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Awareness of E-Learning Among Library and Information Science Professionals in University of Kerala and Mahatma Gandhi University: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to examine awareness of e-learning among LIS professionals in University of Kerala and Mahatma Gandhi University: A comparative study. The study intended with an aim to explore the awareness, attitude and problems faced in the utilisation of e-learning. Closed ended questionnaire was used to collect the data from respondents. The study includes the library professionals of the central and 43 teaching department libraries in the UoK and central and 25 teaching department libraries of MGU. Among the 112 questionnaires distributed, 104 were completely answered and returned. The findings of the study revealed that half of the library professionals are well aware of e-learning in both universities.

Key words: e-learning, awareness, LIS professionals

1. Introduction

Development is a continuous process. Every new development will bring more opportunities in each particular field. The field of education also follows this. For better education, humans are a continuous search for developing new tools and methods. Revolution of human society had its impact on education. The development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has brought psychological, sociological, as well as technological changes in the field of education. The present boon of ICT has its own very special impact on education. This impact of ICT is noticeable in formal and informal education, traditional and professional education, as well as at all levels of education. The

most recent influence of ICT in the field of education is recognized as e-learning. E-learning has many other nomenclatures such as computer-assisted instruction, computer-based training, online education, web-based training, etc.

E-learning is defined as interactive learning in which the learning content is available online and provides automatic feedback to the students learning activities. E-learning covers an extensive set of applications and processes, such as web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. It includes the delivery of content via the internet, intranet/extranet, satellite broadcast, interactive television, CD-ROM, DVD, audio and videotape, etc.

2. Related Studies

Alhabeeb and Rowley (2017) analysed critical success factors for e-learning in Saudi Arabian universities. The purpose of the paper was to offer insights into the development of e-learning systems and the perceptions of key players in the management of e-learning systems in three large universities in Saudi Arabia. Structured interviews were conducted with senior managers with responsibility for implementing and promoting e-learning in their universities. The interview protocol prompted discussion of the importance of the following sets of factors in the success and acceptance of e-learning: student characteristics, instructor characteristics, learning environment: instructional design, and support. Interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. It was found that supported by the Saudi Government, the three universities in this study have been developing their e-learning services. The two most important groups of critical success factors in this process were regarded as those related to student and instructor characteristics. Further analysis within each group of factors suggested that participants regarded instructor knowledge with learning technologies and student knowledge of computer systems, and technical infrastructure as important facilitators of success. Amongst instructional design factors, clarity of learning objectives and content quality were regarded as important. Insights are offered as to the reasons for these selections.

Goh et al. (2017) carried a study about students experiences, learning outcomes and satisfaction in the e-learning. The study was aimed to examine whether students experiences in e-learning are related to learning outcomes and satisfaction. A self-administered questionnaire was used to conduct the study. The paper questionnaires were distributed to students at a university in Malaysia. In total, 670 valid responses were obtained. Exploratory factor analysis was performed to confirm the underlying factor

structure for the observed variables. Regression analyses indicated that course design, interaction with the instructor and interaction with peer students are positively related to the learning outcomes and satisfaction. They found that among all learning experiences, interaction with peer students makes the strongest contributions to learning outcomes and satisfaction. The study demonstrates the importance for University administrators and instructors to design e-learning course to optimal students' experiences to enhance their learning outcomes and satisfaction

Han and Yates (2016) analysed e-learning integration in the library with a case study. The purpose of the paper is to describe an evaluation of the implementation of the strategy with recommendations for sustaining and improving practices. The evaluation was divided into four categories using a mixed methods methodology for evidence gathering. Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from both primary and secondary sources for an enriched understanding of practices. It is found that library staffs have gained knowledge and skills, indicating a sustainable strategy. However, further work is required to sustain staff development and support staff requirements in the long term. The conclusions of the evaluation, as well as methods of its execution, can be shared with other institutions wishing to produce e-learning resources in a sustainable and effective manner.

Fischer et al. (2015) reported how to identify e-learning trends in academic teaching with methodological approaches and the analysis of scientific discourses. The purpose of the paper was to introduce the methodology and findings of a trend study in the field of e-learning. The overall interest of the study was the analysis of scientific e-learning discourses. The methodology adopted was abstracts of 427 scientific articles of leading German-speaking e-learning conferences (GMW and DeLFI) – published from 2007 to 2013 – were examined. A category scheme was derived from the Horizon Report. The category scheme then was gradually expanded and adapted to the data material during the investigation. The paper found that the detailed analysis of the frequency distribution over the seven years reflects the intensity of scientific discussion towards e-learning trends within the investigation period, and conclusions about the didactical or technical potentials of innovations can be drawn because both conferences are different in terms of their objective.

