EUROPEAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH
Vol. II, Issue 6/ September 2014

Impact Factor: 3.1 (UIF)
DRJI Value: 5.9 (B+)

ISSN 2286-4822
www.euacademic.org

Information Seeking and Behaviour Awareness Patterns in Madurai Kamaraj University Library Users: An Analytical Study

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Abstract:

This study basically aims at finding out the information seeking pattern of the two main groups of the users namely, Faculties and Students. Apart from studying these two broad groups, the study is also aimed at finding out whether the different categories of students (Under Graduates, Post Graduates, and Researchers) and Faculties (Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors) differ amongst themselves in the usage level, awareness level, problems faced and the like. The awareness level of the facilities available in the Library and the ways and means of increasing the same were also discussed. The purpose of these competitions should be more to persuade and promote the users to use the Library resources.

Key words: Information Access Patterns and Sources, level of awareness, finding and conclusion

1. Induction

Academic libraries are distinguished significantly from other types of libraries. These libraries are attached to academic institutions, serving the teaching and research needs of the faculty and students. These libraries support the curriculum and also support the research activities. Academic libraries hence, must decide what focus they need to take in collecting materials to serve the above said purposes. The present digital era has ushered a paradigm shift in the concept of library. Traditional libraries are undergoing a gradual metamorphosis which requires a serious consideration by the library professionals. The present day libraries are no longer expected just to issue books or photocopy journal articles. Librarians are expected to be trained in various specialized services and capable of processing multiple format resources. The collection of a library not only includes printed materials but digital resources which are supplemented and complimented by audio and video. Such hybrid collection of resources has brought a significant change in the status of libraries which in turn will fulfill the expectations and information seeking behaviour. There was a paradigm shift in the closing years of 20th century. This resulted in drastic changes in all the spheres of society including library and information centres. No doubt, the libraries in developed nations are able to quickly adapt and modify their working nature and pattern of services to suit the changing environment. But, unfortunately most of the libraries in developing nations are unable to cope up with the rapidly changing technologies and modalities. Information is an indispensable resource, which human beings receive throughout the day. Currently we are living in the age of

'information explosion'. Information is the communication of knowledge about an event, given condition, or the spread of knowledge derived from observation, study, experience or instruction. Information can be stored in different physical media. In order to make the information sources easily available, facilities should be provided in such a way that these sources could be made accessible to the right user at the right time.

2. Literature Review

Njoku (2004) investigated and concluded that the means and sources of information seeking found in fishermen in Lagos State are no longer adequate to meet the advanced technology in the field and this can be detrimental to the profession. Suggestions that would facilitate information seeking and the use are among the fishermen in Lagos state were given.

Moster and Ocholla (2005) investigated the information needs and information seeking behaviour of parliamentarians in South Africa. Parliamentarians have an incessant need for bestowed on them by the electorates or society. A strong information accessibility that empowers them to fulfill this responsibility effectively is therefore very significant. Essentially and traditionally, parliamentary libraries are expected to provide legislators with most of the information they need.

Popoola (2008) examined and considerable difference was found in the faculty awareness about library and information products and services. It further disclosed that the users did not have the required knowledge of library products and services relevant to their teaching and research work. The author concluded that the level of knowledge of the faculties has relationship with the frequency of library use, consultation of librarian etc.

Gopalakrishnan et al (2008) "Information Use Pattern by the Academicians: A Case Study of NIFT Centers in India" is a survey conducted to examine the information needs and information use pattern of the academicians of seven institutes of fashion technology in India. The authors suggested to have functional and effective collection development programme to meet information needs of the users and the need to popularize the less used services to ensure their optimum utilization, conducting regular user education programmes, acquiring both print and non-print material, moving towards digitalization, etc.

Singh and Satija (2008) executed a survey to find out the information seeking behaviour of teachers and research scientists, Users depended heavily on the computerized information search facility. The working culture of those who need information, facilities available for seeking information and knowledge about them, chances of getting the required information etc. affect the information seeking behaviour of the users.

