Access and Use of Electronic Information Resources by Students in College of Education: A survey at the Alagappa University

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Abstract

Information is a key resource for academic community for various reasons. Information is now available in various electronic formats. The growth of electronic resources is significant. The study of the users particularly to assess their electronic resources is not a new area of research in Library and Information Science. The present study is focused on to identify the level of competency in using Electronic Information Resources by the students in the College of Education, Alagappa University, Karaikudi. In the context of the present work, the methodology adopted, was found to be more appropriate and feasible and enabled the investigator to achieve the objectives of the study.

Keywords

computer skills, electronic resources, university students, rural areas, gender differences
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INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, libraries of all kinds have been spending larger and larger shares of their budgets to acquire or gain access to electronic resources from publishers and vendors. The users would find a daunting array of resources that might include hundreds of databases and thousands of electronic journals. Electronic resources have enabled libraries to improve services in a variety of ways. First, most electronic resources come equipped with powerful search-and-retrieval tools that allow users to perform literature searches more efficiently and effectively than was previously possible. In addition, most relevant electronic resources are now available through the Web; users can have desktop access to them 24 hours a day. In many cases, users also can now navigate directly from indexing databases to the full text of an article and can even follow further links from there. Most users have welcomed all these developments but libraries face a number of technical, financial, and organizational challenges as they seek to continue offering the high level of services that users have come to expect.

The Department of Education established in 1986 has been serving the major objectives of higher education such as teaching, research, extension and publication activities providing equitable access to all social and economic categories of the immediate community. While serving as a classic example of inclusive higher education, the Department has been striving to maintain quality adopting national priorities. The Department, within a short period of its establishment has ascended to great heights through its commendable research programmes. This is accomplished with the team work of competent and committed teaching and administrative staff with the ample support of university administration.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sampath and Kumar (2010) study showed the purpose of use of electronic sources by the respondents. The major reasons for the usage of electronic sources were in support of their study (70 per cent) and teaching (59 per cent) with one-third of respondents tending to use the electronic resources for project work. Regarding the different disciplines, 88 per cent of medical science students used electronic sources for study purposes followed by engineering (67 per cent) and then management studies (55 per cent).

Bassi and Camble (2011) study revealed that male and females students use e-resources for different purposes. The most common reasons are for research, assignments, and writing for project, thesis and dissertation. Every user needs particular resources for his or her information needs. Also surveys by Bassi (2010) on attitudes of students towards use of e-resources shows that students are the major users of these libraries and they are heterogeneous in nature. This posed a point of concern to the researchers to investigate gender difference in attitudes among students in these libraries towards the use of electronic resources. This is important because electronic information resources open opportunities for both male and female students for their information needs in the pursuit of their educational career and future endeavors. Thanuskodi & Meena (2013) study revealed that 46.67% of respondents want to access only electronic version of journals, whereas only 23.88% of users want to read the printed journals, but 29.45% of respondents want to use both electronic and printed journals. Wu & Chen (2012) study revealed that the Graduate students are of frequent users of electronic resources, particularly during the thesis-writing period. Graduate students of science and technology perceive electronic resources to be considerably more important to their research and studies than students of other disciplines do. Few students use the meta-search tool and alert services to retrieve heterogeneous electronic resources in the library. They concluded that the Electronic resources are the current foci of collection development in university libraries. Libraries continue investing funds to expand their electronic collection. To ensure that these investments are worthwhile, libraries must understand the attitudes of their patrons and their usage patterns of the collections. Vellaichamy & Jeyshankar (2014) mentioned that the majority of the faculty members (90%) have ranged above a years' experience of internet use. Shaw & Gant (2002) findings appeared to strengthen the general assumption that men prefer to use the Web for information gathering and entertainment and women

METHODOLOGY

The methodology adapted for the study is described under the following subheadings; sample used for the study, sources of data; research instruments; data collection procedure and statistical methods used. For the current study, the researchers surveyed the students with multiple disciplines in the education department. Questionnaire is the main tool used in the collection of data from the identified B.Ed Students. Designed to take just a few minutes to complete, the survey instrument gathered qualitative and quantitative data. Survey responses were confidential and also not required to answer every question. However as the situation warranted observations and interaction with the Students and Library and Information Science professionals have also been used as supplementary aspects in collecting data in addition to questionnaire. A questionnaire survey of students from B.Ed department at the Alagappa University, Karaikudi was conducted. In total, 146 out of 148 students were participated.

DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire has been constructed on the basis of objectives of the study. The questionnaire has been designed by dividing into five sections as enumerated below:

1. Personal Identification
2. Frequency of E-Resources
3. Use of E-Resources
4. Information Sources and Services
5. Problems and Satisfaction while using e-resources

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find the frequency of using Internet
- To find the level of awareness and purpose of using e-resources
- To find the favourite information sources of respondents
- To know the level of ability in various e-resources
- To know the respondents perspectives on e-resources
- To know the preferred format of e-resources
- To know the difficulties and satisfaction of e-resources

SAMPLE USED FOR THE STUDY

The Random Sampling Technique was used for this project to find the use of e-resources in the department of education. It was hoped that from the data collected it would be possible for analyzing the level of competency using electronic resources in the department of education. Basic statistical techniques and Microsoft Excel have extensively been used in the process of analysis of data for empirical interpretation. The data was collected during the period of February 1-15, 2014.

Table 1: Sample Population

Sl. No	Particulars	No. of Questionnaire Distributed	No. of Questionnaire Received
1	Physical Sciences	26	26
2	Mathematical Sciences	34	34
3	Bio-Sciences	27	27
4	Social Sciences	13	13
5	Commerce	11	10
6	Special Tamil language	12	11
7	English	25	25
Total		**148**	**146**

The Table 1 shows that out of 148 questionnaires distributed, 146 questionnaires were taken and remaining 2 were found to be invalid; they were incomplete and thus rejected from the ultimate sample. A completely filled 146 questionnaires formed the sample for the study.

Table 2: Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No	Gender	No. of Respondents	
		Number	Percent
1	Male	36	24.7
2	Female	110	75.3
Total		**146**	**100.0**

The table 2 shows gender-wise distribution of Respondents. It is obvious that among the 146 respondents, 36 are male and 110 are female.

Table 3: Age wise Distribution of Respondents

Sl. No.	Age	Respondents	
		No.	Percent
1	21-25	91	62.3
2	25-30	52	35.6
3	>30	3	2.1
Total		**146**	**100**

The table 3 illustrates the age wise distribution of respondents. It is revealed from the table that 91 (62.3%) respondents belong to the age group of 21-25 and 52 (35.6%) respondents are in the age group of 25-30 followed by 3 (2.1) in the age group 30 and above. Hence, the majority of the respondents were in the age group of 21-25.

Table 4: Educational Qualification

Sl. No.	Degree	Respondents	
		No.	Percent
1	UG	115	78.8
2	PG	31	21.2
Total		**146**	**100**

The table 4 shows that educational qualification of the respondents. It indicates that an average of 115 (78.8 %) undergraduate and 31(21.2 %) postgraduate students responded to the questionnaires which were distributed to them. Among the respondents undergraduates are more in number than the postgraduate students. We conclude that most of the students do a bachelor degree in education after completion of their under graduation and number of post graduate students doing bachelor degree in education is very less. So, it is obvious that most of female respondents prefer an academic oriented job and they believe that it will be suitable for them to work

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Table 5: Subject wise Population in B.Ed Students

Sl. No.	Subject	Respondents	
		No.	Percent
1	Physical Science	26	17.8
2	Mathematical Science	34	23.3
3	Bio Science	27	18.5
4	Social Science	13	8.9
5	Commerce	10	6.8
6	Special Tamil	11	7.5
7	English	25	17.1
Total		**146**	**100**

The Table 5 illustrates the subject wise population of Bachelor of Education in Alagappa College of Education, Alagappa University, Karaikudi. It is found that seven major subject wise distribution of questionnaire among the students of B.Ed. The table shows respondents from Mathematical Science is (34) 23.3 followed by Bio Science 27 (18.5), Physical Science is 26 (17.8), Social Science 13 (8.9), Commerce 10 (6.8), Special Tamil 11 (7.5) and English 17.1 (25). It is noted from the that majority of the respondents' 121 (82.9) were single in marital status with female 90 and male 31 followed by 25 were married with 5 of male and 20 of female. It is

good to know the married female respondents (18%) rural areas because they are aware the education will change the status of their family. 61.6 percent of the total female respondents were single and the parents in the today's society wants to see his female child to become educated.

