

**INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF FACULTY AND RESEARCH
SCHOLARS IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES OF KARNATAKA: A STUDY**

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Abstract

This study deals with the information seeking behaviour of faculty and research scholars in private universities of Karnataka. The main purpose of the study is to know the usage of resources, various services rendered by the library, facilities regarding the ICT. For this study the researcher has adopted questionnaire method and the collected data was analyzed in simple statistics and presented in tables consisting of frequencies and percentages. It is found that irrespective of the respondents' gender, age, and designation, the purpose of using e-resources predominantly used for research purposes followed by writing and publishing article purposes. It was apparent that e-resources have influenced positively on the respondent's information-seeking behaviour.

Keywords: Information, Seeking Behaviour, Electronic resources, Library Services, Internet, Private University Libraries, Information communication technology.

Introduction

Today, digital technologies are bringing about revolutionary changes in the way the information is stored, retrieved, and disseminated. These have a profound impact on the ways Private University libraries function and open up electronic access to information for thousands

of users. Private University scenario, over the years, has undergone tremendous changes, assuming new dimensions influenced by the technology-driven applications. Instead of building a collection of books, the library is now evolving into an electronic portal and subject gateways to a growing global collection in digital content.

The emerging demand for electronic information resources may warrant the restructuring of the college libraries to digital Private University libraries. The library's holdings can be accessed by the research scholars and faculty members when they needed. Most of the Private University libraries have Internet facilities and are providing almost free access to research scholars and faculty. The observation reveals that substantial use of e-resources in the field of allied subjects includes E-journals, databases, reports, discussions, curricula, reading lists, information 'brochures' etc. Faculty and research scholars always rush to the library to get the required information.

Information Seeking Behaviour

Information Seeking is a necessary activity indulged in by all people and manifested through a particular behaviour (Ellis, 1989). It is also an aspect of the scholarly work of most of the academic librarians who strive to develop collections, services, and organizational structures that facilitate information seeking.

Information seeking behaviour is the application of attitudes through a set of actions to achieve the desired information required. When moods and actions collaborate, the performance emerges. Based on the level of performance, the satisfaction level of the acquired knowledge is determined. Wilson (1999) defines the term information-seeking behaviour as 'the totality of human behaviour concerning sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use.' Thus it includes face-to-face communication with others, as well as the passive reception of information as in, for example, watching television advertisements without any intention to act on the information given. Information Seeking Behaviour refers to the way people search for and utilize information. Most of the time, students' information-seeking behaviour involves current or purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to complete course assignments, prepare for class discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences, or writing examinations.

Information seeking, for the present study, means the process of searching and gathering information and information resources for meeting the academic information needs about the learning, teaching, and research activities of the population under study.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are as follows;

- To identify the usage of library resources by research scholars and faculty members in Private Universities.
- To understand the various library services for information seeking behaviour of users in Private Universities.
- To identify the library facilities in Private Universities.
- To understand the awareness of e-resources of faculty and research scholars in Private Universities.
- To examine the ICT efficiency in the library of Private Universities.

Methodology

A survey method of research has been used for collection of data, a structured questionnaires were distributed for data collection of private universities. The researcher has personally assisted and interviewed in order to receive more clear, accurate and pin-pointed responses to the listed questions. The data gathered is organized in tabular form and simple calculations (%percentage) are used to achieve the qualitative and quantitative results in the study.

A sample of 820 users was selected for the survey. The questionnaire was distributed among the users who visited the library during the period. Although 820 questionnaires were administered, only 712 filled questionnaires were received, amounting to a moderate response rate of 86.83%.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Details of the respondents

Table 1 indicates a gender-wise distribution of respondents. Out of 712 respondents surveyed, 451 (63.34%) were male, and about 261 (36.66%) respondents were female. It can be inferred from the table that male respondents dominated over the female

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by Gender-wise

Sl.No.	Gender	Responded	Percentage
1	Male	451	63.34%
2	Female	261	36.66%
Total		712	100%

Age group

To examine the influence of age on the information-seeking behaviour of the Private Universities library users, the respondents were requested to indicate their age. The response is illustrated in Figure 1.

