

RETRIEVAL OF RESOURCES AND USAGE OF TECHNOLOGY: A STUDY ON THE VIEWS OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS OF COIMBATORE REGION

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Abstract

The study attempts to explore various views of students and their interest on using the information technology in identifying or retrieving required information through e-sources and making use of e-facilities. The study also examines the students' need for training in using information technology. Gender wise, course wise and location wise analyses were carried out on the data collected from the students. The data further analysed using frequency analyses and chi-square test.

Keywords: *Information Seeking Behavior and Information Technology, Usage and Information Technology*

Introduction

The advent of information technology has its influence on the students who study in engineering colleges. The level of application of information technology by the student varies, particularly in libraries while seeking for information in order to satisfy their information needs. The students have different views in applying the information technology. Though the students are familiar with internet search engine sources such as google, yahoo, msn etc. web tools such as chat, messenger, email etc, social networking sites like twitter, whatsapp, facebook etc. the familiarity in accessing these sites alone does not yield them in getting their information needs be satisfied in a satisfactory manner. This study examines four views of students on the usage of information technology while retrieving sources of information. The study further analyses the students' views on the basis of their gender, location of their institutions in which they study and course of study.

Review of Literature

The satisfaction level of information needs of users depends upon their awareness on the information sources, which they identify and use. In the process of identifying students' information needs, their awareness on information sources and their preferences, Majid and Tan (2002) carried out a study among computer engineering students of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. A questionnaire was distributed among 200 randomly selected students and 102 students responded. The purpose of the study was to investigate the types of information sources used by the students. The study found that printed materials were the most preferred format among the students. The order of preference of information seeking materials was books, lectures, internet, friends and manuals. The use of databases and electronic journals was low among the computer students.

Internet was found to be the most crucial source to satisfy the information needs of students through the investigation of Ajiboye and Tella (2007). They analysed the impact of information seeking behaviour on the quality in higher education in Africa. The study was conducted among university undergraduate students. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and data was collected using a questionnaire administered among two thousand respondents randomly selected from six departments in the University of Botswana, Gaborone, Botswana. It was found that the students gave primary importance for academic information.

In order to know the users preference on information sources, Sudharani and Veeranjanyulu (1999) invited views of users through a survey on the information needs and use of faculty members of Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalayam, Tirupati, Andra Pradesh. The study brought out about various library resources such as books, periodicals, other resources and through interlibrary loan from which the faculty sought for information for satisfying their needs.

Gurdev (2002) examined the use of college libraries by faculty members of University of Delhi. The study found that textbooks were most frequently needed resources, followed by reference books and general books. Main purpose of visiting library was to prepare notes for students. The study found out that journals and textbooks were not adequately available. Almost all the faculty members wanted the library services to be computerized

Giving focus on the electronic resources, Patil and Parameshwar (2009) undertook a study to find out the information needs and usage of electronic resources by the research scholars in various PG departments and to assess whether their information needs were fulfilled through the e-resource facilities provided in the Gulbarga University, Gulbarga, India. The studies showed that the information needs were satisfied using the electronic resources available in the University Library. It was recommended to include more number of journals in the UGC-Infonet Consortium.

Swarna (2004) conducted a study to know the information needs of the users at the B.Ed. college libraries in Andhra Pradesh, India. The study was conducted with an aim to gather the views of students and teachers on library collection, services, facilities, rules and regulations, reading facility and organization of documents.

Achonna (2008) conducted a study on the students' awareness, access and the usage of e-journal resources at the library of Yaba College of Technology, Yaba- Lagos. The study assessed the level of awareness, access and usage of e-journal resources among the students. It was revealed that inadequate infrastructure of computers, lack of skill in utilizing the e-resources, insufficient power supply were found to be the hindrances for the effective usage of e-resources.

Research Methology

Students of engineering colleges in and around Coimbatore region are the sample of the study. Data was collected from 1613 students who study in the region. The analyses were done using five point scale. The data further analysed on the the basis of gener, location of the

institution and course of study. WAM were calculated and ranked. Standard deviation was also calculated in addition to chi-square test.

Tables

1. Demographic Details of the Respondents

Demographic details of respondents such as gender, location and course are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1

Table 1 Demographic details of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Group	Description	Frequency	%
1	Gender	Male	1030	63.9
		Female	583	36.1
		Total	1613	100
2	Place	Urban	433	26.8
		Semi - Urban	579	35.9
		Rural	601	37.3
		Total	1613	100
3	Course	UG	1398	86.7
		PG	215	13.3
		Total	1613	100

Table 1 represents classification of respondents by gender, place and course. Out of 1613 questionnaires received, 63.9 percentage of the respondents are male students and 36.1 percentage of the respondents are female students. This shows that two-third of the respondents are male.

