User Perception of E-books for Competitive Exams in University Libraries: A Case Study of Tamil Nadu

A. Vinoth Sermarajan
Research Scholar
Department of Library and Information Science,
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University,
Tirunelveli-627 012, Tamil Nadu, India.
E-Mail: talentserma@gmail.com

P. Balasubramanian
University Librarian and Head
Manonmaniam Sundaranar University
Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India.
E mail: bala_phd2010@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study analyzed the role of e-books and library services offered by university libraries in Tamil Nadu in aiding students' preparation for competitive exams. The research, conducted at Manonmaniam Sundaranar University and Madurai Kamaraj University, found that students expressed satisfaction with the resources provided by the libraries, indicating that these resources are perceived as beneficial for their academic and professional success. A survey instrument was developed using Google Forms and distributed to 200 students.
.

Keywords
E-Books; competitive examinations; university libraries; successful candidates,

Electronic access
The journal is available at www.jalis.in
DOI: **10.5281/zenodo.12749263**

Journal of Advances in Library and Information Science
ISSN: 2277-2219 Vol. 13. No.2. 2024. pp.105-110

1. Introduction

A library is a collection of organized information sources and resources available to a specific community for reference or borrowing. Information is a valuable resource in today's competitive world, and as India prepares to become a knowledge economy, libraries and information centers must adapt to the new information environment and design appropriate systems and services. Information is based on human activities and can be divided into various forms of communication and understanding. Information dynamics involve events that intimate the state of the active system that can understand the information. Information resolves uncertainty by considering its possibility of incidence and inversely relative to that. Common terms like library instruction, library orientation, user education, and bibliographic instruction refer to helping users use the library, accessing information, and introducing various bibliographic tools.

Universities are crucial in guiding students about competitive exams, career guidance, and counseling. The National Accreditation Committee (NAAC) has framed guidelines for the Assessment and Accreditation of Institutions, which require institutions to submit an NAAC-Self-Study Report (SSR) when applying for NAAC accreditation. The report focuses on Student Support and Progression, facilitating students from one education level to higher education or employment. Higher educational institutions should identify students qualifying for state/national/international exams. The NAAC-SSR requires institutions to provide the average percentage of students who have been benefited by guiding for competitive examinations and offering career counselling over the last five years.

2. Profile of sample units

Manonmaniam Sundaranar University in Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India, has a well-equipped library that is crucial for students, researchers, and faculty members. Established in 1990, the library houses extensive books across various disciplines, including arts, science, engineering, and management. It offers access to various electronic resources, including e-books, e-journals, databases, and online repositories. The library is affiliated with consortia like INFLIBNET, granting access to numerous online resources.

The library houses theses and dissertations submitted

by postgraduate and doctoral students, providing reference and research aid. It also offers lending services, digital library access, interlibrary loan programs, and reprographic services. Its amenities include reading rooms, a computer lab, Wi-Fi access, and study carrels. The library features special collections of rare books, manuscripts, and local historical resources.

Madurai Kamaraj University's Bharathiar Memorial Library, also known as the Bharathiar Memorial Library, is an important academic and research resource for the university. Established in 1966, it houses over 250,000 volumes covering a wide range of subjects and subscribes to about 450 print journals. It houses a substantial collection of doctoral theses, dissertations, rare books, manuscripts, and Tamil literature and culture archives. The library offers lending services, reference services, interlibrary loan facilities, a digital repository, computer labs, reprography services, an audio-visual room, and free Wi-Fi access. It is involved in digitization projects, collaborations with academic institutions, and regular library orientation programs.

3. Review of Literature

Competitive exam trends have significantly impacted quality management in educational institutions. Advanced technology, such as iPads, has made exam preparation easier, and tutorials are available for exams like JEE, GMAT, and IIT. A study by Jain and Paras (2016) found that girls are more interested in competitive exams than boys. The trend has helped prevent unemployment, made students sincere, and managed the quality of institutes. Prakash, Veena., et al. (2016) assessed the information needs of competitive exam aspirants at Arts University of Nagpur City. They found that libraries should provide user orientation programs, separate notice boards for exam alerts, record students who have cleared competitive exams, and regularly take feedback from successful candidates. Library budgetary provisions should be made to meet resources required for competitive exams, and email alerts, special talks, lectures, and seminars can be conducted. The authors concluded that libraries are responsible for assisting competitive exam aspirants by providing necessary reading materials, guidance, and timely information.

