

INFORMATION GATHERING HABITS OF USERS AMONG SELECTED ENGINEERING COLLEGES IN BANGALORE: A STUDY

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Abstract

User Studies are starting to be recognized as an important part of information package. Information providers like the library need to be aware of their user's information requirements as well as their information gathering methods in order that they might be able to provide better services. This study will highlight the features of few engineering colleges in Bangalore. The result shows that 60% users spent time in libraries to gather information. Finally this paper highlights the main points and issues relating to the information gathering.

Keywords: Information seeking, information habits, E-resources, engineering Colleges, information usage

1. Introduction

Information a vital commodity, an amorphous concept, less susceptible for a precise definition, but everyone has to deal with it in many ways throughout one's life. Indeed, Crawford (1978) has described information as the fifth need of human beings ranking after air, water, food and shelter. Information collection, transfer and use are all pervasive and universal activities in all walks of life. Information brings people and thoughts together. It is the exchange of ideas, news and data that makes a society what it is. Information is a very important element for the progress and development of any organization. Library is one of the key resource pools for the information. General libraries will have various types of information resources whereas the academic libraries are more concentrated on the education.

2. Information Gathering

Information gathering is a behavior of human activity like writing a memo, driving a car, talking on the phone. Since it is a behavior, it is logical to propose that it stems from sources common to all behaviors. Psychologists try to determine why people need? What do they need? Why people behave differently and how do they behave? Librarians, though differently involved in observation of information-seeking behavior, on professional as well as personal level, have paid little attention to the psychological reasons for such behavior. The information seeking behavior is used here to include all activities comprising information seeking, information gathering, and information retrieving and communication activities performed in the library environment.

3. Review of Literature

Engineering college libraries have witnessed great changes in recent years in their collection and in their services. Significant development changes occurred in policies and practices (Mulla, K R and Chandrashekar). In another study by Kaur and Rajeev (2008) in their study on engineering college in Punjab and Haryana all the respondents make frequent use of the Internet because they have access either at college or at home. Satpathy, Sunil Kumari (2010) examined the faculty members in engineering and highlighted the problems by the users especially in the usage of e-resources and suggested remedial measures for its improvement. Puttaswamy and Krishnamurthy (2014) in their study in engineering colleges in Karnataka found that majority of teachers/scholars prefer to access e-resources for getting the latest information for their lectures, research work and for professional development

Girija Kumar and Jayaswal in their study of nine research scholars enrolled for their Ph.D degree with the centre for the study of social system, Jawaharlal Nehru University, concluded that due to lack of knowledge about the use of different formal channels of information, researcher's reliance on library use was relatively low. Kapoor reported that researchers in geography hardly had adequate knowledge of the availability of secondary sources of information because of lack of training in the library use. Sethi and Sharma indicate that frequency of use of formal channels of information by historians depended on the ease of accessibility.

Sethi (1990) focused on the information seeking behavior of Indian Social Scientists and reported that social scientists sought their information from a wide network of channels and from a wide variety of sources; their information search was governed by a number of factors; they devoted certain amount of time in visiting places and attending conferences; they mainly depended upon documents and their dependence on certain library services was considerable. Similarly, the contributions made by Sridhar; and Subramanyam; and Suri were noteworthy on this study. A number of citation studies in social sciences were made to measure the users information needs in India. Mention might be made of studies made by Rana in anthropology; Sahai, in Sociology; Kaula and Singh in Social Science; and Hadagali in agricultural Economics. Some other authors shown interest in information seeking behavior like Karisidappa and Reddy, Sasikala, have made attempted to in the field of information seeking behavior.

4. Ways of getting the information by different users:

Different terminologies are being used like user studies, information-need studies, information-transfer studies, communication behavior studies, information seeking behavior studies etc without having a definite, clear cut definition for expression. All these phrases are closely related and often used synonymously. When looked at from the user's point of view, information seeking behavior study is nothing but the study of flow of information among the users. The way used and adopted for fetching the same information may vary depending upon the person trying that. It may depend on how he tries to analyze the piece of information he is having and also on how he interacts/approaches the information paths. In this study we are trying to understand the patterns of different categories of students like undergraduates/ graduates/postgraduates and researchers in diff categories and information system. This flow starts with purposes and motives and ends with satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

5. Objectives and methodology:

The main objective of this study is to gather the statistics of information pattern used by the various categories of engineering college students and researchers in Bangalore. This study covers the information seeking behaviors of students of UG, PG and researchers of following Engineering colleges in Bangalore. The Questionnaire methods were used for this study to collect the primary data, keeping in view of the objective of the study. In total 300 questionnaires were distributed among the students of 5 engineering colleges of Bangalore, filled in questionnaires were received back. The rate of response was 78%. In addition to questionnaire method, interview schedule and observation method were also used to collect required information as a supplement to the questionnaire method to bring more clarity to the data which are essential and use for analysis and interpretation of data.

