Assessment Practices Followed for Information Literacy Programmes in UAE

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Abstract

Information Literacy Programmes in the higher educational institutions are instruction to students in identification, utilization, and documentation of information; in other words the searching of the knowledge. Assessment is an imperative in the whole of teaching learning process. Information literacy programmes conducted in higher educational institutions have been assessed using a variety of assessment practices. The study was designed to gather information on the assessment practices followed during the conduct of information literacy programmes of higher educational institutions in UAE. The authors have also interpreted the assessment practices with the factor designation of whom have involved in information literacy programmes.

Keywords

Literacy; information and communication technology; University Libraries.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The assessment is part of the feedback cycle of teaching and learning process. Assessment of teaching programmes informs the students that how well they have learned and the results of assessments will help the teachers to understand that where they have been successful in transferring knowledge to students and where there is need for improvement of the programmes. In the recent information accumulation era, library professionals have been striving to help the higher educational students to search and learning to search the information needed for their academics, research and career progress. Library professionals have been using various assessment practices to evaluate the information literacy programmes.

1.1 INFORMATION LITERACY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In higher education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.Cambridge Assessment International Education explains that assessment for learning is an approach to teaching and learning that creates feedback which is then used to improve students' performance. Students become more involved in the learning process and from this gain confidence in what they are expected to learn and to what standard. One way of thinking about assessment is that it aims to 'close the gap' between a learner's current situation and where they want to be in their learning and achievement. Skilled teachers plan tasks which help learners to do this. Assessment involves students becoming more active in their learning and starting to 'think like a teacher'. They think more actively about where they are now, where they are going and how to get there. ACRL Information Literacy Framework for Higher Education in which they defined "Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning".Information Literacy Assessment has become a very important aspect especially in higher education, it is basically the process of determining how well an educational system functions and improves. Most often the term refers to "outcomes

assessment," which according to Wanda E.Gill (1993) tries to answer three questions: "

(1) What should students learn?;
(2) How well are they learning it?; and
(3) How does the institution know?"

1.2 NEED FOR INFORMATION LITERACY ASSESSMENT

In conducting information literacy programmes in higher educational institutions, the library professionals wanted to be able to provide information to themselves and the administrations that the information literacy programmes were valuable to students and worth the time, personnel, and infrastructure facilities required. The assessment practices would be needed to understand the information literacy course modification, improvement of course plans, evaluations of teaching methods followed, evaluations of library professions skills who were involved in information literacy courses. At the outset to enhance the overall usage of library resources and services the assessment of information literacy programmes would be necessary.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Julien, Gross and Latham (2017)[1] surveyed using ann online survey sent to the community of professional librarians in the U.S. who provide information literacy instruction in academic libraries provided insights into their practices and the challenges they faced. The survey results helped to identify best practices, to improve present practice, to compare practices across different contexts, and to inform pre-professional preparation of librarians who will become providers of instruction. Cmor, Chan and Kong (2010)[2] focused on instruction and assessment of library database searching within the context of a required first year ICT course being run by the Computer Science department. The study assessed all the sections of the course using three different assessment tools. They assessed in-class exercises, presentations made 2 weeks later, and interviewed classroom instructors. The results highlight transference problems. It is not clear that the students who performed well on the in-class exercises, the same day as the library presentation, were then able to use the same skills later in the semester.

Hsieh and Holden (2010)[3] described an assessment tool that was used to examine the effectiveness of standard lecture based library instruction in a general education information technology course. As part of the study "The pre- and post-tests (summative instrument) and a student survey (formative instrument) were installed on the University's Course Management System (CMS)". The assessment instruments were revised over several semesters. The post-test scores were generally higher each semester. The authors do review which questions were consistently more challenging for students. They also discuss questions about the research design. Marzal (2010)[4] focused on the basis of transformations occurring in the educational model as a consequence of the shift from "producing" to "generating" knowledge, the impact of the digital divide threat, and the rise in "corporate social responsibility" and information literacy, analysed European Union policy actions aimed at fostering social inclusion. Consequently, the author also analysed the concept, approach, design, types and tools of evaluation that can be effectively applied to information literacy programmes. Finally, a proposal was made for the incorporation of evaluation and its tools into an information literacy programme. Tancheva, Andrews and Steinhart (2007)[5] described the assessment efforts undertaken by the staff of the Albert R. Mann Library at Cornell University. Three distinct phases of assessment were described. The first phase used focus groups and a statistical survey. The second phase used a pre-test / post-test form of outcomes assessment. The third method discussed was "gap-measure assessment," using a "web based survey". The results of each assessment project are given in some detail.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the role of library professionals in information literacy programmes assessments.
- To find the various assessment practices followed for information literacy programmes.

4. METHODOLOGY

The literature on assessment practices followed for Information Literacy Programmes (ILP) has been reviewed from various resources. Based on the review of literature, the below mentioned assessment practices were listed to survey.

