

INFORMATION UTILITY OF RESEARCH SCHOLARS IN COLLEGE LIBRARIES IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to study the information use pattern of social science researchers in arts and science colleges in Chennai affiliated to University of Madras. Information has the power only when it is transferred and communicated. Questionnaire was used to collect the data. It is found from the study that thirty eight percent of the respondents belong to Commerce discipline in the colleges of Chennai. Majority of the respondents were full-time M Phil (46%) and full-time Ph D (34%) and a minor portion of the respondents were part-time Ph D (14%) and part-time M.Phil. (6%) scholars; Maximum of 58 (58.00%) respondents visit the library 'every day'. Maximum of 90% of the users used 'textbooks' more often than the library material, whereas 80% of the respondents use 'reference books' among the library material. However, 30.00% of the respondents use 'subject periodicals'. Documents such as 'government documents, computerized information service' were found to be of very little use.

KEYWORDS: *Information Sources, User Behavior, Information Structure*

INTRODUCTION

Information is described as the fifth need of man ranking after air, water, food and shelter. In one form or another, it remains a significant element in the development of human society and it has shaped over a long period of time into the way in which we think and act. The information 'explodes' into power only when it is transferred and communicated, in other words, information is activated by communication. More research into behavior and information gathering patterns of the user groups, will assist the library more effectively in developing programmes and using resources and using the resources and limited funds to achieve desired goals. Accurate and up-to-date knowledge about users and the information behavior emerges now as one of the essential ingredients for any library system design.

The effectiveness of the library informative system depends on the extent to which the system characteristics correspond with the user and on how much the potential user is willing and able to make use of it. The librarian has to intimately and individually understand the requirements of his users and continuously update his knowledge about users through systematic studies and observations. Information use pattern studies are one of the important areas in user studies. The motives and purposes of users give a new insight into information needs and requirements. To satisfy such needs and requirements, users adopt various means for accession to sources of information, and in the act of accession to information, the user relies or calls upon the sources predetermined which lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

STATEMENT OF LITERATURE

This study examines information seeking behavior of social science researchers in arts and science Colleges in Chennai. The information needs can be assessed on the basis of duration and quantum of time utilization in search of information in libraries of their own institutions and also in other institutions; and so the time aspect had been brought within the purview of the present study.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Liew and Ng (2006) investigated the information-seeking behavior of fourteen ethnomusicologists in New Zealand via interviews. The findings shed light on what information ethnomusicologists seek, the sources and services they use, and the barriers they face in information seeking and use. A number of ways in which libraries can create collections and design services that will meet the information needs of ethnomusicologists are proposed.

Weiler (2005) carried out research in information-seeking behavior, motivation, critical thinking, and learning theory was explored and compared in a search for the possible motivating factors behind students' dependence on television and the Internet for their information needs. The research indicates that only a very small percentage of the general population prefers to learn by reading.

Barrett (2005) summarized an exploratory research study on the information-seeking habits of graduate student researchers in the humanities. In-depth interviews with a small sample of humanities graduate students were used to explore to what extent humanities graduates' students might constitute a user group distinct from faculty and undergraduate models.

Sharma and Pant (2004) in their study on information seeking patterns of Defense Research and Development Establishment (DRDE) Scientists revealed a few trends, which provide very valuable data for analysis. Field of research work in such establishment has been growing up very rapidly therefore, providing the correct and pin pointed information to the scientists is an incredible task for library personnel. The study found that most of the scientists belong to 40-49 age group; 100% of scientists of this establishments are using library for referring the journal articles. One of the significant change of communication media, internet is most popular among the scientist.

Shokeen and Kushik (2002) studied about information seeking behavior of social scientists working in the universities located in Haryana. They reported that most of the social scientists visit the library daily. The first preferred method of searching the required information by the social scientists followed by searching through indexing and abstracting periodicals, and citations in articles respectively.

OBJECTIVES

The researcher has framed the following objective.

- To analyse the time spent by the users on accessing the resources.
- To identify the types of information used by the users.
- To identify users' opinion on collection of library resources in the institutions under study.
- To find out the respondents' views on advantages of using the library of their own institutions.

HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses are formulated on the basis of content and coverage of framed objectives and they are tested by employing appropriate statistical tools:

- There is a significant difference between the different disciplines of users and type of materials used in the library.
- There is a significant difference among the users and the services provided by the library.
- There is a significant difference among the users in time spent for accessing the Internet facilities.
- There is significant variation between the purposes of library visit among the respondents.

