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Digital Literacy Skills among the Students of the University of Jammu: A Case Study

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Digital Literacy Skills among the Students of the University of Jammu: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The paper highlights the importance and effectiveness of digital literacy skills among the students of the University of Jammu. In today's technological age the students must develop digital literacy skills. This study used a purposive online survey of the students at the University of Jammu. Google form was used to design the questionnaire. The results of the study show that majority of respondents at the University of Jammu were female and were between 23 and 26 years of age group. The analysis of the study shows majority 85.24% of respondents know the concept of digital literacy. In the current digital environment, it was found that the maximum number of respondents prefer internet websites to find information as it is the easy, flexible, and affordable way to find the information. 62.88% of respondents prefer the google search engine as compared to other search engines.

KEYWORDS: Digital literacy, Digital literacy skills, University of Jammu, Online learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Information is a resource that is naturally needed in all human endeavors, crucial for the development of a nation in different areas, without which there would be no developed society. The knowledge society depends upon the information for social, economic, scientific, technological, and industrial development. The term "digital literacy" was coined by Paul Gilster who defined it as, "*a set of skills to access the Internet; find, manage and edit digital information; join in communications, and otherwise engage with an online information and communication network*" (Gilster,1997). The concept of digital literacy involves the group of competencies or skills needed for participation in a knowledge-based society.

Digital literacy is the ability and capability to collect, investigate, and effectively use digital data in a digital or technological society. Digital literacy has become a necessity for people because now we are surrounded by technology, most of the time is spent on digital devices so we should have the digital literacy skills to excel in our respective fields. The digitally literate person has the skills to make the use of digital tools and technologies to select, access, evaluate, use, and communicate information effectively and efficiently. Digital literacy is the most fundamental step for the social and economic development of any developing nation. With the increased importance of technology and digital devices in society, digital literacy is gaining recognition as the most important and valuable tool for lifelong learners. Every day we encounter an increasingly large and diverse sea of information available through the web, mass media, published works, etc.

It is the kind of skill, expertise, and quality of the user to locate, understand, examine, and analyzed the information with the help of digital technology and tools. It includes digital knowledge and its various related skills. In today's times, digital literacy is not only important

for the students in schools, colleges, and universities but it has also become significant and essential for the working people or the people finding jobs. Nowadays, most companies are in the search of people with digital skills. In the time of the 21st-century libraries and librarians are playing a very important role in the efficient and effective execution of the Digital literacy program at institutions. Libraries and Librarians play an important role in educating the people by teaching them information skills effectively and efficiently at all levels of education to enable them to be skilled and informative citizens of the country.

2. UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

Established in 1969, the University of Jammu is situated on the banks of the Tawi river. The NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) has accredited the University of Jammu with an A+ grade. Currently, 155 affiliated colleges from various streams are administrated by the University of Jammu. The university has set up a total of seven off-site campuses (Bhaderwah, Kathua, Kishtwar, Poonch, Ramnagar, Reasi, and Udhampur) has been set up by the university. The University of Jammu offers various undergraduate, postgraduate, and Ph.D. programs in different fields, currently, there are 11 faculties and 38 academic departments. In the year 2021 National Institutional Ranking Framework, the Ministry of Education ranked the University of Jammu 66 in the Universities ranking. The University of Jammu is the first university in India to get the ISO-9001 certificate. (<https://www.jammuuniversity.ac.in/>)

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of Literature is a tool to find out the summary of previous studies in a particular field of research. Many studies are conducted regarding digital literacy previously. For instance, **Esh & Ghosh (2021)** analyzed in their study that LIS students good understanding and knowledge of digital literacy and its related concepts. It also highlights concern on the less proficiency of students in the proper usage of the internet and its related aspects. **Andimuthu & Sinha (2021)** surveyed the central university students and the results showed that the concept of digital literacy has reached the students of urban as well as rural areas of Tamil Nadu and students have well balanced the usage of electronic resources in their respective fields of studies. **Shukla, Kumar, and Verma (2020)** conducted a comparative survey-based study targeting postgraduate students of Mizoram and Tezpur university and the results show that above 60% of students were familiar with the information and digital literacy skills. The majority of respondents are aware of the concept of plagiarism as well as different anti-plagiarism software. **Kumar (2020)** found in his study that there is a need to develop a better e-educational environment among the students to develop digital resource awareness as many of them are not aware of the subject gateways, online databases, and web portals. **Murthy & Kumari (2019)** finds in their study that with the enhancement of technology usage in the current time, most students consult digital resources for their respective studies. **Thakur (2020)** examined the digital literacy skills among the postgraduate students of the school of social science at the University of Jammu. The study shows that the respondents opined themselves very poorly using different digital literacy skills. The majority of the respondents i.e. (80.7%) feel that they possess a good understanding of the functions of a computer and its hardware components.