Table -1 Engineering colleges covered under this study

| College Names | UG's | PG's | Researchers |
|--|------|------|-------------|
| PES Institute of Technology | 72 | 36 | 7 |
| Dayananda Sagar College of Engineering | 36 | 9 | 1 |
| B M S College of Engineering | 9 | 4 | 0 |
| B N M Institute of Technology | 9 | 3 | 0 |
| Bangalore Institute of Technology | 32 | 14 | 2 |
| Total | 158 | 66 | 10 |

It is evident from the Table-1 that Total 234 respondents covered in this study and majority of the users from PES institute of technology (49%), Dayananda Sagar College of Engineering (20%), BMS engineering college (6%), BNM institute of technology (5%) and Bangalore Institute of Technology (20%).

Table -2 Type of Users

| | No. of Respondents | % |
|-------------|--------------------|-----|
| UG's | 158 | 68% |
| PG's | 66 | 28% |
| Researchers | 10 | 4% |

Table -2 Indicates majority of 68% respondents are UG's, 28% PG's and only 4% are researchers.

Table -3 Sex wise distributions of respondents

| Sex | No. | % |
|--------|-----|-----|
| Male | 161 | 69% |
| Female | 73 | 31% |
| Total | 234 | 100 |

According to Table-3 69% of male students and 31% are females.

Table – 4 Students satisfaction with library resources

| Type | Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Excellent | 40 | 17% |
| Good | 145 | 62% |
| Average | 30 | 13% |
| Poor | 19 | 8% |

Out of 234 participants, 145 students (62%) are having the feedback as good with the library resources. 17% having the opinion of excellent.

Table -5 Users satisfaction with the library materials

| Type | Excellent | Good | Average | Poor |
|-----------------|-----------|------|---------|------|
| Reference books | 30% | 52% | 12% | 6% |
| Magazines | 60% | 20% | 18% | 2% |
| Text books | 30% | 40% | 20% | 10% |
| News papers | 82% | 12% | 5% | 1% |

It has been noticed that the reference books, magazines and newspapers are being treated as excellent type of resources for research scholars as they will get more updated and reliable information for this section of students.

Table -6 Purpose of information seeking

| Purpose | Responses | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------|
| To borrow study materials | 120 | 51% |
| Preparing notes | 45 | 19% |
| General Awareness | 20 | 9% |
| Reading | 28 | 12% |
| Research work | 10 | 4% |
| Photocopy | 11 | 5% |

As per the above table, around 51% of the students were having the main purpose of library visit as “Borrowing books”. Followed by 19% for notes preparation and 12% for reading.

Table -7 General information sources for users

| Sources | UG's | PG's | Researchers |
|------------------|------|------|-------------|
| Books | 76% | 60% | 68% |
| Journals | 55% | 45% | 78% |
| Reference books | 56% | 44% | 55% |
| Online databases | 33% | 29% | 89% |

As the library provides all these sort of sources of knowledge, all sources are useful for all these categories of students in one way or the other. These days the online databases are also taking some good amount of share. But only the problem is always you have to rely on power supply, internet connection and the gadgets for using this method. So it is not so advised and dependent source of information.

Methods of getting the latest information by users:

Table-8.1 Total in percentage

| Method | Participants | Percentage |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|
| Current issues of journals | 178 | 76% |
| Personal communications | 10 | 4% |
| Seminars | 20 | 8% |
| Internet | 26 | 12% |

Table-8.2 Category wise

| Method | UG's | PG's | Researchers |
|----------------------------|------|------|-------------|
| Current issues of journals | 30% | 20% | 50% |
| Personal communications | 45% | 30% | 25% |
| Seminars | 20% | 20% | 60% |
| Internet | 30% | 30% | 60% |

With the text books in library you may get the more information, but for latest and updated information, one need to keep checking in periodical magazines/journals and seminars. And internet takes top in this section. It has been notices that the researchers are very comfortable with all these methods of keeping them updated. PG's are in next place and UG's at last place.

Table-9 Problems faced while using library

| Problems | Respondents | Percentage |
|--|-------------|------------|
| Lack of updated information | 121 | 52% |
| Unware of e-resources usage | 34 | 15% |
| Lacking the knowledge of how to search | 50 | 21% |
| Library staff not supportive | 29 | 12% |

Table -10 Training requirement:

| Training for students | Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|
| Needed | 100 | 45% |
| Not needed | 90 | 38% |
| No comments | 44 | 17% |

When asked whether the training required for students or not, we got almost the 50-50 response for both. Few were not having any opinion on this.

Findings and suggestions

In this study we have interacted with 234 students of various categories. Students use various methods to get the knowledge for the academic purpose. Books are the primary source of information. As nowadays the internet is reaching all the corners of the world in a rapid manner, students are started using the e-resources as well.

It has been noticed that, few libraries are not updated with the latest version of academic books. This has to be taken care from the libraries to keep them updated. Also as the e-resources are being taking the priority, there should be a way to educate the students and to encourage them for using this type of resources. Last but not least, the students should be educated/guided on how to search for specific information. This will really help in reducing the time spent on gaining the knowledge.

Conclusion

The role of library remains same even though there are various methods and ways for getting the similar information. This study gives the stats on various categories of students with the satisfaction level. From the review of literature presented are would conclude that there exists much and about need for user research, speculative findings, claims and counter claims occupied in a large volume of literature with least consolidation and cumulating. The vast scope for further research in terms of different

segments of users, different aspect user behaviour and attitude with refined methodologies and rigorous analyses of data still remain unexplored.

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