Benta, Bologna and Dzitac (2014) examined e-learning platforms in higher education. The paper described experience in using e-learning platforms to support face to face instruction in the academic field. It aimed to be easy to read and understand by proving

the importance of using e-learning platforms in higher education the approach is the use of Moodle as interactive e-learning tool to motivate students and involve them in resolving single and collaborative homework tasks. It is found that many universities in the world use e-learning platforms, this case it was for the first time used, and it is a great teaching or learning experience.

3. Objectives

The major objectives of the present study are:

- (a) To know the awareness on e-learning among LIS professionals.
- (b) To understand the LIS professionals attitude towards e-learning.
- (c) To know the perfect method of learning about the use of e-learning materials
- (d) To identify the problems faced in the effective utilisation of e-learning application

4. Method

The survey research methodology was adopted to conduct the study. The study includes the library professionals of the central and 43 teaching department libraries in the UoK and central and 25 teaching department libraries of MGU. The population selected for the study includes all the library professionals from two universities. The total LIS professionals from UoK were 108, and from MGU was 47. In total, there were 155 LIS professionals from the two universities. 112 questionnaires were distributed. Eight questionnaires with incomplete responses were discarded, and 104 were selected for the analysis. The data has been collected with the help of structured questionnaires. The questionnaire is prepared on the based on objectives of the study with open ended and close ended questions. The questionnaire is distributed personally to the LIS professionals to collect relevant data.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 University-wise distribution of respondents

Data analysis and interpretation is the process of assigning meaning to the collected information and determining the conclusions, significance and implications of the findings. It is an important and exciting step in the process of research. In all research studies analysis follows data collection. In this chapter, an attempt is made to analyse the data collected for the study regarding awareness of e-learning among LIS professionals in UoK and MGU.

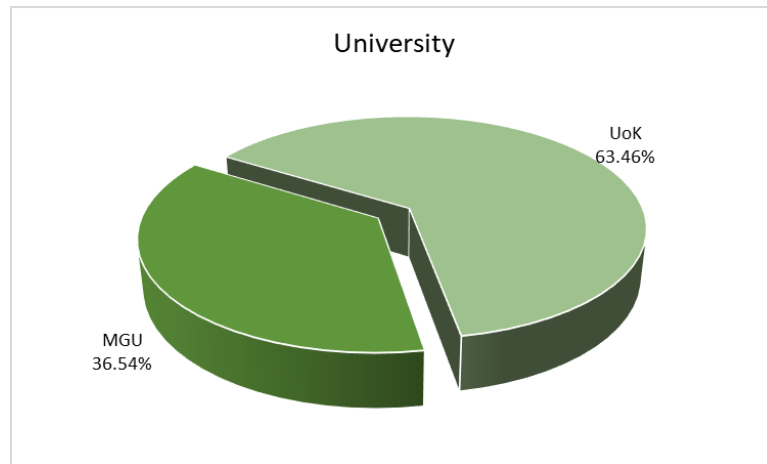


Fig 1 University-wise Distribution of Respondents

Fig 1 shows the university wise distribution of respondents. From the study, it can be seen that majority of the respondents (63.46%) were from UoK, and 36.54% were from MGU

5.2 Variation in Awareness on E-learning among LIS Professionals in UoK and MGU

Table 1 shows the Variation in Awareness on E-learning among LIS Professionals in UoK and MGU. It is evident from the study that half of the library professionals (50%) are well aware of e-learning in both universities. By comparing the universities in the aspects of awareness in e-learning, it is evident that out of 38 professionals 19 were “well aware of” e-learning in MGU and whereas out of 66 professionals 33 were “well aware of” e-learning in UoK. Out of 38 professionals, 18 (47.37%) professionals were “somewhat aware of” e-learning in MGU whereas out of 66 respondents 33 (50%) professionals were “somewhat aware of” e-learning in UoK. Only 2.63% of the respondents “don’t know” about e-learning in MGU and none of the professionals in UoK “don’t know” about e-learning.