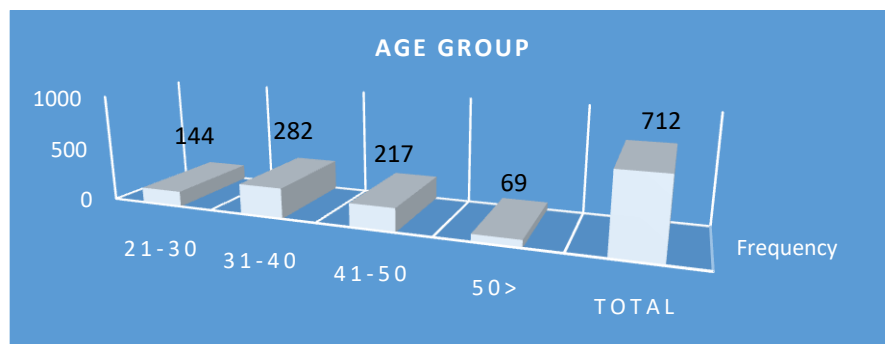


Figure 1: Age-wise distributions of the respondents

An age-wise distribution showed that 282 respondents of the survey of the total 712 belonged to the age group of 31 to 40. It makes up 39.60% of the total sample. The large consolidation of the sample in this age group is due to the fact that majority of the respondents were faculty and research scholars of Private Universities. The next large group belongs to the age group of 41 to 50, where there are 217 respondents amounting to 30.50% of the total sample. As expected, the users of the libraries in an academic situation will show a similar pattern where the bigger age groups will be limited in number. That is 20.20% belong to the age group of 21 to 30, and the remaining 9.70% of respondents are above 50 years.

Gender and age group-wise cross-tabulation

The age and gender-wise distribution of the sample are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Gender and age group-wise respondents

Age groups	Gender		Total
	Male	Female	
21 – 30	144	0	144
	31.90%	0.00%	20.20%
31 – 40	213	69	282
	47.20%	26.40%	39.60%
41 – 50	52	165	217
	11.50%	63.20%	30.50%
> 50	42	27	69
	9.30%	10.30%	9.70%
Total	451	261	712
	100%	100%	100%

The sample constitutes a very specific group of users, comprising of 451 (63.79%) male and 261(36.21%) of female persons. It presents a picture that the majority of the users of these libraries belong to the gender male.

Table 3: Awareness of various information resources

Awareness of Information Sources	Designation		Total
	Faculty	Research Scholar	
Aware of Books Available	309	136	445
	62.93%	61.54%	62.50%
Extensively using the available books	175	92	267
	35.64%	41.63%	37.50%
Search of library catalogue/OPAC	242	114	356
	49.29%	51.58%	50.00%
Arrangement of books on the shelf is helpful	119	59	178
	24.24%	26.70%	25.00%
Total	845	401	1246
	67.82%	32.18%	100.00%

A designation-wise analysis of the awareness of various information resources shows that a majority were aware of books, including 62.93% of the faculty members and 61.54% of the research scholars. The second-largest group of people 242(49.29%) faculty and 114(51.58%)

research scholars were aware of the search of library catalogue/ OPAC, 175(35.64%) faculty and 92(41.63%) research scholars were aware extensively using the available books, only 199(24.24%) faculty and 59(26.70%) research scholars opinion that arrangement of books on the shelf is helpful to aware of various information resources in the library. The scenario warrants the necessity of awareness programs for faculty members and research scholars.

Preferred information sources used by the respondents

We are all aware that in the present day, documents get published in print as well as electronic format. People prefer either print or electronic format, and sometimes they may like both. With a view to finding the most preferred document format among the respondents were asked the question regarding preferred information sources to use. Their responses in this regard are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Preferred information sources used by the respondents

Preferred information sources	Designation		Total
	Faculty	Research Scholar	
Text Book	491	221	712
	100%	100%	100%
Journal	421	190	611
	85.74%	85.97%	85.80%
Conference Proceedings	68	37	105
	13.85%	16.74%	14.70%
CD-ROM Databases	130	76	206
	26.48%	34.39%	28.90%
Reports	68	37	105
	13.85%	16.74%	14.70%
Reference sources	355	155	510
	72.30%	70.14%	71.60%
E-resources	215	92	307
	43.79%	41.63%	43.10%
Newspapers	409	199	608
	83.30%	90.05%	85.40%
Total	491	221	712
	100%	100%	100%

The analysis data reveals that the majority of the respondents, that is, 712 (100%) opined that they preferred to use text books of information sources, 611 (85.80%) of the respondents expressed their opinion that they prefer to use journals of information sources, about 510 (71.60%) of the respondents opined that they use reference sources of the information sources.

