A Study On Information Seeking Behaviour And Usage Pattern Of Electronic Resources And Services Of Postgraduate Students At Bharathidasan University

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ABSRACT:

This study investigates how Bharathidasan University postgraduate students, M.phil and P.hD scholars use electronic resources and how they seek knowledge. Given the growing abundance of digital resources, it is essential to optimize academic support by comprehending how students access, use, and face difficulties with e-resources. Data were gathered from 160 postgraduate students, M.phil and PhD scholars using a convenience sample technique and a survey study methodology. The results show that e-books and e-journals are widely used due to the demand for up-to-date, subject-specific information. Students, however, deal with issues such a lack of digital literacy, information overload, and poor internet connection. In particular, women say they struggle more to use technology resources efficiently. In order to better assist academic performance, the report ends with recommendations for institutions to improve digital infrastructure, strengthen training programs, and solve e-resource reliability issues. These observations advance our knowledge of how digital resources are used in higher education and provide direction for creating more useful and accessible academic materials.

Key Words: E-Resources, Information Seeking, E-Services, Usage Pattern.

INTRODUCTION:

Information availability and utilization have undergone a radical change since the dawn of the digital era, especially in educational institutions. The capacity to find and use information efficiently is essential for academic success for postgraduate students, who are at the vanguard of research and knowledge development. With the advent of electronic resources, students may now access a wide range of material at their fingertips, revolutionizing traditional library use. Examples of these resources include online journals, databases, e-books and institutional repositories. But the difficulty of accessing and using digital resources efficiently increases along with their availability.

Information seeking behaviour is the term used to describe the methods and techniques people employ to find and find information. The behaviour of postgraduate students is influenced by several variables such as the necessity for current research material, time restrictions and the particular requirements of their academic fields. It is vital for academic institutions to comprehend these behaviours in order to furnish pupils with the appropriate resources and help. The ease of use, accessibility and relevance of electronic resources to postgraduate student's fields of study as well as their experience with digital technologies, all have an impact on how these resources are used. Students may encounter obstacles like information overload, insufficient training or restricted access to subscription based materials even if electronic resources have a lot to offer in terms of accessibility and content breadth.

The purpose of this study is to investigate how postgraduate students use electronic resources and how they go about finding information. The research looks at how these students utilize databases, digital libraries and other online resources to understand what makes it easier or harder for them to get and use information effectively. The study will also evaluate postgraduate student's knowledge and skill levels in using these resources as well as the difficulties they face along the way.

To improve academic support services and make sure students can properly utilize the wide range of information accessible to them, it is essential to understand the information seeking behaviour and resource utilization patterns of postgraduate students in a fast changing digital world. By gaining insights on how to make electronic resources at higher education institutions more accessible and useful, this study will add to the body of knowledge on the usage of academic information.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Tuemay Hayelom Adhena (2020) has done a study on Assessing electronic information seeking beahviour of academic staffs; A case study of maichew polytechnic college. Using a mixed methods approach, this study examined the electronic information seeking behaviour of Maichew Polytechnic college academic staff. Surveys and semi-structured interviews with 65 individuals were used to gather data. The results showed that staff members routinely utilized the internet on a regular basis and routinely used electronic resources for teaching, communication, general awareness and research. Electronic resources however were seldom ever utilized for amusement. The majority 55.38% expressed dissatisfaction with information literacy instruction and the most often used resources were google. Access limitations and sluggish internet connections were among the problems. Increasing internet speed and subscribing to pertinent scholarly publications and databases are among the suggestions.

Kanchan Kumari and Swadesh Sharma (2021) have explored Information seeking behaviour of the users of academic libraries: A critical review of literature. The methods employed and the reliability of the conclusion drawn from the research is the main topics of this critical assessment of a few studies on user's information seeking behaviour in digital settings. It looks at eleven research from various libraries showing how the robustness of the body of literature. To improve library services and research rigor the evaluation recommends concentrating on specific libraries enhancing methodology and verifying more general assumptions.

Nirupma Chohda and Neeru Gupta (2017) investigated study on Use pattern and seeking beahviour of students in National institute of technology, Jalandhar, India. The researcher examined how students at the National institute of technology, Jalandhar, india, go about fining information and how they use it, with a focus on information quality. The study counts percentages to analyze data and using a survey research methodology. 70% of students are aware of database and e-journals according to the findings. Although students frequently access e-journals outside of the department library both print and electronic versions are strongly recommended. Furthermore, 32.22% of participants reported using the internet for more than an hour. The project intends to

assist academic librarians in identifying and resolving institutional weakness as well as obtaining the essential e-journals for their libraries.