Table 6: Background of the Respondents

Sl. No.	Area	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Rural	23 (15.8)	80 (54.8)	**103 (70.5)**
2	Semi Urban	8 (5.5)	19 (13.0)	**27 (18.5)**
3	Urban	5 (3.4)	11 (7.5)	**16 (11.0)**
Total		**36 (24.7)**	**110 (75.3)**	**100.0**

The Table 6 depicts the background of respondents. It is shown that an average of 103 (70.5%) respondents is from rural areas which include 80 (54.8%) female and 23 (15.8%) male. The respondents from semi-urban areas are 27 (18.5%) that includes female 19 (13.0%) and male 8 (5.5%) whereas 16 (11%) respondents are from urban areas. Therefore, the university plays a vital role in improving the educational status of the respondents who come from rural areas).

are willing to studying higher education in

Table 7: Computer Competency level of Student

Sl. No.	Competency Level	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Below Basic	2 (1.4)	8 (5.5)	**10 (6.8)**
2	Basic	13 (8.9)	96 (65.8)	**109 (74.7)**
3	Competent	21 (14.4)	6 (4.1)	**27 (18.5)**
Total		**36 (24.7)**	**110 (75.3)**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data

Of the total 146 respondents, 109 (74.4%) have some basic knowledge about computer followed by 27 (18.5%) are competent whereas the remaining 10 (6.8%) have the knowledge of computer below the basic level. In this context, Table 7 shows the gender wise distribution of respondents. It is obvious from the table that 96 out of 110 female know the basic level of computer whereas the majority of male respondents 21 out of 36 are competent in using the computer. The computer competency level among the female respondents is very less which shows their lack of interest in using computer.

Table 8: Frequency of Using Internet

Sl. No.	Frequency	Various Internet Services			
		Social network	E-resources	Searching Information	Total
1	Daily	14 (9.6)	34 (23.3)	18 (12.3)	**66 (45.2)**
2	Weekly twice	15 (10.3)	18 (12.3)	6 (4.1)	**39 (26.7)**
3	Once a week	8 (5.5)	13 (8.9)	4 (2.7)	**25 (17.1)**
4	Occasionally	4 (2.7)	7 (4.8)	5 (3.4)	**16 (11.0)**
Total		**41 (28.1)**	**72 (49.3)**	**33 (22.6)**	**146 (100.0)**

The Table 8 presents the frequency of using various internet services. A total of (45.2%) of the respondents using internet services daily. Among them 34 (23.3%) use to access e-resources, 18 (12.3) for the purpose of searching information and 14 (9.6) use it for social network. 39 (26.7%) of the respondents use internet twice a weekly, 17.1% (25) use once a week and 11% (16) of respondents use it occasionally

Table 9: Awareness of E-Resource

Sl. No.	Particulars	Location			Total
		Rural	Semi-Urban	Urban	
1	Colleagues/Friends	3 (2.1)	2 (1.4)	4 (2.7)	**9 (6.2)**
2	WWW	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)	2 (1.4)	**3 (2.1)**
3	Library Professionals	58 (39.7)	11 (7.5)	5 (3.4)	**74 (50.7)**
4	Social Media	0 (0.0)	2 (1.4)	4 (2.7)	**6 (4.1)**
5	Teacher/Research Guide	42 (28.8)	9 (6.2)	3 (2.1)	**54 (37.0)**
Total		**103 (70.5)**	**25 (17.1)**	**18 (12.3)**	**(100.0)**

The table 9 shows the sources from which the respondents get awareness of e-resources. It is revealed that the majority of respondents 74 (50.7) get awareness from library professionals about the e-resources which includes 58 (39.7%) respondents come from rural area. 54 out of 146 (37%) respondents get awareness from Teacher/Research Guide about the e-resources followed by Colleagues/Friends (6.2%), Social Media (4.1%) and World Wide Web (2.1%). It is shown that the respondents who come from rural areas get awareness only from library professionals and Teacher/Research Guide. It can be said that academic professionals play a vital role in creating awareness about e-resources among the students

