Research Article

ONLINE INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF RESEARCH SCHOLARS, SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS IN PERIYAR UNIVERSITY, SALEM

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	The information seeking behaviour of the present day post graduate students have transformed rapidly thanks to the penetration of ICT tools and techniques in their information seeking, searching, accessing, disseminating and strong information. The present study aims at understanding the online information seeking behaviour of Research Scholars School of mathematics in Periyar University, Salem. Out of 100 questionnaires randomly distributed to the respondents, 90 duly filled in questionnaires were received and taken to the analysis. The study reveals that: Majority of the respondents were male. A majority of the students belongs to the Mathematics Department. 36(40%) respondents visit the library daily. While 17(19%) respondents visit the library once a week, 11(12%) respondents visit the library once a month. 43 (48%) respondents use search engines to get information in Internet. 30(33%) respondents use Textbooks followed by 24(27%) respondents using newspapers and 17 (19%) respondents using E-books in the library. 33(37%) respondents each opined that their level of satisfaction on online resources available in the library is 'Satisfied' and 'Good'. 28(32%) respondents use Wikipedia followed by 20(22%) respondents using various e-journals.

INTRODUCTION

Information is considered as a useful commodity for routine life. For anything and everything information is necessary. This information is available in various sources. Libraries act as a center for providing right information to the right people at all times. The New information technology has enabled the library and information centers to change their mode of service from traditional to Internet based services.

Information

- Information is the result of processing, gathering, and organizing data in to the knowledge of the receiver.
- It is the knowledge derived from study, experience, or instruction.
- It includes facts, concepts, or instructions; any sort of knowledge or supposition which can be communicated.
- "Information" means data, text, images, sounds, codes, computer programs, software, databases or the like.
- It is the data that have been processed and presented in a form suitable for human evaluation.

Information Seeking Behaviour

Information Seeking Behaviour basically refers to the strategies and actions undertaken to locate discrete knowledge of elements. It is concerned with the integrated utilization of the three basic resources: people, Information and System. Information seeking is thus a natural and necessary instrument of human existence. Seeking means when human beings search for something which they want to get, it means they don't have it but they need it. Information seeking is the process of searching for the information from the information resources. Information seeking differs from person to person, that is, the ways and means they are using in seeking the information they need are different. The following process takes place in the information seeking behaviour:

- Identifying objective
- Defining need
- Accessing information system
- Establishing sources of information
- Information acquisition
- Use of Information and
- Satisfaction/dissatisfaction

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Periyar University Library

In 1997, Periyar University Library was launched. 78,580 volumes of text and reference books on different subjects are available in Periyar University Library. In this library 180 National and International journals and 13 leading Newspapers were subscribed. The library is following the open access system and provides its service to meet the requirements of students, research scholars and professors of Periyar University. It has different sections such as Reference Section, Text book Section, Books for competitive Examinations, Thesis and Dissertations Section, Back Volumes Section, Reprographic Section, Question Banks etc. Library also extends its facilities to the students and faculties of affiliated colleges.

Library Collections

- UGC - Info net Digital Library
- Online Journals: Subscribed
- Subscribed Periodicals (Print)
- Open Access Journals
- Wiley Online E-Books
- Open Access E-Book
- E-Learning Facilities: NPTEL

Table 1 Digital Library Collections

S. No	Collections	Total
1	Books	78,580
2	Journals and Magazines	180
3	Back Volumes	3418
4	Theses and Dissertations	2661
5	CDs/DVDs & Audio Cassettes	2455
6	Reports	971
7	News Papers	13
8	ERIC Database	01
9	EBSCO Database	01
10	SRELS journal of Information Management	01

Objectives of the Study

- To show the gender and department-wise distribution of the respondents
- To identify how frequently the respondents are visiting the library
- To understand how do they access the information online
- To enlist the information sources used by the respondents
- To judge the level of satisfaction of the respondents on online resources
- To know the varieties of digital resources used by the respondents.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shokeen and Kushik (2002) carried out a study about information seeking behaviour 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 was to search for the required information through indexing and abstracting periodicals, and citations in articles respectively. The social scientists use current journals followed by books.

Liao (2002) conducted a study on information seeking behaviour of agricultural researchers as teachers in Taiwan. He investigated that the critical ways for the teachers to get needed literature and the use pattern of information sources is primarily the primary sources of information.

Okiy (2002) conducted a survey of students and faculty members to assess the use of Delta State University library in Nigeria. The books were mostly needed and utilized compared to other resources. Most users considered library services and facilities as fair. It was also found that the visiting behaviour between students and faculty had different frequencies.

Chakraborty (2003) examined information needs and the seeking behaviour of the agricultural scientists of Delhi agricultural institute. The study reveals that agriculture scientists rely more frequently on scientific/technical journals than on teachers.

