LIBRARY ANXIETY AMONG POSTGRADUATES:
A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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ABSTRACT
A preliminary study to investigate the prevalence of library anxiety among postgraduates who attended the information skills instruction sessions at a public university in Malaysia was carried out. The mode and module of these sessions had undergone minimum changes since it was first started. Brief questionnaires to assess these sessions usually indicate moderate satisfaction. It was necessary to find out students' needs and anxious areas before steps can be taken to facilitate the continual improvement of these sessions. The modified Library Anxiety Scale was distributed to the students who attended the sessions. The objective of this study was to assess the prevalence of library anxiety among these students and to explore the item statements in the dimensions which can give an insight to the unspoken anxieties of these students. It was revealed that generally, postgraduates in this study are not really anxious about library staff and services barriers as the mean level for both factors is below average but factors associated with affective barriers and library resources barriers show a slightly elevated mean level of anxiety. Statements such as I am unsure how to begin my research and I get confused trying to get my way around the library were statements identified as the reasons for a great source of library anxiety. It is strongly recommended that besides hands-on during these sessions, students have to be brought around the library and also taught the effective strategies to begin research.

Keywords: Library anxiety, Anxiety among postgraduates, Information skills, Academic library

INTRODUCTION

Postgraduates are basically researchers who need to research, retrieve, evaluate, and use information sources effectively. There is a great need for them to use the resources in the library to enable them to write their research proposals, assignments, and thesis/dissertation. As mentioned by Onwuegbuzie and Jiao (2004), the writing of theses and dissertations typically necessitate extensive use of libraries and related information sources. and one of the common form of

academic-related anxiety reported among the collegians is library anxiety. Library anxiety as conceptualized by Mellon (1986) states that when confronted with the need to gather information in the library for their first research paper many students become so anxious that they are unable to approach the problem logically or effectively. Traditionally, academic libraries have attempted to assist to reduce students' anxiety through library instruction programs. However, it has been reported that such library instruction programs may not be effective if there are extraneous factors influencing the affective behavior of students (Moore, 2005) or if the transfer process of information literacy skills is hindered by the students' inherent problems (Grassian, 2001).

PURPOSE OF STUDY

At the University of Malaya, the library conducts information skills sessions for postgraduate students to assist their learning and research. These sessions are conducted twice weekly and each session is for three hours. The contents of the sessions include an overall introduction to the various resources in all formats and hands-on teaching on how to use the electronic resources. Managing information collected using EndNote is also taught. Although this program began about a decade ago, there had been no major changes made so far to the contents and pedagogy. The only change was in the technique of searching and retrieving information since most of the essential resources have moved from print to electronic format. It has been the practice to distribute a simple questionnaire after each session to assess the satisfaction level. Most often, students have expressed moderate to high satisfaction level but there has never been any in-depth study to assess the actual learning.

Prior to making any changes, it was deemed necessary to have some background knowledge about the students' needs and feelings which would be instrumental to enable the library to improve and modify the mode and module of these information skills sessions. For a start, it was decided to investigate if there is a prevalence of library anxiety and whether it is at a problem level. The responses from the dimensions will be studied before steps can be taken to facilitate the continual improvement of these sessions. It is hoped that the present study can make significant contributions in understanding the postgraduate students' areas of anxiety and subsequently improving the library instruction sessions. Getting to know students in an informal setting may contribute to their comfort and confidence levels, which in turn, allows them to feel less anxious about using the library (Carlile, 2007). The purpose of the study thus is to:

(i) Assess the extent of library anxiety among postgraduates attending the library instruction sessions

(ii)   Explore the item statements with an above average mean value which can give an insight to the unspoken anxieties of these students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

It cannot be denied that academic related anxieties in the form of library anxiety may lead to underachievement in research methodology courses and research proposal writing (Onwuegbuzie, 1997). Onwuegbuzie had undertaken a number of studies among postgraduates particularly students' disposition and characteristics in relation to library anxiety. For instance, high-procrastinating graduate students engaged in the research process, experience extreme elevations in library anxiety (Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2000). On average, for every three citations included in dissertation proposals, one of them represents some type of inacceptable error (Jiao, Onwuegbuzie & Waytowich, 2008). Library anxious students tend to be those who like structure, self-motivated, lack persistence, and are peer-oriented learners. They also tend to require mobility in learning environments (Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 1998). Graduate students who have behavioral characteristics towards perfectionism tend to have higher levels of library anxiety (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 1998). Furthermore it was found that low levels of self-perception, unorganized study schedule, academic procrastination, and library anxiety affect each other (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 1999). Patterson (2009) observed a notable lack of confidence in the use of citation indexes to track articles, conference papers, and reference materials. The library use of jargons such as 'controlled vocabulary', 'truncation', 'wildcard', and other terms commonly used by librarians do not help the students in understanding and managing information.