Above (70%) of the respondents know the different skills such as using to search commands to locate files and recording and edit digital videos

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY ARE:

The main objectives of the study are:

- To examine the familiarity with the concept of digital literacy by respondents.
- To analyze the efficient resources consulted by the respondents to find information related to any topic.
- To identify the various preferred search engines by the respondents.
- To analyze the digital literacy skills in accessing, searching, evaluating, and using the information by respondents.
- To examine the respondents' preference for searching techniques in the electronic environment.

5. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study is to analyze the digital literacy skills among the students at the University of Jammu. This study used a purposive online survey to collect the data from the respondents of the University of Jammu. For the study, a survey-based method was adopted. A questionnaire was prepared with the help of Google forms and was forwarded to the students the filling up their respective opinions. The Google form was sent to the respondents through WhatsApp and E-mail. A total of 393 students responded to the questions and provided complete information regarding the survey. The Google form remained open for submission for the respondents for 15 days from 12th February 2022 to 27th February 2022. The data collected from the respondents were presented in the form of tables, charts, and explanations.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

6.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 and Figure 1 show the characteristics of the respondents of the University of Jammu which includes the gender and age group of the respondents. In the gender-wise distribution of respondents, out of the total 393 respondents, the majority 216 (54.96%) of respondents were female, while the remaining 177 (45.04%) of respondents were male. In the age group-wise distribution of respondents, the majority 145 (36.90%) of the respondents belong to the 23-26 years age group, followed by 111 (28.24%) of respondents belonging to the 26-29 years age group, 86 (21.88%) of respondents belong to the 20-23 years age group and the remaining 51 (12.98%) of respondents were above the above 29 years, age group. In the course-wise classification of respondents, the majority 308 (78.37%) of respondents were pursuing Postgraduate courses, while 45 (11.45%) of respondents were pursuing Undergraduate courses and the remaining 40 (10.18%) of respondents were pursuing M.Phil./ Ph.D. course in the University of Jammu.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondents

Gender-wise distribution of respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	177	45.04%
Female	216	54.96%
Total	393	100%
Age group-wise distribution of respondents		
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
20-23 years	86	21.88%
23-26 years	145	36.90%
26-29 years	111	28.24%
Above 29 years	51	12.98%
Total	393	100%
Course-wise classification of the respondents		
Courses	Frequency	Percentage
UG	45	11.45%
PG	308	78.37%
M.Phil./ Ph.D. Scholars	40	10.18%
Total	393	100%

6.2 Familiarity with the concept of Digital Literacy

Digital literacy is becoming important in the current time because we are living in a technology-driven world and people need to understand the importance of digital skills and they must become digitally literate. Table 2 and Figure 1 illustrate the familiarity of the respondents with the concept of digital literacy. Out of the total of 393 respondents, a large number of 335 (85.24%) of respondents were familiar with the concept of digital literacy while the remaining 58 (14.76%) of respondents were not familiar with the concept of digital literacy at the current time.