4. Statement of Problem

Competitive exams are essential for university students to pursue advanced studies or secure employment opportunities. They require a wide range of knowledge beyond regular coursework, including general knowledge, current affairs, reasoning, aptitude, computer literacy, English language skills, and analytical abilities. University libraries must maintain collections to cater to these diverse needs. They offer resources and information services to aid students in preparing for competitive exams, coordinating with career development professionals and library staff. Libraries also provide guidance on job search, application forms, resumes, and interview skills. Many universities and public libraries have specialized "Career Resource Centre/Competitive Exam Cell" divisions and websites to deliver career-related information. Students heavily rely on these libraries for competitive exam preparations, seeking supplementary materials covering general knowledge, mental ability, current awareness, numerical proficiency, language skills, and analytical abilities.

5. Objectives of the study

- → To identify the profile of selected users of the university libraries of Tamil Nadu.
- → To evaluate respondents' satisfaction regarding the resources and services available for competitive examinations in the sample units.

6. Null and Alternative Hypotheses

H_O: The resources and services available in the university libraries of Tamilnadu do not influence respondents' satisfaction.
H_1: The resources and services available in the university libraries of Tamilnadu influence respondents' satisfaction.

7. Scope of the study

The present study is confined to Tamilnadu, and the targeted population is state university students. The researcher analyses the respondents' satisfaction regarding the E-resources and services available for competitive examinations in the sample units.

8. Methodology

The study involved empirical research to evaluate students' insights into the e-books and services offered to aid their preparation for competitive examinations. This analysis focused on assessing student satisfaction with the e-books and services

provided by Manonmaniam Sundaranar University Library in Tirunelveli and Madurai Kamarai University. To achieve this, an all-encompassing questionnaire was developed using Google Forms, which drew from existing research while aligning with the study's current objectives. Field experts reviewed the survey instrument, and 200 students were randomly selected from the two chosen sample units. The questionnaire was distributed to the students with the assistance of the librarians at both universities. In the end, 184 fully completed Google forms were collected from the respondents.

9. Limitations

- → The study is limited to only Manonmaniam Sundaranar University and Madurai Kamaraj University libraries.
- → The research relies mainly on primary data, and the accuracy of the findings hinges on the honesty of the participants' responses.

10. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Frequency of Visit to the University Library

Sl. No	Particulars Frequency of Visit	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Daily	61	33.15
2.	Once in two days	45	24.46
3.	Weekly two days	39	21.20
4.	Weekly one day	21	11.41
5.	Occasionally	18	9.78
	Total	**184**	**100**

(Source: Primary Data)

Fig 1

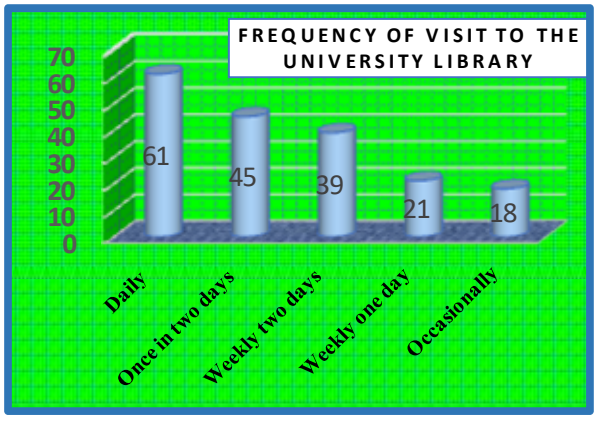


Table 1 presents the frequency of visits to university libraries by the selected respondents for competitive examinations. The data indicates that up to one-third of the respondents visit the library daily for competitive examinations, 24.46% visit once every two days, and 21.20% visit twice a week. Additionally, 11.41% of the respondents visit the university library once a week and only 9.78% occasionally visit the university library.