The mean score of awareness of LIS professionals from MGU on e-learning is 2.47, and that of UoK is 2.50. As the significance level of t-value is greater than 0.05, the result indicated that the awareness level of LIS professionals from both Universities are significantly the same. Hence, the result accepts the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of aware about e-learning among library professionals from MGU and UoK.

Table 1
Variation in Awareness on E-learning among LIS Professionals in
UoK and MGU

Level of Awareness	University			
	MGU		UoK	
	N	%	N	%
Fully aware	19	50.00	33	50.00
Somewhat aware	18	47.37	33	50.00
Not aware	1	2.63	0	0.00
Total	38	100.00	66	100.00
Mean score of awareness	2.47		2.50	
SD	0.56		0.50	
Two-independent	T	0.274		
samples t-test	Sig.	0.806		

5.3 LIS Professional's Attitude towards E-learning

Table 2 shows the LIS professional's attitude towards e-learning. From the study, it is evident that majority (69.23%) of library professionals agrees with the statement "It would be easy to find information by using e-learning" possessed first rank (mean score: 4.21) and 26.92% strongly agreed with the statement. At the same time, 4.81% neutral with it. None of the professionals disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Using e-learning would improve the course performance possessed the second rank (mean score: 4.12) where 26.92% of the respondents strongly agreed, 57.69% agreed, 15.38% were neutral. "Users have the initiative and motive to learn and use the e-learning system" got third rank (mean score: 4.07). "Users are willing to participate in e-learning activities" obtained the fourth rank (mean score: 4.06). "Users believe in their capability to internet ICT use by e-learning" obtained the fifth rank (mean score:4.05). "Users found e-learning easy to use" obtained sixth rank (mean score: 4.01).

Table 2**LIS Professional's Attitude towards E-learning**

Attitude		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
It would be easy for me to find information by using e-learning	N	27	72	5	0	0	4.21	0.52	23.979	0.000
	%	25.96	69.23	4.81	0.00	0.00				
I have the initiative and motive to learn and use the e-learning system	N	24	65	13	2	0	4.07	0.66	16.554	0.000
	%	23.08	62.50	12.50	1.92	0.00				
Using e-learning would improve my course performance	N	28	60	16	0	0	4.12	0.64	17.684	0.000
	%	26.92	57.69	15.38	0.00	0.00				
I have a high level of self-confidence about using for e-learning	N	20	59	21	4	0	3.91	0.74	12.609	0.000
	%	19.23	56.73	20.19	3.85	0.00				
I am willing to participate in e-learning activities	N	24	66	10	4	0	4.06	0.69	15.535	0.000
	%	23.08	63.46	9.62	3.85	0.00				
I believe in my capability to internet ICT use by e-learning	N	22	66	15	1	0	4.05	0.63	16.991	0.000
	%	21.15	63.46	14.42	0.96	0.00				
I found e-learning easy to use	N	20	68	13	3	0	4.01	0.66	15.579	0.000
	%	19.23	65.38	12.50	2.88	0.00				

6.4 Variation in Attitude towards E-learning in UoK and MGU

Table 3 shows variation in attitude towards e-learning in UoK and MGU. By comparing the above tabulated data, most of the professionals (mean score: 4.24) in MGU had the opinion that “It would be easy for me to find information by using e-learning”, it was 4.20 in the case of UoK. It could be seen that most of the professionals (mean score: 4.13) in MGU says “I have the initiative and motive to learn and use the e-learning system”, in UoK it was 4.03, majority of the professionals (mean score: 4.18) in MGU says “Using e-learning would improve my course performance”, in UoK it was 4.08. Most of the professionals in MGU (mean score: 3.97) opined that “I have a high level of self-confidence about using for e-learning”, in UoK it was 3.88 and also majority of the professionals in

UoK (mean score: 4.12) have the opinion “I am willing to participate in e-learning activities” in the case of MGU it was less (mean score: 3.95). Majority of the professionals in MGU (mean score: 4.13) have the opinion “I found e-learning easy to use” in the case of UoK it was less (mean score: 3.94). From the table, it can be inferred that both MGU and UoK professionals have the same opinion (mean score: 4.05) about “I believe in my capability to internet ICT use by e-learning”.