Table 2: Familiarity with the concept of Digital Literacy

Familiarity	Frequency	Percentage
Familiar	335	85.24%
Not Familiar	58	14.76%
Total	393	100%

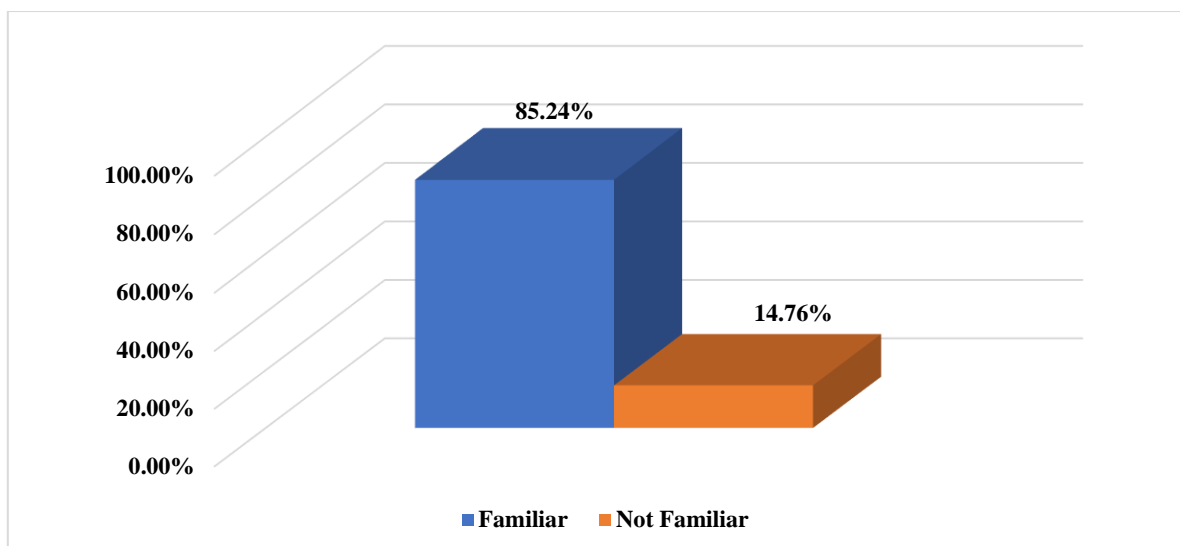


Figure 1: Familiarity with the concept of Digital Literacy

6.3 Preference for Searching Techniques in the Electronic Environment

Table 3 and Figure 2 describe the preferences of the respondents for searching techniques in the electronic environment to find their desired information. The respondents are preferring more than one searching technique for finding their required information. The majority 215 (37.99%) of respondents preferred the title-wise search, followed by 162 (28.62%) of respondents preferred the author-wise search, while 106 (18.73%) and 45 (7.95%) of respondents preferred the subject-wise search and publisher-wise search respectively and the remaining 38 (6.71%) of respondents preferred the other searching techniques such as keyword and phrase searching wise search for finding their required information. It was found that the maximum number of respondents preferred the title-wise search as it is the simplest searching technique for finding the desired information.

Table 3: Preference for Searching Techniques in the Electronic Environment

Searching Technique	Frequency	Percentage
By Title	215	37.99%
By Subject	106	18.73%
By Author	162	28.62%
By Publisher	45	7.95%
Any Other	38	6.71%
Total	566	100%

(Frequency exceeded because respondents choose more than one option)