Table 2: Preparation for types of Competitive exams

Sl. No	Particulars Preparation for Competitive exams	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Entrance for Higher studies in universities/GRE/TOEFL/ GMAT	24	13.04
2.	IBPS	32	17.39
3.	Civil Service Exam	19	10.33
4.	Staff Selection Commission	14	7.61
5.	UGC-NET/SET	22	11.96
6.	TN-TET/ TRB	15	8.15
7.	Railway	9	4.89
8.	LIC	11	5.98
9.	TNPSC (Group I, II, IV, VAO, etc.)	26	14.13
10.	Police Exam	12	6.52
	Total	**184**	**100**

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 2 shows the types of exams the respondents are preparing for and the university libraries they use. The information indicates that the largest proportion of survey participants (17.39%) are preparing for the IBPS exam, followed by 14.13% for Tamilnadu Public Service Commission exams and 13.04% for entrance examinations for higher studies. Besides, 10.33% of the respondents are preparing for the Civil Service Exam, 8.15% for TET / TRB, and 7.61% are preparing for the Staff Selection Commission exams.

Table 3: Mode of knowing the announcement of competitive exams

Sl. No	Particulars Announcement of competitive exams	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Newspapers	19	10.33
2.	Magazines	17	9.24
3.	Websites	42	22.83

4.	Teachers	17	9.24
5.	Library notification	21	11.41
6.	Family members	14	7.61
7.	Television	5	2.72
8.	Friends	11	5.98
9.	Mobile applications	17	9.24
10.	Social media	21	11.41
	Total	**184**	**100**

(Source: Primary Data)

Fig 2

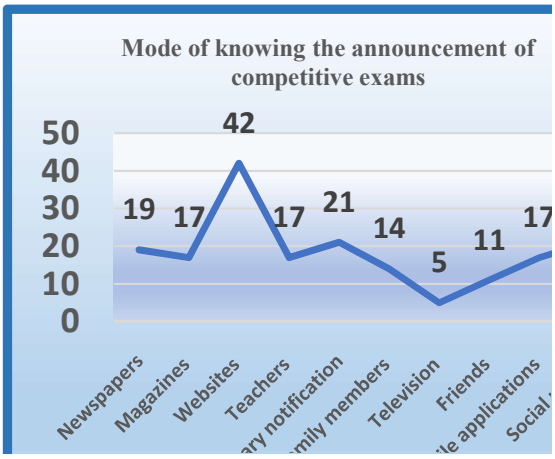


Table 3 shows how respondents learn about competitive exam announcements. The data reveals that 22.83% of the respondents find this information on official websites, 11.41% through social media, and an equal percentage from library sources. Additionally, 10.33% of the respondents rely on newspapers, 9.24% on teachers, and an equal percentage on mobile applications. Furthermore, 7.61% of the respondents get information from family, 5.98% from friends, and 2.72% from television.

Table 4: Reasons Behind the use of University Library for Competitive exam preparation

Sl. No	Particulars Use of University Library	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Sharing of competitive exam resources	51	27.72
2.	Group discussion and learning	37	20.11
3.	Being motivated by seeing other aspirants' preparation	41	22.28
4.	Useful collection of resources	32	17.39
5.	Reading in a peaceful atmosphere	23	12.50
	Total	**184**	**100**

(Source: Primary Data)

Fig 3

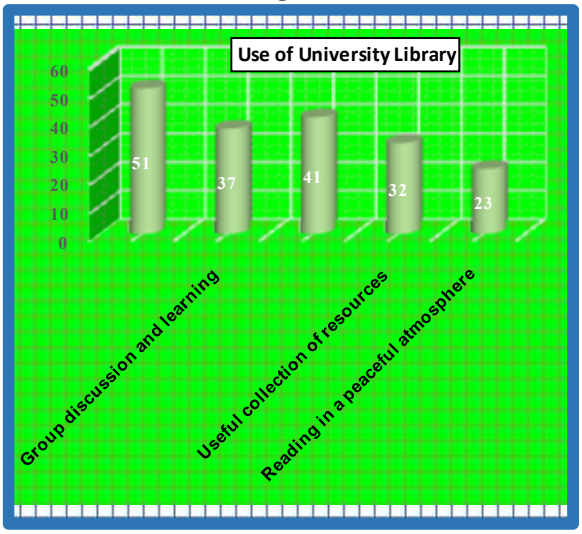


Table 4 exposes the selected respondents' opinions about the reasons behind using University Libraries for Competitive exam preparation. It is noted that a maximum of 27.72 per cent of the respondents share competitive exam resources, 22.28 per cent are motivated by seeing other aspirants' preparation, and 20.11 per cent go to the library for group discussions. Further, 17.39% availed themselves of the useful collections, and 12.50% read the books in a peaceful atmosphere.