Table 10: Favorite Information Resources

Sl. No.	Types	Location			Total
		Rural	Semi urban	Urban	
1	Electronic	15 (10.3)	12 (8.2)	4 (2.7)	**31 (21.2)**
2	Print	80 (54.8)	9 (6.2)	3 (2.1)	**92 (63.0)**
3	Both	8 (5.5)	6 (4.1)	9 (6.2)	**23 (15.8)**
Total		**103 (70.5)**	**27 (18.5)**	**16 (11.0)**	**(100.0)**

The table 10 illustrates the favourite information resources of the respondents. It is depicted that most of the respondents 92 (63%) prefer printed information resources as their favourite resources. Among them 80 respondents are from rural areas. Only 31 respondents prefer electronic information resources which include 15 respondents from rural, 12 from semi-urban and 4 from urban.

Table 11 depicts the respondents' purpose of using e-resources. It is shown in the table that the 90 (61.6) respondents use e-resources for their academic purpose followed by general 29 (19.9%) and research 27 (18.5%). So, it is concluded that the majority of respondents use e-resources for their academic purpose such as writing assignments, take study materials, preparing for seminars and competitive exams and so on.

Table 11: Purpose of Using E-Resources

Sl. No.	Purpose	Degree		Total
		UG	PG	
1	General	25 (17.1)	4 (2.7)	**29 (19.9)**
2	Academic	78 (53.4)	12 (8.2)	**90 (61.6)**
3	Research	12 (8.2)	15 (10.3)	**27 (18.5)**
Total		**115 (78.8)**	**31 (21.2)**	**(100.0)**

Table 12: E-Resources vs. Print-Resources

Statement	Rating									
	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
E-resources are better than the print sources for getting Information richly	16	76	13	21	4	4	1	6	2	3
The ICT makes less impact on the use of Library resources	2	4	1	3	5	8	8	27	20	68

It is noted from the table 12 that majority of the respondents 92 (63%) were strongly disagreed with the statement that, "E-resources are better than the printed matter to getting information richly" because they felt that the printed matter motivated the reading habits. Regarding Library resources, majority of the respondents 88 (60%) strongly agreed with the statement that, "the ICT makes less impact on the use of library resources" because the respondents get all available information in electronic format. These two statements produce different thinking of the users. The reason is that the respondents use e-resources effectively but they are not convenient like printed matter.

The table 13 depicts the perspective of electronic resources regarding usefulness. The majority of the respondents (89.7%) believed that the e-resources are very useful, particularly for the purpose of studying and finding subject related materials. It is also revealed that e-resources are useful for writing assignments, knowing current information, finding relevant information and finally research work.

Table 13: Usefulness of E-Resources

Sl. No.	Statement	Scaling		
		Very Useful	Useful	Not Useful
1	For project work	31 (21.2)	75 (51.4)	40 (27.4)
2	To know current information	76 (52.1)	23 (15.8)	47 (32.2)
3	Finding relevant information	72 (49.3)	68 (46.6)	6 (4.1)
4	For writing assignments	87 (59.6)	52 (35.6)	7 (4.8)
5	Get subject related materials	113 (77.4)	23 (15.8)	10 (6.8)
6	For study purpose	131 (89.7)	9 (6.2)	6 (4.1)

Table 14: Respondents Perspectives on e-resources

Sl. No.	Statement	Scaling			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	Getting updated information instantly	6 (4.1)	2 (1.4)	13 (8.9)	125 (85.6)
2	Solve my doubts easily	7 (4.8)	8 (5.5)	113 (77.4)	18 (12.3)
3	No need to go anywhere	23 (15.8)	24 (16.4)	46 (31.5)	53 (36.3)
4	No need to find information in library	12 (8.2)	99 (67.8)	33 (22.6)	2 (1.4)
5	Portability	3 (2.1)	4 (2.7)	57 (39.0)	82 (56.2)

Table 14 shows respondents' perspectives on e-resources. It is noted from the table 14 that majority of the respondents gives positive feedback about e-resources. 124 out of 146 (85.6%) strongly agreed that e-resources help them to update. Regarding comfortableness, majority of the respondents 82

(56.2) agreed strongly that the e-resources are portable to take information anywhere and 57 (39%) agreed with the statement.