3 Research Objectives

The objectives of the present study are,

1. To find out the various information seeking behaviour of the Madurai Kamaraj University Library users.
2. To identify the sources of information available for the users of the Madurai Kamaraj University Library
3. To find out the challenges faced while accessing e-resources by the users of Madurai Kamaraj University Library
4. To analysis the awareness of e-resources available among the users of Madurai Kamaraj University Library

4. Data Collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire, which was distributed among the respondents of library users in Madurai Kamaraj University Library. The questionnaire contained open-ended questions and it also incorporated various parameters that were identified for analysing those parameters.

5. Sample Size

The sample size consists of 137 respondents for LIS professional. Convenience sampling technique was used for a period of 2 months (December 2012 – January 2014).

6. Research Design

Question-wise analysis was carried out with the help of Microsoft Excel Workbook and SPSS version 15.0. The questionnaire was based on difference variables, which were considered to be significant while analysing library users. Some analytical techniques like tables, percentage, Rank techniques and Coefficient Correlation test were used to analyse the collected data.

7. Sample Population

Data were collected from the users of the Madurai Kamaraj University Library to discern their information needs and assess their usage patterns of the resources and services available in the Library. The general information collected about the respondents includes their department, whether they belong to the Student category or the Faculty category. A total of 137 respondents gave their feedback for the questionnaire. Out of these respondents 84 (61.31%) were Male and 53

(38.69%) were Female, 121 (88.32%) were Students and 16 (11.67%) were Faculty members. Out of 121 Students who were part of this study, 62 (51.24%) were Under Graduates, 48 (39.67%) were Post Graduates and 11 (09.09%) were Research Scholars, and out of 16 Faculty members, 04 (25.00%) were Professors, 6 (37.50%) were Associate Professors and 6 (37.50%) were Assistant Professors. the frequency into two larger groups, it is found that while 62.04% of the Students visit the Library very often only 09.49% of the Faculty visit often. The corresponding details are listed in Table 1. It is very clear that a larger percentage of Students spend shorter duration like less than an hour in the Library.

Table 1 Frequency of Visit and time spent to the Library by Types of Users

	Overall		**Student**		**Faculty**	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Frequency of Visit						
Often	98	71.53%	85	62.04%	13	9.49%
Not Very Often	39	28.47%	36	26.28%	3	2.19%
Total	**137**	**100.00%**	**121**	**88.32%**	**16**	**11.68%**
Time Spent						
> One hour	84	61.31%	76	55.47%	8	5.84%
< One hour	53	38.69%	45	32.85%	8	5.84%
Total	**137**	**100.00%**	**121**	**88.32%**	**16**	**11.68%**

The results are detailed in Table 2 which discuss the information access patterns. For Identifying the information with the help of fellow users (88.32%) stand First Rank, identifying information with the use of OPAC (85.40%) secured the Second Rank and 76.64% of the users said that they adopted a self learning method. The results are given in Table 3 and the General browsing of the stack area of (23.36% and Identifying the information with the help of fellow users of

88.32% were the most exercised options while accessing the library resources by the users. The assistance from the faculty was the least used mode (28.47%). 37.69% of the respondents said that they Identify information with the use of card catalogue while 85.40% said that they use OPAC. 76.64% of the users said that they adopt a self learning method

Table 2 Information Access Patterns

Information Access Patterns	N	%	Rank
General browsing of the stack area	32	23.36%	VII
Identifying the information with the help of fellow users	121	88.32%	I
Identifying the information with the use of card catalogue	52	37.96%	V
Identifying the information with the use of OPAC	117	85.40%	II
With the help of library staff members	97	70.80%	IV
With help of faculty members	39	28.47%	VI
Through self learning methods	105	76.64%	III