Table 5: Utilization of Competitive Exam Resources

Sl. No	Particulars Utilization of Competitive Exam Resources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	General Studies	19	10.33
2.	General knowledge	14	7.61
3.	Current affairs	16	8.70
4.	General Science	18	9.78
5.	Quantitative aptitude	15	8.15
6.	Logical Reasoning	17	9.24
7.	Subject/Course specific books	13	7.07
8.	Computer & ICT	10	5.43
9.	English language	21	11.41
10.	Interview Techniques	20	10.87
11.	Group discussion	9	4.89
12.	NCERT School Textbook	12	6.52
13.	Tamilnadu Board School	19	10.33

	Textbook		
	Total	**184**	**100**

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 5 displays the participants' views on using library resources for competitive exams. The participants use these resources for a wide variety of topics, such as General Studies, General Knowledge, Current Affairs, General Science, Quantitative Aptitude, Logical Reasoning, Subject-Specific or Course-Specific literature, Computer and ICT, English Language, Interview Skills, Group Discussions, NCERT School Textbooks, and Tamilnadu Board School Textbooks.

Table 6: Respondents' opinions about sources and services of university libraries to meet the competitive examinations

Code	Variables	Mean	S. D	C.V	"t" value	Rank
VAR1	Library working days are satisfactory.	3.414	1.692	49.568	14.374	VIII
VAR2	A comfortable seating facility is available.	3.239	1.474	45.516	18.706	XIII
VAR3	Competitive Exam Books on the latest edition are available	4.481	1.426	31.830	20.227	I
VAR4	Ventilation and Lighting facilities are sufficient	3.658	1.571	42.937	16.567	VI
VAR5	Sufficient Magazines are available for competitive exam preparation	4.128	1.604	38.859	18.867	II
VAR6	Competitive exam books and magazines are in usable condition	3.254	1.740	53.485	14.383	XII
VAR7	Library staff explained the order of book arrangement whenever the need arises.	3.934	1.420	36.099	19.618	IV
VAR8	Library staff explained how to find the books by different types of searching	3.269	1.460	44.673	18.884	XI
VAR9	Library staff get suggestions/feedback periodically on library services	3.640	1.522	41.815	16.910	VII
VAR10	A sufficient number of Newspapers are available.	4.020	1.597	39.728	17.799	III
VAR11	Library staff arranges for inter-library Loan	3.354	1.740	51.890	14.383	IX
VAR12	Books are arranged according to the library classification for easy identification and selection.	3.672	1.415	38.529	18.592	V
VAR13	Information Retrieval service through the Internet is provided	3.293	1.525	46.319	13.908	X

Table 6 discloses the ranking of respondents' opinions about the sources and services of university libraries to meet the competitive examinations. The first rank is allotted to the variable "Competitive Exam Books on the latest edition are available" with the "t" value of 20.227. The second rank assigned to Sufficient Magazines are available for competitive exam preparation, and the third rank for A sufficient number of Newspapers are available.

Table 7: Association between the resources and services available in the university libraries of Tamilnadu and the Respondents' satisfaction.