The institutions are located in urban, semi-urban and rural places. Most of the responses (37.3%) were received from rural areas than semi - urban (35.9%) and urban (26.8%) areas. It is seen from the above table that many respondents of engineering colleges established in rural areas in and around Coimbatore region have responded compared to semi-urban and urban areas.

Among students who represent UG/PG courses, majority of the students (86.7%) are studying in UG courses compared to PG courses (13.3%).

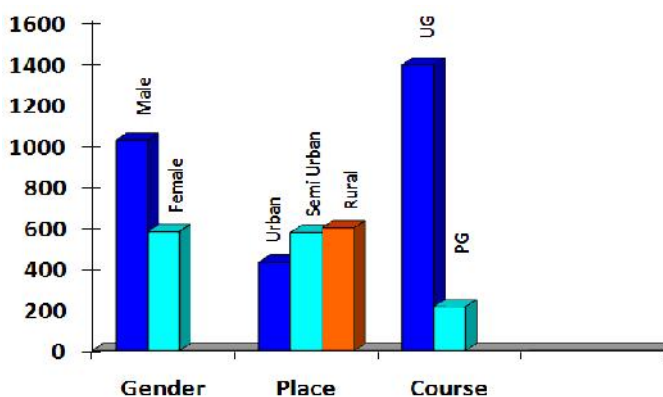


Figure 1 Demographic Details of the Respondents

2. Mode of Access

The students' preference on mode of access while seeking for information is analysed. The mode of access is classified into print mode, digital/online mode and both of these forms of access.

Table 2 Mode of Access

Sl. No.	Mode of Access	Frequency	Percentage
1	Print	266	16.5
2	Digital / Online	435	27.0
3	Both	912	56.5
Total		1613	100

Table 2 illustrates the mode of access preferred by students while seeking information. 56.5 percentage of students prefer both print and digital mode of access. While 27.0 percentage of students prefer only digital/online mode for accessing resources 16.5 percentage of students prefer print mode alone. It is understood that students prefer both print and digital modes for accessing information during the information seeking process.

3. Views of Students on Usage of Information Technology in Libraries

The opinions of students in using the information technology, such as their interest in using the technology, need for training, difficulties in retrieving the e-sources and their comfort level in getting the required information within right time are analysed. Gender wise, course wise and location wise analysis are carried out using chi square tests.

Table 3 Views of Students on Usage of Information Technology in Libraries

Sl. No.	Views	Frequency	Percentage
1	I am not interested in using the technology rather than going straightaway to the resource by intuition	470	29.1
2	I am not given proper training / information in making use of them.	260	16.1
3	The retrieval of e – sources consumes much time in getting right information I need, since the search lists large number of relevant and irrelevant informations	198	12.3
4	I feel comfortable in getting my information with in right time using the e – facilities.	685	42.5
Total		1613	100.0

Table 3 indicates that 42.5 percentage of students feel that they are comfortable in getting their information within right time using the electronic facilities. 29.1 percentage of the

students indicate that they are not interested in using the technology rather than going straightaway to the resource by intuition. 16.1 percentage of students specify that they are not given proper training / information in making use of the technology. 12.3 percentage of students point out that the retrieval of e – sources consumes much time in getting right information that they need, since the search lists large number of relevant and irrelevant information.

4. Views of Students on usage of information technology in libraries vs gender

Analyses on the usage of the information technology in libraries are carried out based on the views of male and female students.

Table 4 Views of Students on Usage of Information Technology in Libraries Vs Gender

Sl. No.	Views	Gender	
		Male	Female
1	I am not interested in using the technology rather than going straightaway to the resource by intuition	308 (29.9%)	162 (27.8%)
2	I am not given proper training / information in making use of them.	188 (18.3%)	72 (12.3%)
3	The retrieval of e – sources consumes much time in getting right information I need, since the search lists large number of relevant and irrelevant informations	128 (12.4%)	70 (12%)
4	I feel comfortable in getting my information with in right time using the e – facilities.	406 (39.4%)	279 (47.9%)
Total		1030 (100%)	583 (100%)
Chi - Square		Calculated Value	14.914
		df	3

Table 4 unfolds views of students from gender point of view on the use of information technology in libraries. More female students (47.9%) feel comfortable in using the electronics sources at the library compared to male students (39.4%). 29.9 percentage of male students and 27.8 percentage of female students give their views that they are not interested in using the information technology but preferred to reach the resource by intuition. However, 18.3 percentage of male students and 12.3 percentage of female students feel that they were not given proper training in making use of information technologies available at library.