Navin Upadhyay et al. (2022) examined Usage pattern of e-resources during COVID-19 and post COVID-19: A study. According to the research, the pandemic had a greater impact on e-journal consumption than it did on e-books. In a same vein, once the institute reopened and research activity picked back up, the usage of databases and standards surged after declining during the epidemic. Following the shutdown in March 2020, substantial e-journals including science direct, springer link, IEE and OSA saw a noticeable decline in usage. The study takes into account utilization statistics from the previous four years from 2018-2021 plus extra data for a few resources from 2022 through June. Excel was used to analyze the gathered data and produce figured and tables. The study also discovered that during the shutdown consumption decreased even though all resources were accessible remotely. Remarkably there was no appreciable spike in e-book consumption while the library was closed.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- ➢ To examine the information seeking behaviour of postgraduate students.
- ➢ To analyze the usage pattern of various electronic resources.
- ➢ To identify the preferred electronic resources and services used by postgraduate students and evaluate the reason for their preference.
- ➢ To assess the level of awareness and familiarity of electronic resources and services.
- ➢ To investigate the challenges faced by postgraduate students in accessing and effectively using electronic resources and services.

METHODOLOGY:

Data from respondents was gathered for this study through the use of a printed questionnaire approach in survey research design. Convenience sampling was the method employed and the target demographic was postgraduate students of Bharathidasan University. The postgraduate students, M.phil, P.Hd scholars were given a total of 170 surveys. A total of 160 completed surveys were accepted as valid and used into the research, obtaining a 94.12% response rate.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

Given its practicality and accessibility to participants, convenience sampling was used in this study. In order to complete the study on schedule and with the available resources, the researcher used a non-probability sampling technique to collect data from willing and accessible postgraduate students.

DATA COLLECTION:

A printed questionnaire designed to gather pertinent data from postgraduate students was used to collect the data. The questionnaire was divided into many sections with the goal of gathering demographic data as well as attitudes and perceptions significant to the goals of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS:

The data were gathered and analyzed using SPSS software. To summarize the key variables of interest and the demographics of the sample, percentage analysis was used in descriptive statistics. The chi square test was used to examine the relationship between categorical variables and find any significant associations in the data set.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Table 1

Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	67	42
	Female	93	58
	Total	160	100
Age	20-25	79	49
	26-30	53	33
	31-35	15	09
	36-40	9	07
	40 & above	4	02
	Total	160	100
User Category	Post Graduate	112	70
	M.phil	7	04
	PH.D	41	26
	Total	160	100

With a value on gender, age and educational attainment, the table presents the demographic of 160 respondents. There is a greater percentage of female respondents is 58%, compared to male respondents is 42%. A mostly young sample is indicated by the biggest age group which is 20-25years is 49%, followed by 26-30years is 33%. At the academic level there are 4% M.Phil students, 26% of P.hD candidates and 70% of postgraduate students. This demonstrates a high level of e-resources usage among graduate students especially among younger female responders.

Table 2

Type of Information Usually Seek from E-Resources

Type of Information	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Current Information	23 (14%)	81 (51%)	30 (19%)	18 (11%)	8 (5%)
Specific Information	36 (23%)	19 (12%)	41 (26%)	52 (32%)	12 (7%)
Full Text Articles	31 (19%)	72 (45%)	14 (9%)	24 (15%)	19 (12%)
Abstract or Bibliographic Information	21 (13%)	37 (23%)	18 (11%)	63 (39%)	21 (14%)
Background Information	18 (11%)	21 (13%)	48 (30%)	59 (37%)	14 (9%)
Subject Oriented Information	43 (27%)	63 (39%)	20 (12%)	19 (13%)	15 (9%)
Government Policy and Document Information	11 (7%)	7 (4%)	24 (15%)	81 (51%)	37 (23%)
Information about Previous Work Done	12 (7%)	27 (17%)	9 (6%)	91 (57%)	21 (13%)

The table reveals how frequently respondents access different kinds of information. 51% of respondent's access current information frequently and 14% access it very frequently. 23% of respondents were seek specific information very frequently, whereas 32% seek it rarely. 45% of readers regularly access full text articles, yet 12% never do. 23% of respondents access abstract or bibliographic material frequently, whereas 39% access it rarely. Notably 51% of respondents rarely review government policy papers suggesting a preference for more easily accessible information types, especially subject oriented material.

