitz (2013) further emphasizes that as the significance of copyright education rises, it is perilous to make sure that the staff allocated this responsibility have the expertise and support to accomplish their tasks in the most appropriate and efficient manner. It is obvious that copyright laws and intellectual property related regulations are closely linked with the social and academic culture and therefore have a significant impact on the nature of the facilities and services academic libraries offer to their patrons (Horava, 2010)

Copyright and role of the librarians

Librarians and Information managers are involved in dealing with copyrighted and non-copyrighted materials in their routine works related to making and keeping trial to various websites such as digital libraries (Ganguli et al., 2021). Librarians working in academic libraries are becoming gradually involved in copyright related matters, such as to get involved in course reserves, acquisition of licensed library resources, and supporting faculty authors in discussing copyright contracts with publishers (Office, 2023a)

A current report from the ACRL (2023) provides background for accelerating the knowledge of copyright laws and learned communication issues in the academic atmosphere. This report indicated that academic librarians must add knowledge of copyright law and other issues related to intellectual property to their "existing collection of literacies" in order to facilitate their users (Davis-Kahl & Hensley, 2013).

In the present era library professionals are facing a dilemma that how to create a balance between the author's right and providing free access of information to its clients. There is a dire need for information professionals to know, understand, and implement the copyright laws in their institutions. In addition, the open access movement and expulsion of digital

resources have necessitated that every library professional must have education and awareness of copyright issues and related laws. Library users are also required to be educated regarding the ethical use of other resources and publications for their educational works. Consequently, there is great importance that the awareness and knowledge of library professionals regarding copyright issues and laws may be examined (Nawazish & Batool, 2022).

In the present digital era, the disagreement between the rights of the library and its patrons and the rights of its creators has become extremely complicated (Ferullo, 2004). The study of Fernández-Molina, Moraes, and Guimarães (2017) seconded the preceding statement and indicated that confronting copyright related questions was a routine practice of academic librarians, and with the passage of time, copyright related matters were getting complex. Matters like fair use and licensing of digital resources need librarians to have expertise, knowledge, and experience in the practice of copyright law, as interpretations of legal issues like copyright are not an easy task. Library professionals feel scratchy or incompetent to negotiate complicated layers of copyright scenarios. It is therefore necessary that professional education and training should be an important aspect for assisting librarians to perform their duties confidently at their institutions (Norris, Tierney, & Dubach, 2019)

The study findings of Nilsson (2016) disclosed that librarians working in academic institutions were not competent enough to deal with copyright issues and, therefore, were not capable enough to play an effective role as copyright advisors. The multinational study findings of Todorova *et al.* (2017) also confirmed the above results and explored that the understanding and awareness level of the library professionals delivering services in libraries, cultural institutions, museums, and archives was not adequate. Ferullo (2004) and Jaszi *et al.* (2010) illustrated that the appropriate application of copyright law can be divided into two parts: awareness and proper clarification of the law. The prerequisite to implement policies intended at improving copyright knowledge among academic librarians cannot therefore be overstated. Academic qualification, professional experience, and work schedule also affect the level of awareness and understanding.

The study outcomes of Adu and Van der Walt (2021) confirmed that librarian's awareness level regarding copyright laws and guidelines was varied. Furthermore, librarians possess maximum knowledge of institutional policies, but, a very low level of knowledge regarding copyright regulations and licensing issues. Olaka and Adkins (2012) also found that knowledge of copyright issues among library professionals in Kenya was at a moderate level. Fernández-Molina, Moraes, and Guimarães (2017) mentioned that even in a country like the USA, considered a pioneer in developing the role of the librarian, there was only an adequate level of training facilities available. Boustany (2018) also indicated the need for training and disclosed that an analysis of curricula indicated a dearth of training regarding copyright laws in LIS education.