Table 3 Information Access Patterns by Types of Students and Faculty

Information Access Patterns	Student			Faculty			Total
	UG	PG	Research Scholar	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor	
General browsing of the stack area	11 8.03%	12 8.76%	4 2.92%	2 1.46%	1 0.73%	2 1.46%	32 23.36%
Identifying the information with the help of fellow users	57 41.61%	48 35.04%	7 5.11%	4 2.92%	3 2.19%	2 1.46%	121 88.32%

Identifying the information with the use of card catalogue	18 13.14%	31 22.63%	2 1.46%	1 0.73%	0 0.00%	0 0.00%	52 37.96%
Identifying the information with the use of OPAC	62 45.26%	45 32.85%	4 2.92%	4 2.92%	0 0.00%	2 1.46%	117 85.40%
With the help of library staff members	49 35.77%	37 27.01%	5 3.65%	2 1.46%	3 2.19%	1 0.73%	97 70.80%
With help of faculty members	22 16.06%	9 6.57%	4 2.92%	2 1.46%	1 0.73%	1 0.73%	39 28.47%
Through self learning methods	52 37.96%	45 32.85%	2 1.46%	3 2.19%	2 1.46%	1 0.73%	105 76.64%

As far as the usage of simple search methods (Table 4) were concerned association of this usage to the type of user (Student or Faculty) 69 respondents of Students and 11 respondents of Faculty members acquire information through simple search method and the Co-efficient of correlation result is significant. The type of students like under graduate, Post graduate and research scholar respondents 20, 39, 10 respondents and they adopted simple search methods and Co-efficient of correlation result is significant. And finally the type of faculty like Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor Respondents 4, 3, 4 adopted simple search methods and Co-efficient of correlation result is an insignificant. In the case of advanced search usage (Table 5), association of this usage to the type of user (Student or Faculty) 51 respondents of Students and 13 respondents of faculty members acquire information through advanced search method and the Co-efficient of correlation result is significant. The type of students like under graduate, Post graduate and research scholar respondents are 8, 32, 11 respectively and they adopted simple search methods and Co-efficient of correlation result is an insignificant. And finally the type of faculty like Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor Respondents are 5,

6, 2 respectively and they adopted simple search methods and Co-efficient of correlation result is insignificant.

Table 4 Simple Search Method vs. User Types and Variables

		Simple Search Method				Co-efficient of Correlation	
		YES		NO			
		N	%	N	%	ϒ =	Result
User Type	Student	69	57.02%	52	42.98%	**1**	Significant
	Faculty	11	68.75%	5	31.25%		
Student	Under Graduate	20	32.26%	42	67.74%	**0.007808**	Significant
	Post Graduate	39	81.25%	9	18.75%		
	Research Scholar	10	90.91%	1	9.09%		
Faculty	Assistant Professor	4	66.67%	2	33.33%	**-0.7559**	No Significant
	Associate Professor	3	50.00%	3	50.00%		
	Professor	4	100.00%	0	0.00%		

Table 5 Advanced Search Method vs. User Types and Variables

		Advanced Search Method				Co-efficient of Correlation	
		YES		NO			
		N	%	N	%	ϒ =	Result
User Type	Student	51	42.15%	70	57.85%	**1**	Significant
	Faculty	13	81.25%	3	18.75%		
Student	Under Graduate	8	12.90%	54	87.10%	**-0.3391**	No Significant
	Post Graduate	32	66.67%	16	33.33%		
	Research Scholar	11	100.00%	0	0.00%		
Faculty	Assistant Professor	5	83.33%	1	16.67%	**-0.96076**	No Significant
	Associate Professor	6	100.00%	0	0.00%		
	Professor	2	50.00%	2	50.00%		

Table 6 Sources of Information Used vs. User Types and Variables

Sources of Information	User Type		Student			Faculty			Rank
	Student	Faculty	Under Graduate	Post Graduate	Research Scholar	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor	
Internet / Web Resources	109	16	54	45	10	6	6	4	I
General Periodicals	101	15	57	37	7	5	6	4	II

