Information Access Pattern among the Students of Engineering and Medicine Faculties in Annamalai University: A Study

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Abstract

This article is made to determine the information access pattern among the students of Engineering and Medicine faculties in Annamalai University. A sample of 600 students selected randomly was studied. The results revealed that the faculty of Engineering and Medicine students are almost in same platform in information use pattern on the basis of socio-economic and faculty wise. Both the faculty students are having more knowledge to utilize the library and library resources. Nowadays students are very much interested to seek the information in different way.They are also getting more information on net

Keywords
Information Access pattern, Annamalai University Students, Faculty.

Electronic access

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Introduction

The present era is the era of information and knowledge revolution. Many electronic resources are available in the library. The increase in information available on the Web has affected information seeking behavior. Innumerable types of information, in a large variety of containers and in many different locations, are all available in one place (Fidel et al., 1999). In the modern society, the types of information and the media which present them have become manifold and multifarious, offering men and women a vast selection.

Information seeking behavior involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought (Leckie, Pettigrew & Sylvain, 1996). Information seeking behavior is expressed in various forms i.e. from reading printed material to research and experimentation. Scholars, students and faculties actively seek current information from the various media available in libraries, e.g. encyclopedia, journals and now currently the electronic media. Abels (2004) mentions that the frequency of use of the Internet in 1998-2000 has greatly increased. At the same time, expenditures on monographs show a steady increase.

Information Need

At the root of the problem of information-seeking behaviour is the concept of information need, which has proved intractable for the reason advanced by Wilson in 1981; that is, need is a subjective experience which occurs only in the mind of the person in need and, consequently, is not directly accessible to an observer. The experience of need can only be discovered by deduction from behaviour or through the reports of the person in need.

Electronic Information Sources

One of the major development in libraries and information services in the last 20 years has been the introduction and spread of electronic information sources (EIS). Progress in information technology has offered today's information seekers different opportunities to access to information resources in an increasing array and format. The commonly available EIS, namely, CD-ROMs, online databases, OPACs, online journals, the Internet, and other networked information sources, are competing with, and in some instances replacing, the print-based information sources as the primary media for the storage and communication of recorded information content.

Information Access Pattern

According to Krikelas (1983), Information access pattern refers to "any activity of an individual that is undertaken to identify a message that satisfies a perceived need".

Objectives

The following objectives are framed for the purpose of the present study:

1. To examine the socio-economic background of respondents in collecting information.
2. To identify the purpose of collecting information from the library and the various sources employed.
3. To study the respondents' duration, quantum of time utilization and purpose of library visit.
4. To study the respondent's satisfaction about the available library services.
5. To analyze the respondent's knowledge in software application and their extent of utilization.

Study Area

To analyse the information access pattern among the students of Engineering and Medicine faculties in Annamalai University has been taken as study area.

Methodology

This study aims at analyzing the information access pattern among the students of Engineering and Medicine faculties in Annamalai University. In this study a total of 600 students were selected, out of which 300 students belonged to the Engineering faculty and the remaining 300 students were from Medicine faculty. While selecting the sample, stratification method has been adopted with a view to relative weight age to the respondents of different categories. Thus, the sampling of the study belongs to the stratified random sampling method. All the students responded and the total number of filled-in questionnaires received was 600.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Religion wise Distribution of Respondents

Religion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Hindu	422	70.34
Muslim	41	6.83
Christian	137	22.83
Total	600	100

A study of data in table 1 indicates the religion wise distribution of respondents. It could be noted that out of the total 600 respondents, 70.34 per cent of them belong to the Hindu religion, 6.83 per cent belong to Muslim community and 22.83 per cent of the respondents are found in the Christian group. It is concluded that more than two thirds of the respondents are Hindus.