Saimbert (2005) attempted to study the information needs and seeking behaviour of baccalaureate nursing students at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey George Smith library. The study highlighted on the repeated categories of information sought by nursing students through data collected using both formal and informal interviews.

METHODOLOGY

This study was based on stratified random sampling method adopted for Primary data collection. Accordingly a structured questionnaire was prepared keeping in mind the basic objectives of the study. 7 schools and 24 Department are functioning in Periyar University. The questions were framed in such a manner that it could be easier for the Research scholar to answer them in the quickest possible time. A total number of 100 questionnaires were distributed among the Research scholar of the School of Mathematics. Out of which, the author received 90 filled in questionnaires - 37 from Mathematics, 35 from Computer Science and 18 from Library Science. The collected data was analyzed and presented in the tabular form.

Analysis of Data

Table 2 Gender-wise distribution of respondents

S.No	Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
01	Male	56	62
02	Female	34	38
	Total	90	100

Table 2 indicates the gender-wise distribution of respondents. Majority of the respondents were male. 56 (62%) research scholars are male and the remaining research Scholars (34, 38%) of respondents were female.

Table 3 Department wise respondents by student

S. No	Department wise	No. of respondents	Percentage
01	Mathematics	37	41
02	Computer Science	35	39
03	Library Science	18	20
	Total	90	100

Table 3 and Fig.1 describe that 37(41%) respondents belongs to Mathematics department, 35 (39%) respondents belong to Computer Science and 18(20%) respondents are from Library Science Department. A majority of the students belongs to the Mathematics Department.
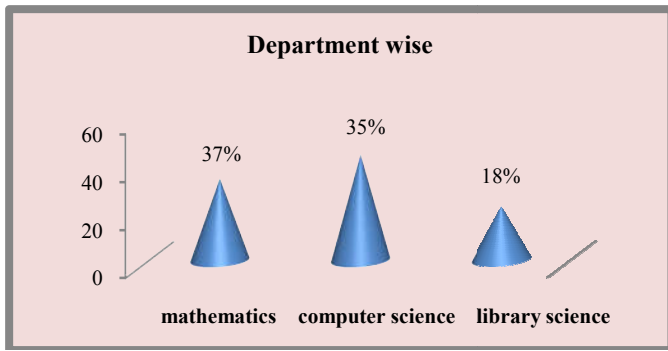
Figure 1 Department-wise distribution of the respondents

Table 4 Frequency of visiting the College Library

S. No	Internet use	No. of respondents	Percentage
01	Daily	36	40
02	Once in a week	17	19
03	Once in a Month	11	12
04	Twice a Week	24	27
05	Occasionally	2	2
	Total	90	100

Table 4 describes the frequency of visiting the College Library among the 90 respondents. 36(40%) respondents visit the library daily. While 17(19%) respondents visit the library once a week, 11(12%) respondents visit the library once a month. 24(27%) respondents visit the library twice a week while and 2(2%) respondents visit the library occasionally. Hence, a majority of the respondents visit the library daily.
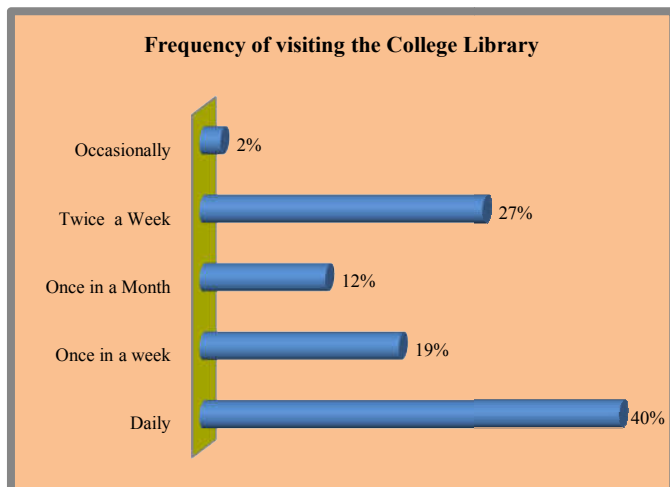

Figure 2 Frequency of visiting the College Library

Table 5 Methods of accessing information online

S. No	Methods of accessing information	No. of respondents	percentage
01	Search engine	43	48
02	Typing URL in the Browser	47	52
	Total	90	100