Globally, various studies are available on copyright laws and the role of librarians in implementing these laws in libraries (Adu & Van der Walt, 2021; Boustany, 2018; Morrison & Secker, 2015; Norris, Tierney, & Dubach, 2019; Patel & Hanumappa, 2019). However, the situation in Pakistan is not encouraging and only a few studies are available that cover the book piracy issues and related copyright laws (Bashir & Khan, 2017; Mahmood & Ilyas, 2005; Nawazish & Batool, 2022). Conversely, no study has been conducted to assess the awareness and preparedness level of the university's chief librarians to handle copyright issues in

Pakistan. Therefore, the current study was conducted to examine the awareness and preparedness level of the university chief librarians of Pakistan regarding copyright issues.

The current work will be useful for library professionals performing their duties in universities, research organizations, and other degree awarding institutions. The findings of the study will help to appraise the awareness and preparedness level of the university librarians related to copyright matters, and thus in enhances their competencies to manage these issues.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the awareness level of the university CLs to handle the copyright issues.
2. To explore the preparedness level of the university CLs to handle the copyright issues.
3. To explore the opinion of the university CLs regarding training programs on copyright issues.

Research Questions

- 1 What is the awareness level of the university CLs to handle the copyright issues?
- 2 What is the preparedness level of the university CLs to handle the copyright issues?
- 3 What is the opinion of the university CLs regarding training programs on copyright issues?

Research Design

Population

The participants of the study were the CLs of the university libraries (public and private sector) of Punjab Province and the federal area, recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, established till 2022. A list of university and degree awarding institutions recognized by HEC was adopted from its website (HEC, 2022). The list was comprised of 105 universities and degree awarding institutions, in Punjab and the federal area.

Sampling

Keeping in view the small population size, the questionnaire was distributed among the chief librarians (105) of the universities and degree awarding institutions.

Data collection Instrument

Creswell (2012) discussed survey method is the more frequently used data collection instrument in social research. In survey research, the questionnaire is a well-established data collection instrument and carries certain benefits. Powell & Connaway (2004) realized that a questionnaire encourages candidates to answer, and eradicate interviewer favoritism, fixed design questionnaires have a tendency to eliminate differences in the enquiring process; provide comfort to participants to answer as per his/her schedule; comparatively easy to assemble and examine, enables the assembling of data in short duration of time, and generally comparatively economical to administer.

Numerous data collection approaches e.g. interviews, observations, questionnaires, etc. have been applied in different research studies based on survey research approaches. For data collection purposes, various statements from relevant previous studies were adopted and adapted and a survey tool was administered. Hence, the self-administered survey tool was

distributed/mailed/WhatsApp in hard or soft form (Google forms) to the population scattered in the vast geographical region of Punjab and the federal area.

Data Analysis

The process of data collection was carried out from mid-June to mid-September, 2022. The efforts of data collection led to the receipt of 85 self-completed questionnaires. The response rate was 81% which was considered a suitable rate of return for the quantitative data analysis. The data was numerical and presented in nominal, ordinal, interval, and yes/no scales of measurement. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19 was employed for data analysis purposes. A number of statistical methods and tests including frequency analysis, descriptive statistics, etc. were employed to examine the data and extract inferences.

6. Results

6.1. Demographic Information

Table 1 demonstrates that males were prevailing as compared to females. The major age group of the participants was 31 – 50 years. Qualification wise participants were divided into four categories. The study found that the majority of the participants hold MPhil degrees followed by Mastersdegrees. The study also established that the majority of the participants possess experience of 11-15 years followed by above 21 years.

Table 1 *Demographic information*

Variables	Options	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	61	71.8
	Female	24	28.2
Age group	21 to 30 years	8	9.4
	31 to 40 years	35	41.2
	41 to 50 years	29	34.1
	Above 50 years	13	15.3
Qualification	BS (Hons)	1	1.2
	Master	32	37.6
	MPhil	44	51.8
Experience	Ph.D.	8	9.4
	1-5 years	9	10.1
	6-10 years	10	11.8
	11-15 years	27	31.8
	16-20 years	17	20.0
	Above 21 years	22	25.9

6.2. Mean and Standard Deviation of factors regarding awareness of copyright

The participants were invited to rate their awareness of copyright laws. To assess their understanding level, a five point Likert scale consisting of not at all aware (1) to fully aware (5) was used to gauge the awareness of participants regarding all aspects of copyright laws. Keeping in view the mean values, the statements about awareness are mentioned in the order of maximum to minimum level (Table 2).