Table 2. Community wise Distribution of Respondents

Community	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Forward Community	119	19.83
Backward Community	180	30.00
Most Backward Community	215	35.83
Scheduled Community	86	14.34
Total	600	100

Table 2 indicates the community wise distribution of respondents. Out of the total 600 respondents, 19.83 per cent of them belong to the forward community group and 30.00 per cent of them come under the backward community group. In this study, 35.83 per cent of the respondents are found to be in the most backward community group and the rest 14.34 per cent of them belong to the scheduled community group. It is concluded that more than half of the respondents belong to the most backward and backward community groups.

Table 3. Distribution of Respondents according to Parental Occupation

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Labour	45	7.5
Farmer	21	3.5
Business	196	32.67
Private employees	92	15.33
Government employees	246	41
Total	600	100

The table 3 analysis the parental occupation wise distribution of respondents. It could be noted that out of the total 600 respondents, 7.5 per cent of them belong to the labour households and 3.5 per cent of them belong to the farm households. In this study, 32.67 per cent of the respondents belong to the business households and 15.33 per cent of the parents

are private employees. It is observed that 41 per cent of the respondents' parents are government employees. It is concluded that more than a half of the respondent's parents are Business and Government employees**.**

Table 4. Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	402	67
Female	198	33
Total	600	100

The table 4 reveals the gender wise distribution of respondents. It could be noted that out of the total 600 respondents, more than two thirds of the respondents (67%) belong to the male group and the remaining one third of (33%) are females. It is concluded that male students constitute more in number than female respondents, which indicates the presence of male domination in university education.

Table 5. Faculty wise Respondents' Frequency of Library Visits

Faculty	Daily	Thrice a week	Twice a week	Once a week	Once in a fortnight	As and when required	Total
Engineering	115	56	41	36	31	21	300
	(38.33)	(18.67)	(13.67)	(12.00)	(10.33)	(7.00)	
Medicine	47	126	47	39	23	18	300
	(15.66)	(42.00)	(15.67)	(13.00)	(7.67)	(6.00)	
Total	162	182	88	75	54	39	600
	(27)	(30.33)	(14.67)	(12.5)	(9)	(6.5)	

Table 6. Faculty wise Respondents' Source of Collecting Study Materials

Faculty	Books	Reference Sources	Periodicals	Theses and Project works	Conference Proceedings	Electronic Journal Articles	Total
Engineering	53	55	27	33	56	76	**300**
	(17.67)	(18.33)	(9.00)	(11.00)	(18.67)	(25.33)	
Medicine	57	39	20	22	76	86	**300**
	(19.00)	(13.00)	(6.67)	(7.33)	(25.33)	(28.67)	
Total	110 (18.33)	94 (15.67)	47 (7.83)	55 (9.17)	132 (22)	162 (27)	600

Table 7. Faculty wise Respondents' Extent of Utilization of Library Services

Faculty	Online Journals			Digital Library Services			Internet Service			Total
	High level	Moderate level	Low level	High level	Moderate level	Low level	High level	Moderate level	Low level	
	152 (50.67)	86 (28.67)	62 (20.66)	168 (56.00)	85 (28.33)	47 (15.67)	150 (50.00)	116 (38.67)	34 (11.33)	
Medicine	136 (45.33)	79 (26.33)	85 (28.33)	152 (50.67)	90 (30.00)	58 (19.33)	146 (48.67)	98 (32.66)	56 (18.67)	300
Total	288 (48)	165 (27.5)	147 (24.5)	320 (53.33)	175 (29.17)	105 (17.5)	296 (49.33)	214 (35.67)	90 (15)	600

Chi-square Summary Result

Chi-square Calculated value	Degrees freedom	Chi-square table value 5%
448.2	25	37.7

Data presented in table 5 indicates the faculty wise respondents' frequency of library visits. It could be noted that out of 600 respondents, 27 per cent of them make library visit every day, 30.33 per cent of them visit library thrice a week, 14.67 per cent of them make library visit twice a week and 12.5 percent of them make library visit once a week. In this study, 9 per cent of the total respondents make library visit once in a fortnight and 6.5 per cent of the total respondents make library visit as and when required. Majority of the Engineering faculty respondents (38.33%) and Medicine faculty respondents (42%) make library visit Daily and thrice a week respectively. Chi square test is applied for further discussion. The computed chi square value is 448.2, which is greater than its tabulated value at 5% level of significance. Hence the difference in faculty background is statistically identified as significant with respect to respondents' frequency of library visits.It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that respondents thrice a week take the first order.