METODOLOGY

The study follows questionnaire method and attempted to study the information seeking Behavior of social science researchers in arts and science colleges in Chennai

SAMPLING

In order to study the information seeking behavior of social science researchers in the Departments of arts and science colleges; researcher has chosen ten college libraries in Chennai.

DATA COLLECTION

The researcher has used the questionnaire method for collecting the data from the respondents. The questionnaires were designed to get the background information of the user, duration and quantum of libraries use, nature and type of information required, motivation to seek and collect the information, extent of utility of library services and facilities, and their opinion about the library services and facilities provided. The researcher carried out the data collection work during the period of January 2019 to June 2020.

DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data are classified and tabulated according to the objectives and hypotheses stated. First, the data are recorded on data sheets and then fed to the computer personally.

The study covered the social science research programmers such as Commerce, Economics, Management and History offered in the departments of ten arts and science colleges in Chennai. The respondents are research scholars from M Phil or Ph. D in the above disciplines.

Table 1: Subject-Wise Distribution of the Respondents

Institutions	Commerce	Economics	Management	History	Total
Affiliated Colleges	38	25	20	17	100

The subject – wise distribution of the respondents shows that thirty eight percent of respondents belong to Commerce discipline, twenty five percent of the respondents belong to Economics subject, twenty percent of respondents belong to the Management subject and remaining seventeen percent of the respondents belong to the History Subject.

Course of Study

Researchers are undertaken for several reasons. They could be taken up, for instance, just to satisfy one's curiosity, plan for an experiment, prepare a scheme or policy, test a hunch, or just for the heck of it. Researchers are also carried out at individual level to make one acquire a qualification. Respondents in this study were carried out a research for the purpose of qualifying M Phil or Ph D in their respective fields.

Table 2: Course of Study-Wise Distribution of the Respondents

Course Study	Commerce	Economics	Management	History	Total
M. Phil Full time	22	10	7	7	46
Ph. D Full time	9	10	8	7	34
Ph. D Part time	5	3	4	2	14
Part-Time M. Phil	2	2	1	1	6
Total	38	25	20	17	100

Course of study-wise distribution of the respondents in the above table indicates that the majority of the respondents were doing full-time M Phil (46%) and full-time Ph D (34%) and a minor portion of the respondents were part-time Ph D (14%) and part-time M. Phil (6%) scholars during the surveyed period. It is also found that at the maximum of 57.8 percent of the commerce scholars are doing M. Phil full-time and 40 percent of scholars doing Ph.D. full-time, belongs to the Department of Economics.

Frequency of Visits to the Library

It is an accepted fact that the frequency of visit to the library by users depends upon the nature of library collection, organisation, maintenance, and above all the services and helpfulness of the library staff in making use of library resources.

Table 3: Frequency of Visit the Library

Frequency of visit	Commerce (N=38)	Economics (N=25)	Management (N=20)	History (N=17)	Total (N=100)
Every day	22 (57.89)	16 (64.0)	14 (70.0)	6 (35.29)	58 (58.0)
Once in two days	8 (21.05)	6 (24.0)	5 (25.0)	7 (41.18)	26 (26.0)
Weekly once	4 (10.53)	2 (8.0)	1 (5.0)	4 (23.53)	11 (11.0)
Once in two days	3 (7.89)	1 (4.0)	0	0	4 (4.0)
Monthly	0	0	0	0	0
Occasionally	1 (2.63)	0	0	0	1 (1.0)
Total	38 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	17 (100.0)	100 (100.0)

The above table indicates that the minimum of 58 (58.00%) respondents visit the library 'every day' and 26.0% of respondents visit the library 'once in two days'. This shows the significance of the library in knowledge-center as a source of information. Overall, a negligible portion of the researchers accounts for less than 1.50% who do visit the library occasionally. Majority of (57.59%) the scholars from Commerce department are using the libraries every day. While 64% of the scholars belong to the department of Economics visit to the library 'everyday', only one or two present of the Research students from commerce department are 'occasionally' visiting the library.

Table 4: Type of the Library Materials used Most Frequently

Library Materials	Commerce (N=38)	Economics (N=25)	Management (N=20)	History (N=17)	Total (N=100)
Text Books	34 (89.47)	23 (92.0)	17 (85.0)	17 (100.0)	90
Reference Books	31 (81.58)	19 (76.0)	15 (75.0)	16 (94.12)	80
Subject Periodicals	10 (26.32)	10 (40.0)	6 (30.0)	6 (35.29)	30
Newspapers and Magazines	19 (50.0)	11 (44.0)	7 (35.0)	9 (52.94)	45
Government Documents	6 (15.79)	5 (20.0)	3 (15.0)	2 (11.76)	16
Computerized information service	7 (18.42)	5 (20.0)	3 (15.0)	4 (23.53)	19

The above table shows that, among the respondents, 90% used 'textbooks' more often than any other library material, and where as 80% of the respondents use 'reference books' among the library material. However, 30% of the respondents use 'subject periodicals'. Documents such as 'Government documents, computerized information services' were found to be of very little use.