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.195	.152		14.466	< 0.05
VAR1	.130	.033	.185	3.943	< 0.05
VAR2	.120	.034	.176	3.503	< 0.05
VAR3	.045	.022	.095	2.052	< 0.05
VAR4	-.100	.036	-.121	-2.748	< 0.05
VAR5	.086	.020	.127	4.375	< 0.05
VAR6	.081	.059	.112	1.375	< 0.05
VAR7	-.176	.041	-.156	-4.312	< 0.05
VAR8	.097	.025	.068	3.943	< 0.05
VAR9	-.145	.030	-.149	-4.902	< 0.05
VAR10	-.069	.019	-.101	-3.620	< 0.05
VAR11	.156	.019	.206	8.075	< 0.05
VAR12	.636	.026	.538	24.496	< 0.05
VAR13	-.315	.051	-.191	-6.175	< 0.05
"R"	0.846				
"R^2"	0.715				
Adjusted "R^2"	0.712				
"F" value	**24.441**		Sig. Value .000		

Table 7 divulges the regression coefficients between the resources and services available in the university libraries of Tamilnadu and the Respondents' satisfaction. The "R", "R^2", and adjusted "R2" values are 0.846, 0.715, and 0.712, respectively. All the values exceed the threshold level of 0.60, indicating a good correlation between the variables selected for the analysis. The "F" value is 24.441, and the corresponding significance value is less than 0.05 at a 95% confidence level. Besides, the "t" values of independent variables are more than 1.96, and the corresponding significance value is less than 0.05. The resources and services provided in the libraries

of Tamilnadu universities have a notable connection with the respondents' satisfaction.

11. Findings

The study reveals that a significant number of respondents visit the library daily for competitive examinations, with 17.39% preparing for the IBPS exam, 14.13% for Tamilnadu Public Service Commission exams, 13.04% for entrance examinations for higher studies, 10.33% for the Civil Service Exam, 8.15% for TET/TRB, and 7.61% for the Staff Selection Commission exams. Most respondents find information on official websites, social media, newspapers, teachers, mobile applications, family, friends, and television.

The study also shows that 27.72% of respondents share competitive exam resources, 22.28% are motivated by seeing other aspirants' preparation, and 20.11% go to the library for group discussions. 17.39% avail themselves of the useful collections, and 12.50% read the books in a peaceful atmosphere.

The participants use these materials for various topics, such as General Studies, General Knowledge, Current Affairs, General Science, Quantitative Aptitude, Logical Reasoning, Subject/Course-specific literature, Computer & ICT, English Language, Interview Strategies, Group Discussion, NCERT School Textbooks, and Tamilnadu Board School Textbooks. The study reveals a significant association between the resources and services available in the university libraries of Tamilnadu and the influence on respondents' satisfaction.

12. Conclusion

Competitive examinations in India serve as a gateway to postgraduate courses and government service appointments. The country's unemployment rate makes thorough preparation for such exams indispensable. University libraries play a pivotal role in facilitating this preparation. The significance of career information lies not only in its provision but also in its accessibility and utilization. This study scrutinizes university libraries' information sources and services from the users' perspective, particularly those aspiring for competitive exams. The findings underscore that factors such as "Library Resources and Support" heavily influence the satisfaction levels of competitive exam aspirants and should, therefore, be the focal point for service providers. The study also concludes that there is still room for improvement in competitive exam aspirants' utilizing information resources. Aspirants need to be aware of the availability of diverse information sources and how to harness them effectively for competitive exam preparation. In conclusion, a systematic approach to gathering and utilizing information from various sources, backed by university libraries, is imperative for competitive exam aspirants to acquire the requisite knowledge and excel in any competitive examination. In summation, "Average students win in competitive exams by exceeding the norm in utilizing library resources."

References

1. Abinaya, G.M., & Lydia, Mercy D. (2016). Transforming the lives through Public Libraries: A Study. In Proceedings of the DRDO-supported National Conference on Creativity, innovation and Transformation in Libraries (pp.73-77). Tiruchengode: SALIS.
2. Baladhandayutham, A., & Murugapandi, V. (2015). Information Access Pattern by the Users in District Central Library, Sivagangai: A Case Study. *International Journal of Information Dissemination and Technology,* 5(3): 196-199.
3. Jain, Paras. (2016). Role of Competitive Exam Trend in Quality Management. *Indian Journal of Applied Research,* 6(7): 478-479.
4. Krishnamurthy, G., & Awari, V.H. (2015). Newspaper Reading Habits among PostGraduate Students of Karnatak University, Dharwad. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology,* 35(1): 25-29.
5. Prakashe, Veena., et al. (2016). Arts Universities Library and Competitive Exams: A suggestive way to reference Nagpur. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 7(2): 92-100.