Chi-square Summary Result

Chi-square Calculated value	Degrees of freedom	Chi-square table value 5%
320.0	25	37.7

The table 6 denotes the faculty wise respondents' source of collecting study materials. It could be noted that out of 600 respondents, 18.33 per cent of them collect study materials from books, 15.67 per cent of them make use of books and reference sources, 7.83 per cent of them make use of periodicals 9.17 percent of them make use of theses and project works. In this study, 22 per cent of the total respondents make use of conference proceedings to collect materials and 27 per cent of the total respondents make use of Electronic journal articles to collect study materials. Majority of the Engineering faculty respondents (25.33%) make use of Electronic journal articles to collect needed information. A considerable number of respondents of the faculty of Medicine (28.67%) make use of electronic journal articles and (25.33%) make use of conference proceedings to collect necessary materials,

Chi square test is applied for further discussion. The computed chi square value is 320, which is greater than its tabulated value at 5% level of significance. Hence, the difference in faculty background is statistically identified as significant with respect to respondents' source of collecting study materials.It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that Electronic journal articles take the first order.

Chi-square Summary Result

Services	Chi-square Calculated Value	Degrees Freedom	Chi-square Table Value 5%
Online Journals	48.87	10	18.3
Digital Library Service	72.54	10	18.3
Internet service	130.6	10	18.3

A study of data in table 7 shows the faculty wise respondents' extent of utilization of library services. Out of the 600 respondents, 48 per cent utilization of online journals services, 53.33 percent digital library Services and the 49.33 per cent internet service have high level utilization. More than a half of the respondents of Engineering faculty (50.67%) online journals Service,56% digital library service and 50% internet service have high level utilization of library service. In this study, considered numbers of Medicine faculty students are high level utilization of library services such as online journal service, digital library services, and internet service.

Chi-square test is applied for further discussion. The computed chi square value is 48.87, which is greater than its tabulated value at 5 percent level of significance. Hence the difference in faculty background is statistically identified as significant with respect to respondents' extent of utilization of online journals service. A similar result has been observed with respect to respondents' views on the extent of utilization of library services such as digital library services and internet service.

Table 8. Faculty Wise Respondents' Methods of Searching Library Information

Faculty	Searching The Shelves	By Using Catalogue	Asking Help from Librarian	Through Internet	Total
Engineering	49	75	80	96	300
	(16.33)	(25.00)	(26.67)	(32.00)	
Medicine	59	62	94	85	300
	(19.67)	(20.67)	(31.33)	(28.33)	
Total	108 (18)	137 (22.83)	174 (29)	181 (30.17)	600

Chi-square Summary Result

Chi-square Calculated Value	Degrees of Freedom	Chi-square Table Value 5%
173.3	15	11.1

Table 8 points out the faculty wise respondents' methods of searching information in libraries. It could be noted that out of the total 600 respondents, 18 per cent of them seek information in library through searching the shelves and 22.83 per cent of them make use of library catalogue to search information and 29 per cent of them seek information through librarian or library staff and 30.17% of them seek information through internet. One third of the Engineering faculty respondents (32%) seek information through internet.

Chi square test is applied for further discussion. The computed chi square value is 173.3, which is greater than its tabulated value at 5% level of significance. Hence the difference in faculty background is statistically identified as significant with respect to respondents' methods of searching library information.

It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that seeking information from internet takes the first order form of utilization.