Table 5: Library Services

Opinion	Commerce (N=38)	Economics (N=25)	Management (N=20)	History (N=17)	Total (N=100)
Excellent	7 (18.42)	3 (12.0)	1 (5.0)	3 (17.65)	14 (14.0)
Good	16 (42.11)	14 (56.0)	9 (45.0)	8 (47.06)	47 (47.0)
Satisfactory	14 (36.84)	6 (24.0)	6 (30.0)	5 (29.41)	31 (31.0)
Unsatisfactory	1 (2.63)	1 (4.0)	3 (15.0)	1 (5.88)	6 (6.0)
Can't say	0	1 (4.0)	1 (5.0)	0	2 (2.0)

The majority of the respondents (47.00%) indicate that the library services are 'Good'. This opinion is uniform in all college libraries in the district. 31.00% of the respondents grade the services as 'satisfactory'. Fewer (6.00%) percentage of respondents expressed that the services are 'Unsatisfactory', and 2% of respondents said, 'can't say' anything about the services.

It is also found that 42.11% of the Researchers from the Department of Commerce said that the services in their opinion were 'Good'. 17.65% of the History Scholars indicated that the service was 'Excellent'. According to the analysis of the study, the opinion about the library services is good in all the colleges. Very fewer percentages of the researcher's show their dissatisfaction. This may be due to lack of staff for assisting the librarian.

Table 6: Time Spent for using Internet by the Users

Duration of using Internet	Commerce (N=38)	Economics (N=25)	Management (N=20)	History (N=17)	Total (N=100)
Less than one hour	12 (31.58)	8 (32.0)	6 (30.0)	5 (29.41)	31 (31.0)
One to two hours	10 (26.32)	12 (48.0)	12 (60.0)	6 (35.29)	40 (40.0)
Two to three hours	7 (18.42)	4 (16.0)	1 (5.0)	3 (17.65)	151 (15.0)
Three to four hours	7 (18.42)	0	1 (5.0)	2 (11.76)	10 (10.0)
Four hours & above	2 (5.26)	1 (4.0)	0	1 (5.88)	4 (4.0)

The above table shows the duration of using Internet by the respondents in the college libraries of the total 40.0% of respondents are using Internet 'One to two hours' per day, 31.0% are using 'less than one hour', and less percentage (4.0%) of users are using 'four hours and above' per day.

Majority 12(60.0%) of the researchers from the department of Management and 12(48%) of the researchers from the department of Economics are using Internet in their library 'one to two hours' per day.

The above tables shows that the average opinion by the respondents about the use of Internet facility indicates that the mean for all users is 2, that is, duration for using Internet is one to two hours per day on an average.

FINDINGS

- It is found from the study that thirty eight percent of the respondents belong to the Commerce discipline in the arts and science colleges of Chennai.
- Majority of the respondents were doing full-time M. Phil (46%) and full-time Ph D (34%) and a minor portion of the respondents were part-time Ph D (14.0%) and part-time M. Phil (6%) scholars during the surveyed period.
- It is found from the study that the maximum of 58 (58.00%) respondents visit the library 'every day'. Majority of (70.0%) the scholars from the Commerce department are using the libraries every day. While 64% of the scholars belong to the department of the Economics visit to the library 'every day' and only one are two percent of the Research students from the commerce department are 'occasionally' visiting the library.
- There is no significant difference in observed between users from various discipline and types of the library materials. Maximum of 90% of the users used 'text books' more often than any other library material, where as 80% of the respondents use 'reference books' among the library material. However, 30.00% of the respondents use 'subject periodical'. Documents such as 'Governments documents, computerized information service' were found to be of very little use.

CONCLUSION

The users' opinion about the purpose, usage of information channels, information sources, library services etc. Were the yard stick to measure the quality of the libraries. In this study, it is evident from the fact that opinion about the library services is good and they are expecting that the introduction of ICT and maintenance of changes in the application of ICT in library management is quite required to get the information with high bandwidth. Working hours, infrastructure and

attitude of library staff towards the user community are analysed with the users' perception and it has to be improved. The present digital era is giving various information seeking avenues to the users and even though it is very much important to upkeep these and it should be incorporated in the library routines.

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