Table 5 and Fig.3 show that 43 (48%) respondents use search engines to get information in Internet and 47 (52%) respondents access information in the net by typing the concerned URL in the browser directly.
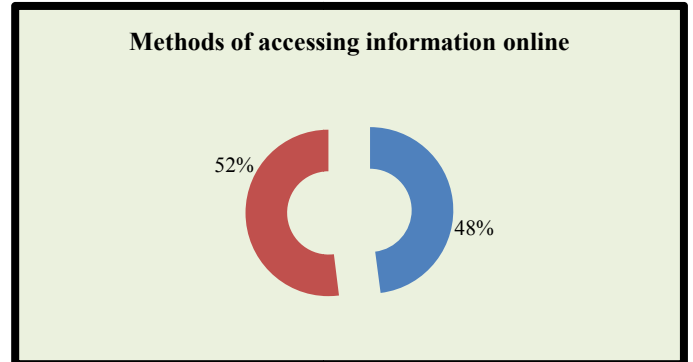

Figure 3 Methods of accessing information online

Table 6 Information sources used

S.No	Information sources used	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Text Books	30	33
02	News papers	24	27
03	Research Papers	06	07
04	Abstract Journals	05	06
05	Indexing Journals	02	02
06	Online magazines	01	01
07	E- Books	17	19
08	Periodicals	01	01
09	Others	04	04
	Total	90	100

Table 6 makes it clear that 30(33%) respondents use Textbooks followed by 24(27%) respondents using newspapers and 17 (19%) respondents using E-books in the library. The least used information source is periodicals (1, 1%) available in the library.
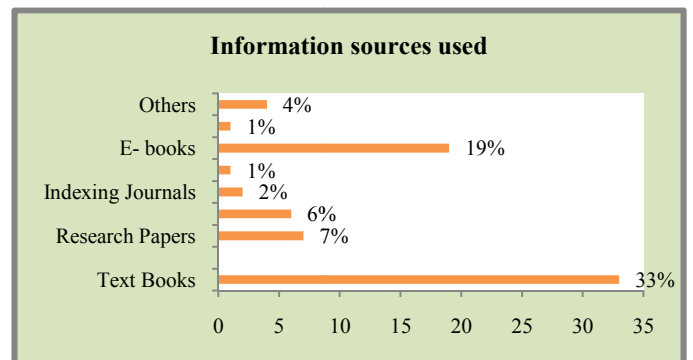

Figure 4 Information sources used

Table 7 Level of Satisfaction on online Resource

S.No	Satisfaction on online Resources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	Very good	17	18
02	Good	33	37
03	Satisfied	33	37
04	Poor	07	08
	Total	90	100

Table 7 and Fig.5 convey that 33(37%) respondents each opined that their level of satisfaction on online resources available in the library is 'Satisfied' and 'Good'. While 17(18%) respondents feel 'Very Good 'about the online resources of the library, 07 (08%) respondents judged the online resources as 'Poor '.
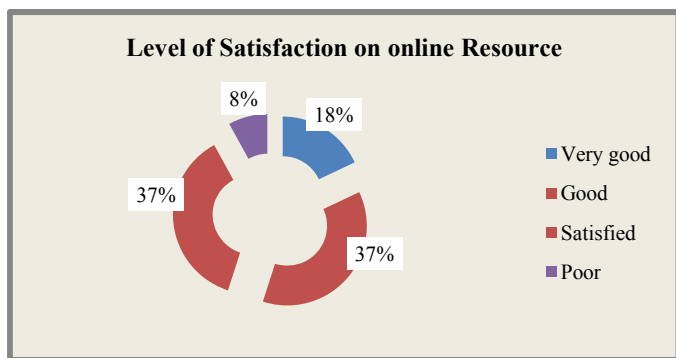
Figure 5 Level of Satisfaction on online Resource

Table 8 Use of Digital Sources

S.No	Digital Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
01	E-journal	20	22
02	Database of scholarly articles	17	19
03	Virtual libraries	13	14
04	Wikipedia	28	32
05	Database of thesis/ dissertations	04	04
06	Database of abstract	08	09
	Total	90	100

It is inferred from Table 8 that 28(32%) respondents use Wikipedia followed by 20(22%) respondents using various e-journals. While databases of scholarly articles are used by 17(19%) respondents, virtual libraries are accessed by 13(14%) respondents. The least used digital sources are abstract databases by 08(09%) respondents and theses databases by 04(04%) respondents.

CONCLUSION

The Information Technology plays an important role in the development of Education. With the emergence of Information Technology the concept of information providing centers such as Libraries, Internet centers, computer centers, etc has been transformed a lot in its functioning and changed the user's expectations. Information seeking behaviour has been changing differently among the users by the influence of various factors. Users have become more information conscious than ever before demanding timely access to the information.

Hence the authorities of the academic institutions must pay due respect to the development of library professionals and services especially digital services in the present context. Many studies have proved that academic development leads to overall economic development of the nation and hence due attention has to be paid for the online information services and their utilization.

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