The present research work inquired the participants to measure their awareness regarding copyright laws, a key element of the legal issues faced by the university chief librarians. Table 2 indicates the mean values of participant’s awareness and disclosed that they were ‘moderately aware’ of the following six elements: “Fair use policy”, “Copyright issues regarding material

from the public domain”, “Copyright issues regarding digital resources/databases”, “Copyright related laws: national level”, “Copyright legislation in Pakistan” and “Copyright issues regarding out of print works” (M= 3.53 - 3.87). While respondents were somewhat aware of the following five statements: “Copyright issues regarding digitization,” “Copyright issues regarding copying for commercial purpose,” “Exemptions in the copyright act,” “Copyright related laws: international level” and “Copyright issues regarding orphan works” (M= 2.99-2.49).

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation of various factors regarding awareness of copyright law.

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	Fair use policy	3.87	1.07
2	Copyright issues regarding material from public domain	3.69	1.09
3	Copyright t issues regarding digital resources/databases	3.63	1.13
4	Copyright related laws: national level	3.57	1.17
5	Copyright legislation in Pakistan	3.54	1.22
6	Copyright issues regarding out of print works	3.53	1.21
7	Copyright issues regarding digitization	3.49	1.09
8	Copyright issues regarding copying for commercial purpose	3.45	1.22
9	Exemptions in the copyright act	3.24	1.22
10	Copyright related laws: international level	3.12	1.36
11	Copyright issues regarding orphan works	2.99	1.23

6.3. Frequency and percentage of CL’s preparedness regarding copyright issues (N = 85)

The respondents were asked about the display of license agreements at places where they browse content. The outcomes of the study illustrated (Table 3) that 32 (37.6%) of the respondents said no while 53(62.4%) replied yes. On asking about arranging orientation programmes for the patrons on copyright laws, 33(38.8%) respondents replied in its favour and 67 (61.2%) against it. On enquiring about the display of copyright warnings at conspicuous places in the libraries, 56 (65.9%) of the respondents replied no, and the remaining 44 (34.1%) said yes.

Table 3 Frequency and percentage of CL’s preparedness regarding copyright issues (N = 85)

Sr. No.	Statements	No	Yes
1	License agreement on databases use is displayed prominently where users browse content.	32(37.6%)	53 (62.4%)
2	Photocopying an entire work is not allowed in my library	33 (38.8%)	52 (61.2%)
3	Copyright warnings are displayed in conspicuous locations in my library	56 (65.9%)	29 (34.1%)

6.4 Mean and Standard Deviation of various factors regarding preparedness to deal the copyright issues.

The subjects were asked to rate their preparedness level in respect of training on copyright issues. To judge their preparedness level, a five point Likert scale consisting of strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used to gauge all the factors. The statements about preparedness, from maximum to minimum level are mentioned in Table 5 keeping in view their mean values.

Table 4 demonstrates the mean values of participant's preparedness regarding training on copyright issues and confirms that participants were 'agree' that "My library staff understands the copyright laws" (M=3.69). While the participants were neutral regarding the following three elements: "My institution encourages the library staff to attend training workshops on copyright" (M = 3.40), "My institution continuously arranges orientation programs for patrons on copyright" (M = 2.79), and "My institution frequently hosts training programs regarding copyright"(M=2.75).

Table 4 Preparedness regarding training on copyright issues

Sr. No.	Statement	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	My library staff understands the copyright laws.	3.69	1.16
2	My institution encourages the library staff to attend copyright training workshops.	3.40	1.23
3	My institution continuously arranges orientation programs for patrons on copyright.	2.79	1.17
4	My institution frequently hosts training programs regarding copyright.	2.75	1.24

7 Discussion

The results of the present study about demographic information discover that males are in majority than females. The findings are analogous to the previous research studies carried out by Warraich and Tahira (2009), Khan and Bhatti (2020), and Ali (2023) which established that the LIS field was dominated by male in Pakistan. Qualification wise majority of the subjects are M Phil qualified trailed by Master, PhD, and BS correspondingly. The findings are contrary to the results of the further studies of Warraich and Tahira (2009), Khan and Bhatti (2020), and Ali (2023) who explored that the greater part of the librarian in Pakistan hold master's level qualification in LIS. The current work also mentions that only one respondent has BS qualification. The reason behind this may be that BS is relatively an emerging discipline in Pakistan.