Table 10. Faculty wise Respondents' Place of Work with Internet

Faculty	Department and Home	University Library	Browsing Centre	University and Home	University Library and Browsing Centre	Total
Engineering	27	39	46	44	144	300
	(9.00)	(13.00)	(15.33)	(14.67)	(48.00)	
Medicine	55	21	26	156	42	300
	(18.33)	(7.00)	(8.67)	(52.00)	(14.00)	
Total	82	60	72	200	186	600
	(13.67)	(10)	(12)	(33.33)	(31)	

Table 11. Faculty wise Respondents' Duration of Hours to Access the Internet

Faculty	Less than 2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4-5 hours	Above 5 hours	Total
Engineering	21	34	67	80	98	300
	(7.00)	(11.33)	(22.33)	(26.67)	(32.67)	
Medicine	33	28	102	82	55	300
	(11.00)	(9.33)	(34.00)	(27.33)	(18.33)	
Total	54	62	169	162	153	600
	(9)	(10.33)	(28.17)	(27)	(25.5)	

Chi-square Summary Result

Chi-Square Calculated Value	Degrees of Freedom	Chi-Square Table Value 5%
695.3	20	31.4

Table 9 pinpoints the faculty wise respondents' use of internet at place of work. It could be noted that out of the total 600 respondents, 13.67 per cent of them work with the internet in their department and also in the home and 10 per cent of them make use of internet service at the University library. In this study, 12 per cent of them can access the internet at the browsing centre and 33.33 per cent of them make use of University internet service along with home internet service. Moreover, 31 per cent of them make use of internet service in the university library and browsing centre. Majority of the respondents of the faculty of Engineering (48%) make use of university library and Browsing Centre. A considerable number of respondents of the faculty of Medicine (52%) work with internet in the University and Home.

Chi square test is applied for further discussion. The computed chi square value is 695.3, which is greater than its tabulated value at 5 percent level of significance. Hence, the difference in faculty background is statistically identified as significant with respect to respondents' place of working with internet. It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that working with internet in the university and home takes the first order.

Chi-Square Summary Result

Chi-Square Calculated Value	Degrees of Freedom	Chi-Square Table Value 5%
235.7	20	31.4

Table 10 studies the faculty wise respondents' duration of hours to access the internet. It could be noted that out of the total 600 respondents, 9 per cent of them have less than 2 hours to access the internet, 10.33 per cent of them have 2-3 hours to access the internet, 28.17 per cent of them have 3-4 hours to access the internet. Moreover, 27 per cent of the total respondents have 4-5 hours to access the internet and 25.5 per cent of the total respondents have above 5 hours to access the internet. In this study, the majority of the respondents from Engineering faculty spend above 5 hours to access the internet. Majority of the Medicine faculty students spend 3-4 hours to access the internet.

Chi square test is applied for further discussion. The computed chi square value is 235.7, which is greater than its tabulated value at 5% level of significance. Hence, the different faculty background is statistically identified as significant with respect to respondents' duration of hours to access the internet. It could be seen clearly from the above discussion that above 5 hours to access the internet takes the first position.

Suggestions

The findings of the present study lead to the following suggestive remarks:

- The Engineering and Medicine students should refer still more electronic journals for getting the latest information.
- Separate library hours should be allotted in time table for students.
- All the faculties suggest that digital libraries should be established for the optimum use of information.
- All faculties insist on computerization of the library service and connection of all the libraries through the Local Area Network (LAN).
- The library authorities should display the available online-resources for the benefit of students. The university library authorities should periodically conduct internet training programmes for the benefit of student population.

Conclusion

This study analyzes the information access pattern among the students of Engineering and Medicine faculties in Annamalai University. The information access pattern has gained momentum in the context of the information age. The availability of infrastructure facilities is quite adequate in searching library and electronic information. The students from faculty of Engineering are utilizing library, and its services, network consortium, application software and have access internet almost equaling to faculty of Medicine students.In some cases they are differ very little. The information provider should also conduct internet training programme, training programme about software usage to the user populations, as some of the students are unable to avail themselves of the benefit of internet and electronic resources.

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