- Formal written exams
- Informal exams
- Objective type exams
- Essay / Topic specified writing
- Face to face interaction

- ❖ Group projects or learning exercises
- ❖ Survey through questionnaire
- ❖ Assessment of Bibliography and Reference used in research

A five point scale questionnaire has been constructed with the above factors to collect the data for the study. An online questionnaire was designed using Google docs and sent via email to LIS professionals working in higher educational institutions in UAE. Respondents were reminded over phone and mail by the researcher. Most of the respondents were Heads and Senior Librarians, Librarians and Assistant Librarians.

5. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

There are 140 (n) professionals responded by recording their data. The data received to the first author's Gmail account which was stored in the Google spreadsheet. Data of the respondents were considered for analysis of the study.

5.1. Role of respondents in Information Literacy Assessment.

From the Table 1, it is clear that one-third (i.e.) 38.6 percent of the respondents were always involved to prepare IL course evaluation materials like Multiple choice question (MCQ) / quiz / assignment, 22.9 percent of the respondents were never involved to prepare IL course evaluation materials, 17.9 percent of the respondents were rarely involved to prepare IL course evaluation materials like Multiple choice question(MCQ) /quiz / assignment, 14.3 percent of the respondents were sometimes involved to prepare IL course evaluation materials like Multiple choice question (MCQ) / quiz / assignment and 6.4 percent of the respondents were often involved to prepare IL course evaluation materials like Multiple choice question(MCQ) / quiz / assignment.

It is observed from the table that one-third (i.e.) 35.7 percent of the respondents were always involved to prepare IL course users' assessment like grading/score analysis, 27.9 percent of the respondents were never involved to prepare IL course users' assessment, 14.3 percent of the respondents were sometimes involved to prepare IL course users' assessment like grading/score analysis, 12.1 percent of the respondents were rarely involved to prepare IL course users' assessment like grading/score analysis and 10.0 percent of the respondents were often involved to prepare IL course users' assessment like grading/score analysis.

Table 1: Role of respondents in Information Literacy Course Users' Assessment

Role	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
IL course evaluation materials like MCQ/quiz/assignment preparation	32 (22.9)	25 (17.9)	20 (14.3)	9 (6.4)	54 (38.6)
Role of respondents in Information Literacy Course Users' Assessment like grading/scoring analysis	39 (27.9)	17 (12.1)	20 (14.3)	14 (10.0)	50 (35.7)

Note: In the Table 2, the numbers in the bracket of each cell represents the percentage of total of respondents (n=140).

5.2. Assessment Practices followed for Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs)

Here the five-point scale format is used to know the assessment practices followed during ILPs is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Showing Assessment Practices followed for ILPs

Assessment practices followed for ILPs	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No Opinion	Agree	Strongly agree
Formal written exams	83(59.3)	22(15.7)	23(16.4)	4(2.9)	8(5.7)
Informal exams	75(53.6)	12(8.6)	27(19.3)	18(12.9)	8(5.7)
Objective type exams	69(49.3)	16(11.4)	14(10.0)	18(12.9)	23(16.4)
Essay / Topic specified writing	97(69.3)	26(18.6)	9(6.4)	-	8(5.7)

Face to face interaction	43(30.7)	9(6.4)	9(6.4)	42(30.0)	37(26.4)
Group projects or learning exercises	49(35.0)	21(15.0)	18(12.9)	27(19.3)	25(17.9)
Survey through questionnaire	37(26.4)	4(2.9)	22(15.7)	22(15.7)	55(39.3)
Assessment of Bibliography and Reference used in research	52(37.1)	18(12.9)	26(18.6)	13(9.3)	31(22.1)

Source: Primary data
Note: In the Table 2, the numbers in the bracket of each cell represents the percentage of total of respondents (n=140).

It is obvious from the table 2 that more than half (i.e.) 59.3 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment practice of formal written exams followed for ILPs, 16.4 percent of the respondents had no opinion, 15.7 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment practice of formal written exams followed for ILPs, 5.7 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment practice of formal written exams followed for ILPs and 2.9 percent of the respondents agreed with assessment practice of formal written exams followed for ILPs.

It is observed that more than half (i.e.) 53.6 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment practice of informal exams followed for ILPs, 19.3 percent of the respondents had no opinion, 12.9 percent of the respondents agreed with assessment practice of informal exams followed for ILPs, 8.6 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment practice of informal exams followed for ILPs and 5.7 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment practice of informal exams followed for ILPs.

It is revealed from the above table that nearly half (i.e.) 49.3 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment practice of objective type exams followed for ILPs, 16.4 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment practice of objective type exams followed for ILPs, 12.9 percent of the respondents agreed with assessment practice of objective type exams followed for ILPs, 11.4 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment practice of objective type exams followed for ILPs and 10.0 percent of the respondents had no opinion.