The study assessed the awareness and preparedness of copyright issues, among the CLs of public and private universities of Punjab province and federal the capital area of Pakistan. The study is of a simply explanatory nature. The subjects were professionally well trained and experienced and were working as CLs/Head librarians, in public and private sector universities. The major findings of the study are discussed as under:

The first research question of the study was to explore the awareness level of the university CLs to handle copyright issues. In this regard, the results illustrate that the CLs were moderately aware of dealing with the six copyright issues fair use policy, material from the public domain, digital resources/databases, out of print works, and copyright laws and

legislation in Pakistan. However, the respondent's awareness level was neutral (low) regarding the five statements as laws related to digitization of material, copying for commercial purposes, exemption in copyright law, international copyright laws, and laws relating to orphan works.

The findings are similar to a study conducted by Nawazish and Batool (2022) which indicated that the awareness level of the university librarians towards copyright and related laws was at a moderate level. However, the findings are contradictory to the study findings of Todorova et al. (2017) who illustrated that the awareness level of library professionals about copyright laws and related issues was not satisfactory. Similarly, the findings are also contrary to the results of a study conducted in India by Patnaik (2014) which revealed that the awareness level of Indian libraries regarding license hiring of electronic resources was critically low. The respondents possess a good level of copyright awareness; however, they have to improve their awareness level of international copyright laws, orphan works, and exemptions in these laws. In this way they will be fully supportive of their clients and organization.

The second research question of the study was to explore the preparedness level of the university CLs to handle copyright issues. The findings show that the majority of the participants replied that they have displayed the database license agreements on places where users browse contents and their library did not allow the photocopy of entire work. On the other hand, the majority of the CLs did not display the copyright warnings in conspicuous locations.

The third research question of the study was to explore the opinion of the university CLs regarding training programs on copyright issues. On enquiring about the fourth research question, the outcomes of the current study expose that the participants moderately understand the copyright laws. Conversely, they were neutral regarding attending the training workshops on copyright, organizing orientation sessions for library patrons, and hosting the training programs on copyright matters. Continuous training programs are considered necessary demonstrate that CLs were not satisfied with respect to attending, organizing, or hosting the training workshops. Therefore, organizations should have to train their staff to provide quality services to users. Similar results were explored in a study conducted by (Boustany, 2018) that highlights lack of training in curricula of LIS education in France. Owushi-Junior (2016) is in favour of orientation programs, he recommended that copyright law be included in orientation lectures and curriculum of library information science students.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The outcomes and discussion in the current study evidently described that the awareness and preparedness level of Head librarians of the private and public universities in Punjab and the federal capital area towards the copyright laws and related issues require extensive improvement. The study showed that the Head librarians of the universities were reasonably aware of copyright related matters like fair use policy, copyright laws, matters relating to online sources and etc. while awareness level of the subjects regarding digitization of resources, commercial use of the contents, exemption in the copyright laws, international copyright law and copyright laws regarding orphans work was at moderate level.

The outcome of the present work clearly shows that the knowledge of CLs (public and private universities) regarding legal issues like copyright laws needs to improve. The universities should hold workshops/ seminars on the issues related to copyright for the library staff and also encourage their professionals and para-professionals to attend such sessions organized by other universities. There is also a need to educate the patrons regarding the implementation of copyright laws. It is also recommended that libraries should initiate a massive awareness campaign regarding copyright laws and the consequences they may face in

case of non-compliance with the copyright laws. The study covers the university CLs of Punjab and federal Islamabad; therefore the limitations of the study may be that its results may not be generalized over all the universities of Pakistan and librarians.

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