It has been suggested that integrating information literacy skills program into higher education is one of the ways to ensure students achieve a level of information literacy that will allow retrieval, evaluation and use information (Gross and Latham, 2007). In countries such as South Africa, the Ministry of Education had documented policy on institutional support for information literacy at schools, community centers, industry-based training sites, and other appropriate sites of teaching and learning (De Jager & Nassimbeni, 2002). Williamson, et al. (2007) suggested that information literacy mode of instruction has to be changed since information seeking ways have changed. At times, students do not know when to stop collection information. They need proper guidelines and strategies to decide when enough information has been collected. Students tend to misunderstand the simple difference between both academic journals accessible through the library and a host of sites found through Google. However, academic libraries must be aware that factors affecting the frequency of library usage can also inhibit the development of successful training programs (Bhatti, Citohan & Naeem, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

The collection of data was carried out during September to November 2014. The period is specifically chosen as it marks the enrolment for the new postgraduate students. A total of 102 students responded. They are from various disciplines; Education (28), Public Administration (12), Business (12), Science (10), Islamic Studies (9), Engineering (8), Language (8), Arts (8), Medicine (4), Law (1), and Computer Science (2). The Library Anxiety Scale developed by Bostick (1992) was distributed at the end of the session.

The original scale developed by Sharon Bostick had 43 items with five dimensions: *barriers to staff*; *affective barriers; comfort with the library; knowledge of library resources; and mechanical barriers*. This original instrument was modified to exclude a total of 11 statements; six (6) considered as irrelevant and redundant, and five (5) removed due to duplication. The six irrelevant and redundant statements are: (i) *A lot of the University is confusing to me, (ii) I feel safe in the library*, (iii) *There is too much crime in the library*, (iv) *The copy machines are usually out of order,* (v) *The computer printers are often out of paper*, (vi) *The change machines are usually out of order*. The five duplicate statements are: (i) *The reference librarians are not approachable*, (ii) *I feel comfortable using the library*, (iii) *The people who work at the circulation desk are helpful*, (iv) *I don't feel physically safe in the library*, (v)*The library is a safe place*. Six new statements related to the online databases and internet services were added. The modified scale consisted of twenty seven with five scales; strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree. The students were informed that there is no right and wrong answer.

FINDINGS

A series of exploratory factor analysis was carried out. It was necessary to conduct a number of exploratory factor analyses because usually the first run of exploratory factor analysis did not represent the maximum percent of variance explained in the data set (Coleman, 2010). Based upon an eigenvalue of 1.00 or more and factor loadings of 0.40 and greater, the first run of exploratory factor analysis yielded 8 factors which explained 73.34% of total variance. Out of the eight factors, four factors had only one or two items each. Hence it was necessary to eliminate them and retain the four factors which had more than three items each. A second run of exploratory factor analyses was conducted using factor loadings of 0.40 or greater and an eigenvalue of 1.00 or greater, but limiting to four factors. The four factors accounted for 56.25% of total variance. The value for Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure for sampling adequacy was 0.818 which was considered adequate. KMO statistic varies between '0' and '1'; '0.70' is often considered a minimum for conducting for factor analysis (Vogt, 2005).

The items were also tested for internal reliability using Cronbach's internal reliability coefficient alpha. All the items met the minimum requirement as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Factor 1 with 10 items had alpha value of $\alpha=0.90$, factor 2 with 7 items had a value of $\alpha=0.81$, factor 3 with 4 items had $\alpha=0.56$, and factor 4 with 4 items had an alpha value of $\alpha=0.64$. The factors were named in accordance with the description of the item statements which loaded in each factor. Factor 1 had items which were related to staff matters and was named as Library Staff Barriers. Factor 2 was named Library Services Barriers, Factor 3 as Affective Barriers, and Factor 4 was named Library Resources Barriers.

Table 1: Library anxiety construct among postgraduates

Dimensions	Items	Cronbach's alpha	% of total variance
Library staff barriers	10 items	0.90	22.76%
Library services barriers	7 items	0.81	16.16%
Affective barriers	4 items	0.56	9.88%
Library resources barriers	4 items	0.64	7.45%
Total	**25 items**		**56.25%**

	Factor 1: Library Staff Barriers	Alpha value(α)
1	*Librarians do not have time to help students*	*0.86*
2	*Library staff at the counter do not have time to help*	*0.82*
3	*Librarians at the reference desk do not have time to help because they are always busy doing something else*	*0.79*
4	*Library staff do not listen to students*	*0.75*
5	*There is often no one available to help*	*0.74*
6	*Library staff do not care about students*	*0.74*
7	*Librarians at the reference desk do not have time to help because they are always on the telephone*	*0.67*
8	*I cannot get help when I need it*	*0.60*
9	*I do not know what to do next when the book I need is not on the shelf*	*0.59*
10	*I get confused trying to get my way around the library*	*0.46*

	Factor 2: Library Services Barriers	
1	*Library staff at the counter are helpful*	*0.81*
2	*Library staff at the counter are friendly*	*0.72*
3	*Library staff at the reference desk are approachable*	*0.71*
4	*The library is an important part of my learning*	*0.68*
5	*I want to learn to do my own research*	*0.63*