The calculated value 14.914 is much higher than the table value 7.815. It shows that the variables vary significantly in the opinion of male and female students.

5. Views of Students on usage of information technology in libraries vs location

Views of the students on the usage of the information technology in libraries are analysed based on the location of the institutions where the students study.

Table 5 Views of Students on Usage of Information Technology in Libraries Vs Location

Sl. No.	Views	Location		
		Urban	Semi - Urban	Rural
1	I am not interested in using the technology rather than going strighta way to the resource by intuition	119 (27.5%)	173 (29.9%)	178 (29.6%)
2	I am not given proper training / information in making use of them.	68 (15.7%)	101 (17.4%)	91 (15.1%)
3	The retrieval of e – sources consumes much time in getting right information I need, since the search lists large number of relevant and irrelevant informations	54 (12.5%)	67 (11.6%)	77 (12.8%)
4	I feel comfortable in getting my information with in right time using the e – facilities.	192 (44.3%)	238 (41.1%)	255 (42.4%)
Total		433 (100%)	579 (100%)	601 (100%)
Chi - Square		Calculated Value	2.596	
		df	6	

Table 5 shows that students (44.3%) studying in urban institutions feel comfortable in using the e-facilities at the library which is followed by students of rural (42.4%) and semi-urban (41.1%) institutions. 29.6 percentage of students of rural institutions feel that they are not interested in using the information facilities at the library and 17.4 percentage of students of semi-urban institutions needed training in the use of e-facilities.

The calculated value 2.596 is much lower than the table value 12.592. It shows that the variation of the variables is insignificant in the opinion of the students of urban, semi-urban and rural institutions

6. Views of Students on usage of information technology in libraries vs course of study

Views of the students on the usage of the information technology in libraries are analysed based on their course of study.

Table 6 Views of Students on Usage of Information Technology in Libraries Vs Course of Study

Sl. No.	Views	Course of Study	
		UG	PG
1	I am not interested in using the technology rather than going strightaway to the resource by intuition	390 (27.9%)	80 (37.2%)

2	I am not given proper training / information in making use of them.	236 (16.9%)	24 (11.2%)
3	The retrieval of e – sources consumes much time in getting right information I need, since the search lists large number of relevant and irrelevant informations	170 (12.2%)	28 (13%)
4	I feel comfortable in getting my information with in right time using the e – facilities.	602 (43.1%)	83 (38.6%)
Total		1398 (100%)	215 (100%)
Chi – Square		Calculated Value	10.311
		df	3

Table 6 shows that more UG students (43.1%) are comfortable in using the e-facilities than PG students (38.6%). PG students (37.2%) commented that they are not interested in using the technology.

The calculated value 10.311 is higher than the table value 7.815. It shows that the variables vary significantly in the opinion of UG and PG students.

Findings

1. More male students (63.9%) responded the questionnaires than female students (36.1%). More responses (37.3%) received from rural areas followed by semi-urban (35.9%) and urban areas (26.8%). Majority of the students are studying UG courses (86.7%).
2. More than half of the students population (56.5%) prefer both print and digital mode of access followed by digital/online mode and print mode of access.
3. Two fifth of the population of the students are comfortable in using e-facilities. However more than half of the population of the respondents needs to be given proper awareness on the use of information technologies.
4. More female students (47.9%) feel comfortable in using the electronics facilities at the library compared to male students. However, male students (18.3%) and female students (12.3%) feel that they need training in making use of information facilities.
5. More students (44.3%) studying in urban institutions feel comfortable in using the e-facilities at the library compared to students of institutions located in semi-urban and rural areas.
6. More UG students (43.1%) are comfortable in using the e-facilities than PG students (38.6%). PG students feel that they are not interested in using the technology.

Conclusion

It is concluded that in the changing learning environment students irrespective of their gender, course of study and location of the institution are by and large, familiar in handling tools of information technology. By smooth handling of these IT tools, they get acquaintance in accessing mere information but majority of these information do not have the resource within

its content to satisfy the needs of the students. So, it is important to give proper training to the students in using technology in such a way that the technology facilitates the users to get right information that is capable of solving their information needs and ultimately contribute for growth of knowledge of the students.

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