Table 5: Frequently used information sources by the respondents

Information Sources	Designation	Faculty		Research Scholars		Total	
	5 point scale	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Text books	1	191	38.90	76	34.39	267	37.50
	2	300	61.10	145	65.61	445	62.50
	3	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	4	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	5	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Reference Sources	1	379	77.19	221	100.00	600	84.27
	2	112	22.81	0	0.00	112	15.73
	3	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	4	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	5	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Thesis and Dissertations	1	77	15.68	59	26.70	136	19.10
	2	414	84.32	162	73.30	576	80.90
	3	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	4	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
	5	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Journals	1	11	2.24	59	26.70	70	9.83
	2	113	23.01	78	35.29	191	26.83
	3	65	13.24	1	0.45	66	9.27
	4	256	52.14	83	37.56	339	47.61
	5	46	9.37	0	0.00	46	6.46
Conference Proceedings	1	66	13.44	124	56.11	190	26.69
	2	177	36.05	52	23.53	229	32.16
	3	183	37.27	44	19.91	227	31.88
	4	65	13.24	1	0.45	66	9.27
	5	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
News Papers	1	52	10.59	43	19.46	95	13.34
	2	51	10.39	16	7.24	67	9.41
	3	53	10.79	42	19.00	95	13.34
	4	269	54.79	120	54.30	389	54.63
	5	66	13.44	0	0.00	66	9.27
Reports	1	103	20.98	59	26.70	162	22.75
	2	64	13.03	117	52.94	181	25.42
	3	6	1.22	43	19.46	49	6.88
	4	131	26.68	1	0.45	132	18.54
	5	187	38.09	1	0.45	188	26.40
CD-ROM / Database	1	98	19.96	43	19.46	141	19.80
	2	5	1.02	16	7.24	21	2.95
	3	57	11.61	78	35.29	135	18.96
	4	275	56.01	84	38.01	359	50.42
	5	56	11.41	0	0.00	56	7.87

Note: 1-Most Frequently; 2- Frequently; 3-Uncertain; 4-Less Frequently; 5-Do not use

The analysis also reveals a similar picture. However, it can be seen that research scholars and faculty members who lean more towards research make use of information sources frequently for academic / research work only when they need it. The largest groups of people most frequently use the reference sources, News-paper, journals and theses, and dissertations only when they need it, i.e., 600 of the 712 members of the sample of which 77.19% of faculty and 100% research scholars belong to this group. As many as 576(80.90%) respondents out of 398 (88.25%) male and 178(68.20%) most frequently use theses and dissertations. It can also be recorded from this table that almost 61.10% of faculty and 65.61% of research scholars were most frequently use text-books also.

Satisfaction level of library Information Services

A library and information science professional must understand satisfaction to improve the library's services and facilities. The challenging task of a librarian is to increase the footfalls of users towards the library. It can be done by providing pioneering services and facilities for the clientele. Furthermore, it is essential to provide need-based services by understanding their level of satisfaction.

Table 6: Satisfaction level of library Information Services

Information Sources	Designation	Faculty		Research Scholars		Total	
	5 point scale	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Reference Service	1	104	21.05	98	44.95	193	27.11
	2	335	67.81	111	50.92	446	62.64
	3	17	3.44	4	1.83	21	2.95
	4	20	4.05	3	1.38	23	3.23
	5	18	3.64	11	5.05	29	4.07
Circulation (Manual or Automated)	1	206	41.70	37	16.97	243	34.13
	2	256	51.82	92	42.20	348	48.88
	3	12	2.43	84	38.53	96	13.48
	4	10	2.02	1	0.46	11	1.54
	5	10	2.02	4	1.83	14	1.97
News Paper Clipping Service	1	147	29.76	0	0.00	147	20.65
	2	135	27.33	161	73.85	296	41.57
	3	193	39.07	53	24.31	246	34.55
	4	7	1.42	3	1.38	10	1.40
	5	12	2.43	1	0.46	13	1.83
Indexing and Abstracting Service	1	138	27.94	0	0.00	138	19.38
	2	145	29.35	85	38.99	230	32.30
	3	4	0.81	36	16.51	40	5.62
	4	7	1.42	39	17.89	46	6.46