Whatever the world changes to favour, the information in the library are elixir of our life. The majority of the respondents 99 (67.8%) disagreed with the statement that there is, "no need to find information in the library". The reason is that the information preserved in the library is spoken well as compared to e-resources. Most of the respondents were strongly agreed 53 (36.3%) that there is no need to go anywhere to find the information. Because they believe that all information is available in the form of e-resources and 46 (31.5%) respondents agreed the same.

Table 15: Preferred format of e-resources

Sl. No.	Formats	Qualification		Total
		UG	PG	
1	PDF	54 (37.0)	15 (10.3)	**69(47.3)**
2	DOC	33 (22.6)	4 (2.7)	**37 25.3)**
3	TXT	14 (9.6)	6 (4.1)	**20 13.7)**
4	PPT	1 (0.7)	1 (0.7)	**2 (1.4)**
5	FULL TEXT HTML	12 (8.2)	3 (2.1)	**15 10.3)**
6	DON'T KNOW	2 (1.4)	1 (0.7)	**3 (2.1)**
Total		**116 (79.5)**	**30 (20.5)**	**(100.0)**

The table 15 reveals that most of the respondents 69 (47.3) preferred PDF (Portable Document Format) out of which 54 are undergraduate and 15 are postgraduate followed by document format 37 (25.3), text 20 (13.7), and full text HTML 15 (10.3).

Table 16: Problems while accessing e-resources

Sl. No.	Problems	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Lack of Internet Connectivity	12 (8.2)	18 (12.3)	**30 (20.5)**
2	Lack of Time	2 (1.4)	9 (6.2)	**11 (7.5)**
3	Lack of Training	6 (4.1)	23 (15.8)	**29 (19.9)**
4	Finding relevant information	8 (5.5)	34 (23.3)	**42 (28.8)**
5	Limited access	8 (5.5)	26 (17.8)	**34 (23.3)**
Total		**36 (24.7)**	**110 (75.3)**	**(100.0)**

The table 16 depicts the problems faced while accessing e-resources. It indicates that majority of the respondents 42 (28.8) find it difficult to search relevant information while accessing e-resources. They also face problems of limited access 34 (23.3) followed by lack of internet connectivity 30 (20.5).

Table 17: Level of Satisfactions of using e-resources

Sl. No.	Subject	Scale				Total
		Dissatisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	
1	Physical Science	4 (2.7)	1 (0.7)	14 (9.6)	7 (4.8)	**26 (17.8)**
2	Mathematical Science	1 (0.7)	7 (4.8)	22 (15.1)	4 (2.7)	**34 (23.3)**
3	Bio Science	2 (1.4)	4 (2.7)	13 (8.9)	8 (5.5)	**27 (18.5)**
4	Social Science	1 (0.7)	3 (2.1)	3 (2.1)	6 (4.1)	**13 (8.9)**
5	Commerce	1 (0.7)	4 (2.7)	3 (2.1)	2 (1.4)	**10 (6.8)**
6	Special Tamil	0 (0.0)	3 (2.1)	5 (3.4)	3 (2.1)	**11 (7.5)**
7	English	2 (1.4)	6 (4.1)	9 (6.2)	8 (5.5)	**25 (17.1)**
Total		**11 (7.5)**	**28 (19.2)**	**69 (47.3)**	**38 (26.0)**	**(100.0)**

Table 17 shows respondents' level of satisfaction of the e-resources which gives a mixed response in this regard. It is evident from the table that 69 (47.3 percent) are satisfied with the collections of e-resources. It is also found that only 26 percent of the respondents are highly satisfied with the use of e-

resources. 28 (19.2) of the respondents responded that they are somewhat satisfied with the use of e-resources.

CONCLUSION

Several experts have conducted a number of works in the field of usage of electronic information resources. The study sought to analyze the use of e-resources by the users of college of education, Alagappa University, Karaikudi. The Alagappa University has 70 per cent of female students and plays a vital role in educating the female students in the society. Most of the objectives are most satisfactorily and most of the users of university libraries are made available the digitalized services, but ratio of services used by users is different because it is dependent upon the type of work and the nature of library. Most of the respondents came from rural areas have the basic knowledge of how to use computer and 70 percent of the users used internet in the university. Half of the respondents from rural areas are aware of electronic resources but they do not how to utilize the e-resources effectively. At the same time they use other electronic services like e-mail, search engines to fulfill their requirement. On the other side, it is noted that the majority of the respondents are female and they are significantly increased to be educated in the society.

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