

Information Seeking Behaviour of Students in Autonomous Engineering Institutions in Coimbatore Region: A Study

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of the study was to examine the various attitudes and behavior in seeking information from engineering college libraries by the students. The study adopted a survey design and data was collected using a self-structured questionnaire tool administered to 250 respondents studying in their 3rd and 4th year are randomly selected from 10 different Autonomous Engineering Colleges in and around Coimbatore zone of which 200 (80%) of students responded with duly filled in questionnaire feedback. Analysis shows that students have been shown more affection to formal print collection as well as electronic resources with the internet has given more preference. Impact of ICT has made electronic print media more popular among users. This study closely examines several aspects of library use, including frequency of visiting the library, satisfaction of students in getting library services and facilities. The respondents mostly use the Chrome web browser to Access flexible e - resources from online databases such as Google Scholar, IEEE /ACM and ASME with a primary support of library staff. Most of the respondents have an opinion of satisfaction with the existing services and facilities provided by their libraries.

Keywords: Information seeking behavior; Engineering Colleges; UG Students; E-resources; Information Communication Technology (ICT); Library services.

INTRODUCTION

The major aim of this study was to find out the Information gathering habits of students which lead to progress of academic education. The purpose of the academic libraries is to provide dynamic services to the academic users in acquiring knowledge and updating their skills. In order to provide these necessary services in times of rapid and continuous change, librarians and information professionals must be able to make management decisions based on the changing needs of their groups - their actual needs, not their perceived needs.

Furthermore, information professionals cannot continue to provide those services that have been satisfactory in the past, especially providing access to collections of print and digitized information collections to use the information effectively. To provide vital services, library and information professionals must be in constant touch with the changing needs of users and the social forces and technologies which influence them. The purpose of this work is to examine the needs of users and understand their awareness about existing print and non-print resources, services and facilities provided by the libraries. Students rely heavily on the Internet as well as the online resources of their college libraries for information, though still using the physical library for hard copy materials such as books, journals and papers. A few students mentioned influences such as difficulty locating information or the need for convenience and speed. The central role of the library profession remains the same, but methods and tools for information storage and retrieval continue to grow and change dramatically. Libraries must understand information-seeking behavior of users to re-engineer their services and provide information efficiently. The results of this study reveal users who are more or less satisfied with library collections and services, but who want training in the use of online information. This is a typical

representation of the population of the graduate students of the various Engineering colleges. Hence the findings could be generalized for the entire related students, which will reflect the current views and practices of information seeking behavior of engineering graduate students.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Asghar Ali (2024) this Study focused on the Information Seeking Behavior of Faculty at Deeni Madrassas in Rawalpindi District, Survey method using a questionnaire, was used to collect data gathered via Questionnaires from 209 users. The study's primary objectives are to identify their perception about the significance of information resources used by Faculty members and Incidence of information resources used by the candidates. The research result indicates that Faculty members maximum holy books used and least importance of abstracts and indexes, users highest satisfied with availability of books. The study result also indicates that library staff members are not much more experienced, and shows that they have difficulty identifying library resources.

Chennupati K. Ramaiah and Somipam R. Shimray (2018) in their study "Information Seeking Behavior of Engineering College Students: A Case Study" evaluate the use of various services and facilities provided by Muffakham Jah College of Engineering and Technology Library, Hyderabad, India. The objectives include finding and examining the overall use of library resources. A total of 350 well-structured questionnaires with relevant details such as personal profile, department, gender, age, qualification, library collections, information access, library services, library facility, digital library, library staff, problems encountered and overall evaluation, were distributed to the students of all branches with a feedback of 85.71%. Based on the feedback analysis is done and the subsequent results have been drawn and presented. Most of the respondents selected print form textbooks (78 %) and printed reference books (80.33 %). of the total, 80% of them specified that they did not find any breaches in library collections and 93.33% did not find any issues in accessing the information from available resources. 89% agreed with the working hours, 81.67% were satisfied with the services provided by the library staff, 78.67 % were satisfied with the existing facilities in the library and 89% specified the need of having a separate website in addition to the college website.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to evaluate the information seeking behaviour of students in using the various services and facilities provided by the Libraries of Engineering Colleges in and around Coimbatore. The primary objectives are enlisted below:

1. To know the students frequency of visiting the library,
2. To determine the kinds of information sources used by students for seeking information,
3. To obtain the views of the respondents about the preference of search engine to search information,
4. To identify the types of information used by the users,
5. To identify the use of various types of print materials used in library by respondents,
6. To identify the use of various types of online Databases used by respondents,
7. To assess the level of satisfaction attained by the students with the available library services and facilities in seeking the academic information.