Table 3

Perception about e-resources and information seeking behaviour influenced by the availability

Perception of E-Resources	Fully Agreed	Agreed	Neutral	Disagreed	Fully Disagreed
I am not at all interested to use e-resources	16 (10%)	24 (15%)	36 (22%)	61 (38%)	23 (14%)
I am not at all aware of using e-resources	14 (9%)	28 (17%)	32 (20%)	57 (36%)	29 (18%)
I am not believed in the authenticity of e-resources	29 (18%)	40 (25%)	53 (33%)	27 (17%)	11 (7%)
If I am using e-resources I will check the reliability of it	27 (17%)	19 (12%)	34 (21%)	29 (18%)	51 (32%)
I am using e-resources along with printed resources	34 (21%)	56 (35%)	17 (11%)	39 (24%)	14 (9%)
Now I am using only the e-resources	29 (18%)	31 (19%)	14 (9%)	37 (23%)	49 (31%)
Now I am not interested to go and check the shelves of the library to get my information	18 (11%)	11 (7%)	24 (15%)	61 (38%)	46 (29%)

The survey finding shows that respondent's opinion on e-resources differed. Only 10% completely agree with the assertion that they have no interest in accessing e-resources, whereas sizable majorities 38% disagree. The level of knowledge of e-resources is modest, as indicated by 36% who disagreed that they were not aware of them. It is concerning that 18% of respondents firmly agree that they do not trust e-resources to be legitimate. Interestingly, the majority 31% favor printed materials over e-resources, although claim to verify dependability. All things considered the evidence points to a cautious but changing user-to-e-resources interaction.

Table 4

Most Preferred E-resources

Most Preferred E-resources	Mean Rank	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5
E-Books	2.10	56 (35%)	40 (25%)	32 (20%)	16 (10%)	16 (10%)
E-Journals	1.85	64 (40%)	48 (30%)	24 (15%)	16 (10%)	8 (5%)
E-Database	3.30	24 (15%)	32 (20%)	40 (25%)	40 (25%)	24 (15%)
E-Thesis & Dissertation	4.10	8 (5%)	24 (15%)	32 (20%)	48 (30%)	48 (30%)
Audio/Video Recordings	3.75	16 (10%)	32 (20%)	24 (15%)	56 (35%)	32 (20%)
Other Web Resources	4.50	8 (5%)	16 (10%)	8 (5%)	32 (20%)	96 (60%)

The rankings of 160 participant's different e-resources are displayed in the table, together with the ranking dispersion and mean ranks. E-books came in second at 2.10 and e-journals came in first with a mean of 1.85. The lowest mean rank 4.50 was exhibited by other web resources. 35% of Rank 1 votes went to E-books, while 40% went to E-Database displayed a balanced rating. 60% of other websites were listed at position five, which was a poor ranking. These findings indicate that e-books and e-journals are preferred and they call into question the usefulness of other online resources.

Table 5

Methods used to retrieve information

Methods used to retrieve information	Most Frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Occasionally	Never
Reading directly from the screen	40 (25%)	48 (30%)	32 (20%)	24 (15%)	16 (10%)
Writing down	19 (12%)	14 (9%)	46 (29%)	51 (32%)	18 (29%)
Downloading in secondary devices	24 (15%)	56 (35%)	40 (25%)	24 (15%)	16 (10%)
Printing	16 (10%)	24 (15%)	32 (20%)	48 (30%)	40 (25%)
Use cut and paste	56 (35%)	59 (37%)	22 (14%)	16 (10%)	8 (5%)

The table shows how 160 respondents used different approaches to interact with e-resources. Notably 12% of participants say they use writing down the most followed by 29% who say they use it regularly, 32% who use it in occasionally and 18% never use this approach. On the other hand 35% of respondents said they used cut and paste the most, while 37% said they used it frequently. Just 14% of people use this strategy occasionally, 10%