Textbooks	102	11	54	40	8	4	4	3	III
Standards	97	15	52	36	9	6	5	4	IV
Encyclopedias / Dictionaries	48	14	12	26	10	5	6	3	V
Online Databases	39	12	6	22	11	4	5	3	VI
E-Journals	42	7	2	29	11	2	3	2	VII
CD-ROM Databases	37	11	7	21	9	3	6	2	VIII
Core Journals	24	14	7	9	8	5	5	4	IX
E-Books	27	9	1	16	10	3	4	2	X
Theses / Reports	28	4	2	15	11	1	2	1	XI
Total	**654**	**128**	**254**	**296**	**104**	**44**	**52**	**32**	

Table 7 reveals the level of awareness of different types of e-resources.

E-resources	**Gender**	**Awareness**				**Co-efficient of Correlation**	
		Yes	**%**	**No**	**%**	**ϒ =**	**Result**
Databases	Male	52	37.96%	32	23.36%	1	Significant
	Female	22	16.06%	31	22.63%		
Full Text Databases	Male	69	50.36%	15	10.95%	1	Significant
	Female	42	30.66%	11	8.03%		
E-books	Male	41	29.93%	43	31.39%	1	Significant
	Female	14	10.22%	39	28.47%		
E-journals	Male	76	55.47%	8	5.84%	1	Significant
	Female	48	35.04%	5	3.65%		
E-newsletters	Male	68	49.64%	16	11.68%	-1	No Significant
	Female	24	17.52%	29	21.17%		
Web Resources	Male	71	51.82%	13	9.49%	-1	No Significant
	Female	37	27.01%	16	11.68%		
Open Sources	Male	52	37.96%	32	23.36%	-1	No Significant
	Female	19	13.87%	34	24.82%		

The table 6 show the different types of Faculty, the source used maximum was again the internet and Web resources (125 respondents) and the least used being Theses / Reports (32 respondents). The trend of usage of general periodicals (116 respondents) gets the second rank, following Textbook (113 respondents) gets the third Rank and the remaining follow the Standards, Encyclopedias / Dictionaries, Online Databases, E-

Journals, CD-ROM, Core Journals and E-Book. Among the table 7 Maximum awareness exists among the users about the e-journals and it is followed by full text Databases. Awareness level is the least about databases and it is followed by e-book. Awareness of e-newsletters is also far away. There is moderate awareness about web resources. But as far as web resources, e-journals or full text databases are concerned, the awareness level is high. The e resources of Databases, full text databases, e-book and e-journals calculate the co efficient of correlation result is significant and the remaining e-newsletters, web resources and open sources calculate the co-efficient of correlation results is insignificant.

8. Finding

- The study shows that the UG Students make good use of the Library.
- There is a difference in the frequency of visit and time spent during such visits between the different groups of users of the Library.
- Though the search engines used are similar between all the groups, the search mechanism used seem to be more refined as one goes up the academic ladder; that is the advanced and Boolean search mechanisms are more often used by the Research Scholars and the Faculty members.
- Mostly, the users use library resources like Web Resources, General Periodicals and Textbooks.
- Though Electronic Journal and web resources is the major awareness level regarding different e-resources is quite high among all the users.

9. Conclusion

In fact, the University may adopt a procedure by which the Faculty in charge of any Student is given some credit for any work done or time spent by their Student(s) in the Library. That will be a good incentive for the Faculty to guide his/her Students into better utilisation of the Library and its facilities. While one can say that any purpose is good enough, it should be realized that the Students should be guided for using resources other than the textbooks to enhance their knowledge. Since there is an efficient intranet system available in the University, procedures can be included in that system to capture the usage pattern of different e-resources in the Library. One should realize that the study might not have captured the usage of e-journals or e-books by the Students outside their Library premises by using the Wi-Fi connectivity in the University. Efforts could also be made to create a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) module about the availability, location and the ways and means of using these facilities which would prove very useful for the end user.

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