Table 3

Variation in Attitude towards E-learning in UoK and MGU

Attitude towards E-learning	University				T	Sig.
	MGU		UoK			
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
It would be easy for me to find information by using e-learning	4.24	0.49	4.20	0.53	0.378	0.706
I have the initiative and motive to learn and use the e-learning system	4.13	0.47	4.03	0.74	0.755	0.452
Using e-learning would improve my course performance	4.18	0.61	4.08	0.66	0.827	0.410
I have a high level of self-confidence about using for e-learning	3.97	0.59	3.88	0.81	0.629	0.531
I am willing to participate in e-learning activities	3.95	0.66	4.12	0.71	1.233	0.221
I believe in my capability to internet ICT use by e-learning	4.05	0.57	4.05	0.67	0.056	0.956
I found e-learning easy to use	4.13	0.53	3.94	0.72	1.435	0.154

5.4 Preference in Use of E-learning Materials

Table 4 shows preference in use of e-learning materials. Majority of the respondents (80.77%) prefer “self-learning” whereas 75.96% of the respondents prefer “instruction by library staff”, 74.04% of the respondents preferred “through course” about 73.08% of the respondents said “online instruction”. From the table 69.23%, 66.35% and 62.50% respectively friends, from literature and information literacy programme

Table 4

Preference in Use of E-learning Materials

Method of Learning about Use of E-learning Materials	N	%
Self-learning	84	80.77
Instruction by library staff	79	75.96
Through course	77	74.04
Online instruction	76	73.08
Friends	72	69.23
From literature	69	66.35
Information literacy programme	65	62.50

5.5 Problems Faced in the Effective Utilisation of E-learning Materials

Table 5 shows problems faced in the effective utilisation of e-learning materials. It is evident from the study that 61.54% of the respondents agreed to “Inadequate training in e-learning application”, 20.19% of the respondents strongly agreed to this, and 12.50% and 5.77% of the respondents are respectively neither agreed nor disagreed and disagreed with the statement, and it possessed the first rank (mean score: 3.96). “Lack of infrastructure” got the second rank (mean score: 3.77), where 12.50% of the respondents strongly agreed, 62.50% agreed. 14.42% neither agreed nor disagreed, 10.58% were disagreed, and none of the strongly disagreed with the statement. “Lack of support from authorities for implementing e-learning in library” got the third rank (mean score: 3.54), From the study, it reveals that “Lack of initiative from professional association to conduct specialised training programmes” got the fourth rank (mean score: 3.38). “Lack of coordination among library staff” got the fifth rank (mean score: 3.30). “No support from administration in training library professional” got the sixth rank (mean score: 3.28). “Lack of interest on the part of users” got the seventh rank (mean score: 3.14).The statements “Lack of scope for library professional due to e-learning” that possessed eighth rank (mean score: 3.06), and “Fear of e-learning applications” that possessed ninth rank (mean score: 2.92).It is inferred from the study problems faced in the effective utilisation of e-learning application is Inadequate training in e-learning applications

Table 5

Problems Faced in the Effective Utilisation of E-learning Materials

Problems Faced in Utilisation of E-Learning Materials		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD	T	Sig.
Inadequate training in e-learning applications	N	21	64	13	6	0	3.96	0.75	13.085	0.000
	%	20.19	61.54	12.50	5.77	0.00				
Lack of infrastructure	N	13	65	15	11	0	3.77	0.80	9.766	0.000
	%	12.50	62.50	14.42	10.58	0.00				
Lack of support from authorities for implementing e-learning in the library	N	15	45	25	19	0	3.54	0.95	5.753	0.000
	%	14.42	43.27	24.04	18.27	0.00				
No support from administration in training library professional	N	12	29	40	22	1	3.28	0.96	2.962	0.004
	%	11.54	27.88	38.46	21.15	0.96				
Lack of coordination among library staff	N	10	33	39	22	0	3.30	0.91	3.331	0.001
	%	9.62	31.73	37.50	21.15	0.00				
Lack of initiative from professional association to conduct specialised training programmes	N	11	38	34	21	0	3.38	0.93	4.129	0.000
	%	10.58	36.54	32.69	20.19	0.00				
Fear of e-learning applications	N	6	29	24	41	4	2.92	1.03	-0.761	0.448
	%	5.77	27.88	23.08	39.42	3.85				
Lack of interest on the part of users	N	4	40	28	31	1	3.14	0.93	1.584	0.116
	%	3.85	38.46	26.92	29.81	0.96				
Lack of scope for library professional due to e-learning	N	9	27	33	31	4	3.06	1.03	0.570	0.570
	%	8.65	25.96	31.73	29.81	3.85				