do it occasionally and 5% never use it. Other techniques, such reading straight from the screen and downloading to other devices exhibit a range of usage patterns, indicating that respondents have varying preferences when it comes to using e-resources. All things considered the data shows a clear preference for using cut and paste techniques while showing that writing down information is used less frequently.
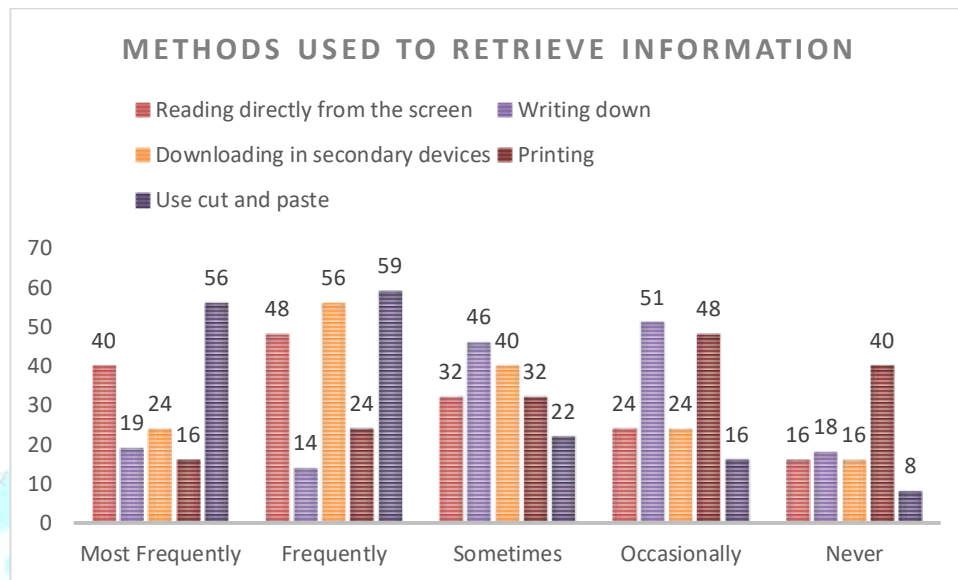
Figure 1

Table 6

Gender and Difficulty while using e-resources

Difficulties	Male (N=67)	Female (N=93)	Total (N=160)
Finding pertinent information might be difficult	19 (28%)	29 (31%)	48 (30%)
Overloading with information	16 (24%)	24 (26%)	40 (25%)
Not having access to the internet at home	14 (21%)	18 (19%)	32 (20%)
Poor internet performance at work place	9 (13%)	20 (22%)	29 (18%)
Time consuming	11 (16%)	23 (25%)	34 (21%)
Unfamiliarity with e-resources	4 (6%)	12 (13%)	16 (10%)
Others	4 (6%)	12 (13%)	16 (10%)
Total	67	93	16

The gender variations in e-resources usage challenges are displayed in the Cross-Tabulation Table. More women than men cited difficulties especially in locating pertinent information 31% compared to 28% for females and using the internet poorly at work 22% compared to13% for females. On the other hand men were

more worried about information overload 24% compared to 26% for women. In general, women encountered more difficulties in critical domains such as internet dependability and information retrieval.

FINDINGS:

1. A young age mostly female user base was highlighted by the fact that the majority of respondents 58% were female and 49% were between the ages of 202 and 25. 70% of the users were postgraduate students.
2. Higher use of e-resources was strongly associated with younger age groups.
3. Subject-oriented material was greatly sought after 39%, whereas a sizable percentage of stduent6s 51% often sought out current information.
4. 51% of respondents seldom accessed government policy and document material, indicating a lack of interest in less scholarly or government related topics.
5. A combination of conventional and digital resources utilization was shown by the 31% of respondents who preferred printed resources. A trend towards digital media was evident, nevertheless as 38% of respondents disagreed with the notion that they had no interest in e-resources.
6. 18% of students completely agreed that they do not trust e-resources indicating concerns about their validity.
7. Other web resources were the least desired while e-books and e-journals were the most widely used ranking first and second respectively.
8. Among the primary challenges that respondents encountered were poor internet performance 18%, information overload 25% and trouble locating pertinent information 30%.

SUGGESTION:

Universities should provide frequent training to reduce unfamiliarity and improve internet infrastructure for easier access in order to improve utilization of e-resources. Libraries should promote not properly utilized resources like e-thesis while concentrating on offering popular ones like e-books and e-journals. In order to foster confidence and allay worries about dependability, educational institutions must also assist students in confirming the legitimacy of electronic resources. Workshops on handling information overload can also improve student's capacity to efficiently filter and assess content.

CONCLUSION:

The study found that Bharathidasan University postgraduate students are using electronic resources more frequently, particularly e-books and e-journals. Information overload, slow internet and lack of experience with e-resources are still problems though. Accessing and properly using these tools is more difficult for female students in particular. To maximize the use of resources and promote academic achievement, educational institutions must prioritize expanding access, boosting digital literacy and building strong infrastructure. Addressing these issue will guarantee that students can get the most out of e-resources in their academic endeavors as the digital landscape develops further.

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