This study is confined to Autonomous Engineering Colleges in and around Coimbatore to examine the information seeking behaviour of students in using the various services and facilities provided by their respective Libraries. The survey covers senior students studying in 3rd year and 4th year of engineering. All the students studying in the colleges are given library membership and the total number of students varies each year depending on the intake capacity of the colleges. Out of the total population, a small sample of 250 students (with a feedback of 200, 80%) from 10 colleges, affiliated to Anna University in the geographical area

of west zone in and around Coimbatore region of Tamil Nadu are chosen for the present study which consists of both genders.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A well-structured questionnaire for students portraying the diverse areas with the mostly available choices is prepared so as respondents are not glued to one particular answer and thus giving room for answering each question to have a full view of their conscience, using Likert scales of preferences wherever possible. The questionnaire for an overall evaluation comprises questions on their personal profile, gender, age, library usage patterns, information accessing modes, problems encountered, their satisfaction level in getting the library services and facilities. From 250 distributed questionnaires, 200 were received with feedback (80 percent) from the 3rd and 4th year students. Analysis of data is completed after organizing the collected data from various sources and the grouped data has been presented in the following tables which further leads to logical findings and conclusions.

Data Analysis and Interpretations

Response to Questionnaires based on Study Year of the Respondents

Respondents	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Received	Year Group Response Rate (%)	Overall Response Rate (%)
4 th year	170	142	83.52	71.00
3 rd year	80	58	72.50	29.00
TOTAL	250	200		80.00

Above table shows that 4th year students give more percentage of feedback than the 3rd year students, with 83.52%, and 72.50% responses respectively. The overall response to the questionnaire is 80.00%.

Frequency of visit by the Student to their institution library

Frequency visit	Respondents	Percentage
Daily	56	28.00
Alternate Days	67	33.50
Twice in a week	44	22.00
Once in a week	33	16.50
TOTAL	200	100.00

Above table shows that majority of the respondents visit library on alternate days with 33.50% respondents followed by 28.00% of the respondents visit library daily, 22.00% of them visit library weekly twice and 16.50% visit library Weekly once.

Reader's Preferences or Reasons for Visiting the Library

Reasons for Visiting Library	Mostly	Moderately	Rarely	Weighted Average	Rank
Reading Magazines / Journals	102	72	26	79	1

Reading/ Referring Books	106	58	36	78	2
Borrowing Books	82	89	29	76	3
Access to e – resources	40	73	87	59	4
Reading Newspapers	27	81	91	56	5

The collected data is calculated and ranked on the basis of proposed values 3, 2 and 1 for Mostly, Moderately and Rarely, in that order. A weighted average is calculated for all these attributes and is ranked in accordance with the same. The above table shows that the respondents are visiting the library for the purpose of Reading Magazines / Journals, Reading/ Referring Books, Borrowing Books, Access e - resources and for Reading Newspapers. These are ranked first to fifth respectively. The respondents have visited the library for the same purposes and there is much dependency between them as the values fall in close ranges even though these are ranked from first to fifth. The table confirms that the purposes of visit to the library of the respondents are not straight to offshoot in choosing a particular preference.

Preferred Web Browsers in Internet Communication Technology (ICT) Networks

Web Browsers	Respondents	Percentage	Rank
Chrome	186	93.00	1
Internet Explorer / Edge	8	4.00	2
Mozilla Firefox	6	3.00	3
Others*	0	0.00	4
TOTAL	200	100.00	

* Maxthon Cloud, Netscape, Opera, Safari, Slimjet and UC Browser

The above table depicts Chrome, Internet Explorer / Edge, Mozilla Firefox and the rest all other web browsers which are ranked from first to fourth respectively. The respondents mostly used Chrome and moderately used Internet Explorer / Edge and Mozilla Firefox and rarely used all other remaining Web Browsers during these study periods. It is clear that the use of Chrome gives more room and advantage over all other browsers. Moreover nearly all the students are in good practice of using Android based mobiles in which Chrome gives best reproducibility for viewing and downloading which has a convenience of usage between computer and mobiles.