It is inferred from the above table that majority (i.e.) 69.3 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment practice of Essay / Topic specified writing followed for ILPs, 18.6 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment practice of Essay / Topic specified writing followed for ILPs, 6.4 percent of the respondents had no opinion and 5.7 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment practice of Essay / Topic specified writing followed for ILPs.

It is found from the above table that one-third (i.e.) 30.7 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment practice of Face to face interaction followed for ILPs, 30.0 percent of the respondents agreed with assessment practice of Face to face interaction followed for ILPs, 26.4 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment practice of Face to face interaction followed for ILPs, 6.4 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment practice of Face to face interaction followed for ILPs and 6.4 percent of the respondents had no opinion.

It is evident from the above table that one-third (i.e.) 35.0 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment practice of Group projects or learning exercises followed for ILPs, 19.3 percent of the respondents agreed with assessment practice of Group projects or learning exercises followed for ILPs, 17.9 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment practice of Group projects or learning exercises followed for ILPs, 15.0 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment practice of Group projects or learning exercises followed for ILPs and 12.9 percent of the respondents had no opinion.

It is known from the above table that one-third (i.e.) 39.3 percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment practice of Survey through questionnaire followed for ILPs, 26.4 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment practice of Survey through questionnaire followed for ILPs, 15.7 percent of the respondents agreed with assessment practice of Survey through questionnaire followed for ILPs, 15.7 percent of the respondents had no opinion and 2.9 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment practice of Survey through questionnaire followed for ILPs.

It is understood from the above table that one-third (i.e.) 37.1 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed with assessment of bibliography and reference used in research followed for ILPs, 22.1

percent of the respondents strongly agreed with assessment of bibliography and reference used in research followed for ILPs, 18.6 percent of the respondents had no opinion, 12.9 percent of the respondents disagreed with assessment of bibliography and reference used in research followed for ILPs and 9.3 percent of the respondents agreed with assessment of bibliography and reference used in research followed for ILPs.

5.3. Friedman Test for Assessment Practices followed for Information Literacy Programmes (ILPs)

Here after the Friedman test for assessment practices, the mean value of each practice method was considered and ranked and given in the Table 3.

It is inferred from the table 3 that survey through questionnaire had first rank (mean value: 5.90) with regard to assessment practices followed for ILPs offered, followed by face to face interaction had second rank(mean value: 5.40), Assessment of bibliography and reference used in research had third rank(mean value: 5.06), group projects or learning exercises had fourth rank (mean value: 4.77), objective type exams had fifth rank (mean value: 4.25), informal exams had sixth rank (mean value: 4.03), formal written exams had seventh rank (mean value: 3.37) and essay/ topic specified writing had eighth rank (mean value: 3.21) with regard to assessment practices followed for ILPs offered.

Table 3: Showing Friedman Test for Assessment Practices followed for ILPs

Assessment practices followed for ILPs	Mean Value	Rank
Survey through questionnaire	5.90	1
Face to face interaction	5.40	2
Assessment of Bibliography and Reference used in research	5.06	3
Group projects or learning exercises	4.77	4
Objective type exams	4.25	5
Informal exams	4.03	6
Formal written exams	3.37	7
Essay / Topic specified writing	3.21	8

From the table, it is suggested that the information literacy programmes offered may be assessed with formal written exams which may give be constructive for the library users to improve the lifelong information literacy skills.

5.4. Analysis of Assessment Practices followed with designation.

Here the one way analysis of variance among the respondents' designation with the assessment practices followed for ILPs are given.

Table 4: Analysis between designation and assessment practices followed for ILPs
The total number of respondents (n=140).

$\bar{X}$	Df	SS	MS	Statistical Inference
Technical Staff =15.0000 Assistant Librarians =20.8000 Senior / Deputy Librarians =21.0476 Chief/Head Librarians =18.1111	Between 3 Within 136	492.711 7737.460	164.237 56.893	F=2.887 P < 0.05 Significant

From the table 4, it is found that there is a significant variance among respondents' designation in the library with regard to assessment practice followed for ILPs (F = 2.887, P < 0.05), besides the mean score indicates that the senior/deputy Librarians had higher level (mean=21.0476), followed by assistant librarians (mean=20.8000) and chief or head librarians (mean-18.1111), whereas the technical staff involvement is less (mean=15.0000).

From the table, it is suggested that the chief/ head librarians may be involved always in assessment practices for information literacy programmes offered.

6. CONCLUSION

Assessment prevails all over the world in every point of human life. The assessment leads everyone to move in right path to achieve the goals. The information literacy programmes offered in higher educational institutions must not exempted from assessment. The assessment practices followed for information literacy programmes plays a major role in usage of library resources, services, the library professionals skills development, in understanding the library users need and approach and besides that, as Information Literacy Programmes will be positively perceived by the library users. Lastly the Library professionals also get better representation as par with teaching faculty in the higher education field and in the society.

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