6	*I enjoy learning new things about the library*	*0.61*
7	*I feel comfortable in the library*	*0.59*

Factor 3: Affective Barriers

1	*I always use the library catalogue when I wish to look for information*	*0.82*
2	*I always use the library catalogue before going to the book stacks*	*0.82*
3	*I am unsure about how to begin my research*	*0.52*
4	*The internet service in the library is very slow*	*0.46*

Factor 4: Library Resources Barriers

1	*I often use the library digital/electronic collection to search materials for my assignments, projects.*	*0.74*
2	*I often use the library digital/electronic collection to search for examination questions*	*0.61*
3	*I have never used the library digital/electronic collection*	*0.58*
4	*I do not know how to use the library digital/electronic collection*	*0.57*

DISCUSSION

(a)   Extent of library anxiety

Table 2: Library anxiety level among postgraduates

Dimensions	Mean	SD	Number of Items
Library Staff Barriers	19.73	6.6	10
Library Services Barriers	12.40	4.0	7
Affective Barriers	10.33	3.9	4
Library Resources Barriers	9.47	3.0	4

This study revealed that generally, postgraduates in this study are not really anxious about library staff and services barriers as the mean level for both factors is below average (M=19.73) and (M=12.40) respectively. However, factors associated with affective barriers and library resources barriers show a slightly elevated level of anxiety (M=10.33) and (M=9.47) respectively. Erfanmanesh (2011) in his study among postgraduate students also reported that most of them only reported an average level of library anxiety. The high average mean was for the factor 'Access to resources' and 'Library literacy'. Library

services did not seem to result in much anxiety as the mean was lower than average.

(b)   Explore the item statements with an above average mean value
The objective of this preliminary study is also to use the analysis to further improve the information skills services offered by the library. A study of the detailed item statements were deemed relevant. Individual item statements with mean level above 2.4 (average) were extracted. 2 items from factor Staff Barriers, all 4 items from Affective Barriers and 1 item from Library Resources Barriers were extracted. They are:

I do not know what to do next when the book I need is not on the shelf	*2.6*
I get confused trying to get my way around the library	*2.4*
I always use the library catalogue when I wish to look for information	*2.5*
I always use the library catalogue before going to the book stacks	*2.5*
I am unsure how to begin my research	*2.9*
The Internet service in the library is very slow	*2.4*
I often use the library digital/electronic collection to search for exam questions	*2.8*

Statements such as *I am unsure how to begin my research* and *I get confused trying to get my way around the library* were also statements identified as the reasons for a great source of library anxiety in Lu and Adkins's study (2012). It is possible that while engaged in the research process, high-procrastinating graduate students experience extreme elevations in library anxiety (Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2000).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRELIMINARY FINDINGS
The main objective of this preliminary study is to improve the Information skills sessions conducted for the postgraduates which was initiated more than a decade ago. Erfanmanesh (2014) in an earlier study among postgraduates in this institution, had reported that the participation of students in information skills sessions seem to have no statistically significant effect on any of the dimensions of information seeking anxiety probably due to the method of instruction provided. In this study, it is further realized that the students' anxiety arousal is when they go to the shelves after learning how to search the library catalogue. They get confused trying to get around the library. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that hands-on during these sessions are insufficient. Students have to be brought to the stacks and around the library for effective learning. Onwuegbuzie and Jiao (1998) also realized from his research that mobility is the learning preference most associated with library anxiety among graduate students.

The other significant finding in this study is that students are unsure of how to begin their research. Librarians have always considered themselves as merely supporting learning and research and facilitate the use of the scholarly resources. The truth is that some of these students are at a novice level where research is concerned. The emphasis for information instruction skills therefore is to teach how to begin any research. As stated by Bruce (2002), it is the reflective and conceptual capabilities that form part of the character of the information literate and not merely technical skills. Plodding the stages of library search process (ISP) as explained by Kuhlthau (1991) need persistence and students with inadequate persistence orientation may give up easily (Onwuegbuzie and Jiao, 1998). Katopol (2012) reported that library anxiety expands to information anxiety with the vast variety of information sources available. One of the ways to improve the current method of library instruction is to develop different types of sessions. Erfanmanesh (2014) suggested small group sessions, one-to-one encounters, written guides and brochures, audiovisual presentations, and computer assisted instructions. The preferred mode of information literacy programs currently is web based, interactive workshops, integration in coursework, and instruction on specific resources (Patterson, 2009).

CONCLUSION
The academic library now has to realize that it should no longer play a secondary role to learning and research. Research students are in need of help and the library and librarians are equipped with the skills and knowledge to move forward and assist. Enhanced roles not only for supervisors but also for academic librarians as educators are essential in this age of information overload (Williamson, et al., 2007). Incorporating Khulthau's information seeking process and Bruce's seven faces of information literacy can help librarians to understand further students' feelings with regards to information need and research.

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