	5	200	40.49	58	26.61	258	36.24
Current Awareness Service	1	112	22.67	0	0.00	112	15.73
	2	234	47.37	79	36.24	313	43.96
	3	6	1.21	43	19.72	49	6.88
	4	77	15.59	56	25.69	133	18.68
	5	62	12.55	43	19.72	105	14.75
Book Bank Facility	1	157	31.78	1	0.46	158	22.19
	2	122	24.70	79	36.24	201	28.23
	3	128	25.91	43	19.72	171	24.02
	4	7	1.42	39	17.89	46	6.46
	5	80	16.19	56	25.69	136	19.10
Bulletin Board Services	1	236	47.77	38	17.43	274	38.48
	2	112	22.67	124	56.88	236	33.15
	3	74	14.98	13	5.96	87	12.22
	4	66	13.36	0	0.00	66	9.27
	5	6	1.21	43	19.72	49	6.88
Document Delivery Service	1	96	19.43	36	16.51	132	18.54
	2	53	10.73	39	17.89	92	12.92
	3	152	30.77	99	45.41	251	35.25
	4	7	1.42	42	19.27	49	6.88
	5	186	37.65	2	0.92	188	26.40
Alerting Services	1	232	46.96	2	0.92	234	32.87
	2	168	34.01	79	36.24	247	34.69
	3	72	14.57	43	19.72	115	16.15
	4	15	3.04	52	23.85	67	9.41
	5	7	1.42	42	19.27	49	6.88
Email Services	1	268	54.25	2	0.92	270	37.92
	2	70	14.17	36	16.51	106	14.89
	3	128	25.91	43	19.72	171	24.02
	4	20	4.05	124	56.88	144	20.22
	5	8	1.62	13	5.96	21	2.95
Web OPAC	1	138	27.94	0	0.00	138	19.38
	2	77	15.59	75	34.40	152	21.35
	3	196	39.68	2	0.92	198	27.81
	4	76	15.38	99	45.41	175	24.58
	5	7	1.42	42	19.27	49	6.88
Webinars	1	92	18.62	0	0.00	92	12.92
	2	177	35.83	1	0.46	178	25.00
	3	148	29.96	119	54.59	267	37.50
	4	69	13.97	85	38.99	154	21.63
	5	8	1.62	13	5.96	21	2.95
Virtual Reference Desk/Ask a librarian	1	8	1.62	4	1.83	12	1.69
	2	222	44.94	39	17.89	261	36.66
	3	11	2.23	75	34.40	86	12.08
	4	77	15.59	98	44.95	175	24.58
	5	176	35.63	2	0.92	178	25.00
Inter Library Loan	1	15	3.04	1	0.46	16	2.25
	2	260	52.63	40	18.35	300	42.13
	3	140	28.34	92	42.20	232	32.58

	4	72	14.57	43	19.72	115	16.15
	5	7	1.42	42	19.27	49	6.88
Reprography Services	1	70	14.17	56	25.69	126	17.70
	2	230	46.56	43	19.72	273	38.34
	3	73	14.78	39	17.89	112	15.73
	4	10	2.02	79	36.24	89	12.50
	5	111	22.47	1	0.46	112	15.73
Internet Services	1	77	15.59	98	44.95	175	24.58
	2	157	31.78	1	0.46	158	22.19
	3	143	28.95	75	34.40	218	30.62
	4	6	1.21	43	19.72	49	6.88
	5	111	22.47	1	0.46	112	15.73

Note: 1-Highly Satisfied; 2- Satisfied; 3-Uncertain; 4-Dissatisfied; 5-Highly Dissatisfied

It is observed that the majority of the faculty (39.47%) and research scholars (42.66%) were uncertain in the level of satisfaction of textbooks in the library. Only six faculty members (1.21%) and 43 (19.72%) Research scholars were highly satisfied in seeking information through a textbook in the library. 53 faculty members (10.73%) and 42 (19.27%) research scholars were satisfied in seeking information through books in the library. Out of 494 faculty members, 184 (37.25%) and 56 (11.34%) members were found Dissatisfied and Highly Dissatisfied respectively, and out of 218 research scholars, 40 (18.35%) were found Dissatisfied in seeking information through textbooks in the library. The level of satisfaction by designation reveals that the faculty and research scholars are satisfied. As much as 77.60% of the faculty members are satisfied by the 71-90% level, research scholars, i.e., 55.66% of research scholars, have a satisfaction level of 60-80%. Overall, the percentage of satisfaction is not alarming among all categories of respondents.

ICT efficiency in the library of private universities

The majority of the respondents used the internet facility for general browsing only, amounting to 712 (100%) of the total sample. The next large group totals 178(25.00%), but a nominal percentage of respondents were using the internet facility to access online journals. Gender-wise division showed that 100% of female and 100% male dominate in using the facility for general browsing. It had concluded that irrespective of the respondents' gender, age, and designation, the internet facility predominantly used for general browsing followed by e-journal access and e-mail purpose.

Conclusion

This study provides unique insights into the information-seeking behaviour of the academic community from their perspectives expressed in their own words. In light of limited access to international information sources and many severe conditions faced by the academic community in developing countries, this study's findings add to the body of knowledge in information science by documenting how the private academics in Karnataka experience various barriers, and how despite them, they accomplish their information needs. The study determines the information needs and information-gathering habits of users in the Private Universities. The result of this survey discloses that Private University users seek diverse information from various sources, both print, and non-print.

The study has revealed that there is an indispensable role for a library to play as an information center with efficient library services with a professional librarian to fulfill the user's curricular research and informational requirements. E-resources, internet, and online information databases are becoming a valuable asset in any library and information center. However, in addition to this, it is essential to note that in this IT and networked era, a significant percentage of respondents also need to depend on the print resources in their libraries. This study can be helpful for the researchers, faculty members, as well as for the library and information professionals.

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