Ideal purposes of using Information Resources

Purposes	Mostly	Moderately	Rarely	Weighted Average	Rank
Academic activities	141	46	13	88	1
Updating knowledge	144	37	19	88	2
Project work	78	50	72	68	3
Writing articles / papers	59	62	79	63	4

The collected data is calculated and ranked on the basis of proposed values 3, 2 and 1 for Mostly, Moderately and Rarely, in that order. Weighted averages are calculated for all these attributes and are ranked in accordance

with the same. Academic activities, Updating knowledge, Project work and Writing articles /papers are the main purpose of using the available Information Resources which are ranked from first to fourth in that order. The respondents never quote any other specific purposes in this category and rightfully ignore the same.

Different types of Print Materials used in Library

Print Materials	Mostly	Moderately	Rarely	Never	Weighted Average	Rank
Reference Books	148	42	10	0	74	1
Journal articles	146	40	7	7	73	2
Text Books	132	61	7	0	72	3
Project reports	69	48	40	43	54	4
Year books	63	46	49	41	53	5
Annual reports	51	40	75	34	51	6
Encyclopaedias	37	65	56	43	50	7
Conference proceedings	27	23	80	70	41	8
Newspaper clippings	11	20	49	119	32	9

The collected data is calculated and ranked on the basis of proposed values 4, 3, 2 and 1 for Mostly, Moderately, Rarely and Never, in that order. Weighted averages are calculated for all these attributes and are ranked in accordance with the same. These attributes are ranked as found in the above table as Reference books, Journal articles, Text Books, Project reports, Year books, Annual reports, Encyclopedias, Conference proceedings and Newspaper clippings, from first to eighth.

Different types of Online Databases used in the Library

Online Databases	Mostly	Moderately	Rarely	Never	Weighted Average	Rank
IEEE / ACM	129	68	3	0	73	1
ASME	88	46	28	38	58	2
Elsevier / Springer	5	15	56	123	30	3
DELNET / NLIST	1	15	45	139	28	4

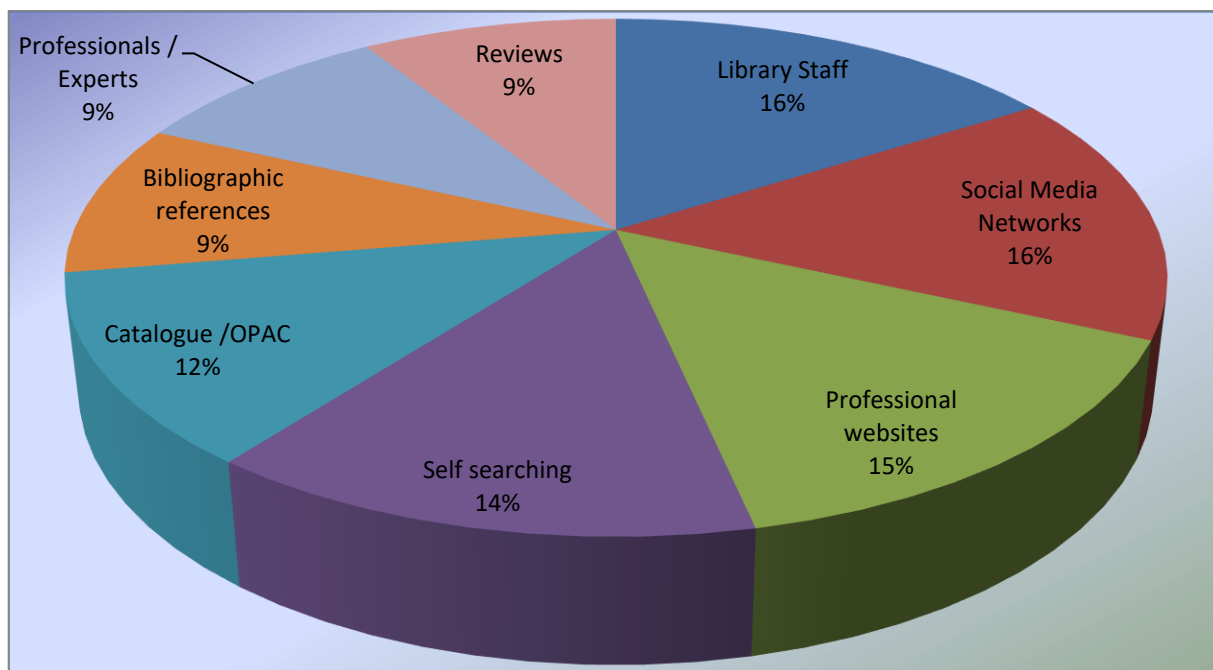
The collected data is calculated and ranked on the basis of proposed values 4, 3, 2 and 1 for Mostly, Moderately, Rarely and Never, in that order. Weighted averages are calculated for all these attributes and are ranked in accordance with the same. These attributes are ranked as found in the above table as IEEE / ACM, ASME, Elsevier/ Springer and DELNET / NLIST, DELNET, from first to fourth.