5.6 Variation in Problems Faced in Utilisation of E-learning Materials among LIS Professionals in UoK and MGU

Table 6 shows variation of problems faced in the effective utilisation of e-learning materials in UoK and MGU. By analysing the above table, it could be inferred that the mean score of the respondents from MGU “Inadequate training in e-learning applications” is 3.74 and that of UoK is 4.09. The significance level of F value related to ANOVA is 0.020, which is below 0.05, i.e. the result indicated that there is a significant difference in the opinion of respondents from UoK and MGU regarding the statement. But when all the problems faced library professionals in the utilisation of e-learning materials are taken together, there is significant difference among LIS professionals from the both Universities as the significance level of MANOVA is less than 0.05. Hence, the result rejects the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the problems faced in utilisation of e-learning materials among library professionals from various Universities and accepts the alternative hypothesis that there is significant difference in the problems faced in utilisation of e-learning materials among library professionals from various Universities.

Table 6

Variation in Problems Faced in Utilisation of E-learning Materials among LIS Professionals in UoK and MGU

Problems Faced in the Effective Utilisation of E-learning Materials	University				ANOVA		MANOVA	
	MGU		UoK		F	Sig.	F	Sig.
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.				
Inadequate training in e-learning applications	3.74	0.79	4.09	0.70	5.625	0.020	2.127	0.035
Lack of infrastructure	3.79	0.81	3.76	0.80	0.038	0.846		
Lack of support from authorities for implementing e-learning in the library	3.45	0.92	3.59	0.98	0.543	0.463		
No support from administration in training library professional	3.39	1.03	3.21	0.92	0.872	0.353		
Lack of coordination among library staff	3.39	0.89	3.24	0.93	0.670	0.415		
Lack of initiative from professional association to conduct specialised training programmes	3.34	0.97	3.39	0.91	0.075	0.785		

Fear of e-learning applications	2.89	1.01	2.94	1.05	0.045	0.833		
Lack of interest on the part of users	3.05	0.93	3.20	0.93	0.580	0.448		
Lack of scope for library professional due to e-learning	2.79	0.91	3.21	1.07	4.171	0.044		

6 FINDINGS

In this developing, fast-moving world, one can find many opportunities to learn new things in many ways. To provide better services to the users it is essential to know the awareness of LIS professionals. There was no study made previously on awareness on e-learning of LIS professionals in UoK and MGU. The findings of the study will contribute to the benefit of society, considering that the library is the centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information made available to its users. Society has various needs such as education, research, information. Library and LIS professionals serve these needs prominently.

Out of 38 professionals, 19 were "well aware of" e-learning in MGU and whereas out of 66 professionals, 33 were well aware of e-learning in UoK. Out of 38 professionals, 18 (47.37%) professionals were "somewhat aware of" e-learning in MGU whereas out of 66 respondents, 33 (50%) professionals were somewhat aware of e-learning in UoK. Only 2.63% of the respondents don't know about e-learning in MGU and none of the professionals in UoK "don't know" about e-learning.

"It would be easy to find information by using e-learning" possessed first rank (mean score: 4.21) where the majority of the (69.23%) library professionals agreed with the statement. Using e-learning would improve the course performance possessed the second rank (mean score: 4.12) where more than half of the respondents (57.69%) agreed of library professionals agreed with the statement. Majority of the respondents (80.77%) prefer Instruction by 'self-learning' whereas 75.96% of the respondents instructions by 'library staff', 74.04% of the respondents preferred 'through course'. "Inadequate training in e-learning application" got the first rank (mean score: 3.96) more than half (61.54%) of the respondents agreed with the statement. "Lack of infrastructure" got the second rank (mean score: 3.77), where majority of the (62.50%) respondents agreed with the statement.

The finding of the study and suggestions received from the respondents, the investigator provides the following suggestions to improve the awareness and use of e-

learning among LIS professionals is in house training programmes for staff development, Regular attendance of relevant conference /workshop, Going for higher studies or formal courses and Attending professional association meetings improves e-learning.

7 CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to compare the awareness and use of e-learning among LIS professionals in UoK and MGU. E-learning library infrastructure and usage depend on many components. Librarians have the opportunity to improve their professional skill .the tendency Hardware, and software components need regular updation, specialised service providers, economic allotment of financial resources etc. The future lies in developing new understandings between technologists and users. The e-learning of the future will be able to operate over a large variety of information object types - far wider than those maintained today in physical libraries and archive.

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