Preferred Tools or People for helping to locate the required Information/documents

Tools or People	Mostly	Moderately	Rarely	Never	Weighted Average	Rank
Library Staff	106	19	38	37	59	1
Social Media Networks	42	101	54	3	58	2

Professional websites	49	81	47	24	55	3
Self-searching	30	91	40	38	51	4
Catalogue /OPAC	28	49	62	61	44	5
Bibliographic references appended with articles	9	34	53	105	35	6
Professionals / Experts	17	16	60	107	34	7
Reviews	3	19	85	93	33	8

The collected data is calculated and ranked on the basis of proposed values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 for Mostly, Moderately Rarely and Never in that order. Weighted averages are calculated for all these attributes and are ranked in accordance with the same. The above table shows that the Tools or People, helping to locate the required information / documents are ranked as Library Staff, Social Media Networks, Professional websites, Self-searching, Catalogue /OPAC, Bibliographic references appended with articles, Professionals / Experts and finally Reviews, from first to eighth in that order.



Preferred Tools or People for helping to locate the Required Information

Opinion about the available Information Resources in their libraries

Information Resources	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Partly-Satisfied	Dis-satisfied	Weighted Average	Rank
Books	103	66	17	14	66	1
Magazines / Journals	65	94	27	14	61	2
E-Resources	31	78	61	29	51	3
Theses and Dissertations	41	71	33	56	50	4

Reports and other literature	20	61	62	56	45	5
Overall satisfaction	260	370	200	170	272	Satisfied

The collected data is calculated and ranked on the basis of proposed values 4, 3, 2 and 1 for Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Partly-Satisfied and Dis-satisfied, in that order. Weighted averages are calculated for all these attributes and are ranked in accordance with the same. The above table shows the respondents satisfactory level ranking as Books, Magazines / Journals, Reports and other literature, Theses and Dissertations, E-Resources, from first to fifth in that order. Respondents are just content with Printed materials and satisfied with Books, Periodicals, E-Resources and Theses.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

- The respondents are getting Library Membership as soon as they join the academic institution, which is very important for improving their academic skill, needs and for better understanding of the topics taught.
- Mostly 33.50% of students visit the library `on alternate days while every student habitually visits at least once in a week.
- The main purpose of the respondents in visiting the library is: Reading Magazines / Journals, Reading/ Referring Books and Borrowing Books. Access to e - resources and Reading Newspapers are least preferred.
- The respondents mostly use the web browser Chrome and moderately used Internet Explorer / Edge and Mozilla Firefox and rarely used all other Web Browsers during these study periods.
- Academic activities, Project work, Writing articles /papers, Updating knowledge are the main purpose of using the available Information Resources by the respondents.
- Most of the respondents favoured the use of Reference books, Journal articles and Text Books as their main printed resources while Project reports, Yearbooks, Annual reports, Encyclopaedias, Conference proceedings and Newspaper clippings were reasonably used.
- IEEE / ACM is the mostly preferred online database. ASME online databases such as Elsevier / Springer, DELNET / N-list are preferred by fewer respondents.
- To locate and obtain the information resources, the respondents mostly look for the help of Library Staff, Social Media Networks, and Professional websites. Students do themselves a bit of self-searching too. Catalogue /OPAC, Bibliographic references appended with articles, Professionals / Experts and Reviews are of least preferred help.
- Most of them are satisfied with the existing services and facilities provided by their libraries.

CONCLUSION

The libraries of engineering colleges in recent days are gradually taking multi dimensions to deliver the educational needs and activities of the academic learning community. This helps the information seeking students in attaining profound supremacy to the maximum possible extent. In this regard the college libraries play a crucial role in making the students be refined citizens for the benefit of the country. The libraries at present need to help the students in getting the updated information by embracing the rigid conventional print forms along with the flexible instant digital world modern resources. Major findings from the study include: first, academic information was rated as the predominant information required by the students, while the Internet via web browser Chrome was rated the most crucial source of most of the academic information

required. Necessary steps for smooth the transition, from conventional to digital and digital to conventional are needed to straighten the path for the benefit of the students. This present study revealed that the users are satisfied with the available resources and the services provided by their libraries at present scenery.

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