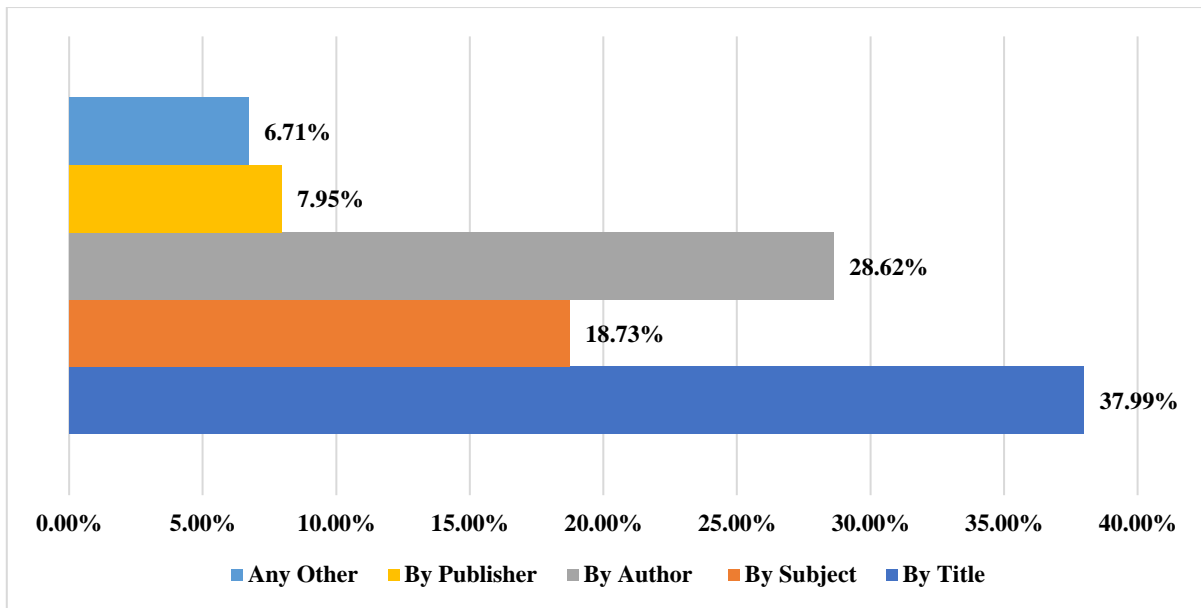


Figure 2: Preference for Searching Techniques in the Electronic Environment

6.4 Efficient resources consulted by the respondents to find out the Information

Table 4 depicts the efficient resources consulted by the respondents to find out the information related to their respective topics. In the current environment, students mostly prefer to consult digital resources. The majority 253 (42.38%) of respondents consult internet websites as it is an easy and fast source for finding the required information, followed by 116 (19.43%) of respondents who consult YouTube channels as various study channels related to different streams and subjects are available on YouTube with free of cost of video material, followed by 78 (13.07%) of respondents consult the journals as journal includes the latest and current information related to its respective fields, while 58 (9.72%), 46 (7.71%) and 36 (6.03%) of respondents consult the databases, subject gateways, and institutional repositories respectively and the remaining 10 (1.68%) of respondents consult the other resources such as study channels, research articles, discussion list/forum, etc. It was found that the maximum number of respondents prefer internet websites to find information as it is the easy, flexible, and affordable way to find information in the current digital environment.

Table 4: Efficient resources consulted by the respondents to find out the Information

Resources	Frequency	Percentage
Internet Websites	253	42.38%
Databases	58	9.72%
Journals	78	13.07%
Institutional repositories	36	6.03%
YouTube Channels	116	19.43%
Subject Gateways	46	7.71%
Any Other	10	1.68%
Total	597	100%

(Frequency exceeded because respondents choose more than one option)

6.5 Proficiency level of Respondents with basic ICT Skills

Table 5 reveals the proficiency level of respondents with basic computer skills. With the change in time and technology, the need for ICT skills has increased among users. Effective and efficient utilization of ICT skills helps the users to get the desired knowledge. The data was collected from the respondents on the 5 points continuous scale: 5: for Excellent, 4: for Good, 3: for Average, 2: for Fair, and 1: for Poor. In Word Applications, the maximum 131 (14.50%) of respondents rate their skills as 3, followed by 4,5,2 and 1 with 97 (24.68%), 74 (18.83%), 57 (14.50%) and 34 (8.65%) of respondents respectively. In Multimedia Applications, the majority 189 (48.09%) of respondents rate their skills as 4, followed by 5,3,2 and 1 with 70 (17.81%), 59 (15.01%), 45 (11.45%), and 30 (7.63%) of respondents respectively. In Spreadsheet Applications, the maximum 117 (29.77%) of respondents rate their skills as 3, followed by 4,2,5 and 1 with 100 (25.45%), 76 (19.34%), 60 (15.27%) and 40 (10.18%) of respondents respectively. In Communication Applications, the maximum 153 (38.93%) of respondents rate their skills as 4, followed by 5,3,2 and 1 with 89 (22.65%), 79 (20.10%), 58 (14.76%) and 14 (3.56%) of respondents respectively. However, in Content Access software, a large number of 148 (37.66%) respondents rate their skills as 4, followed by 3,5,2 and 1 with 104 (26.46%), 81 (20.61%), 42 (10.69%), and 18 (4.58%) of respondents respectively. It was found that the maximum number of respondents were rating skills as 4 (Good) in all the different ICT skills.

Table 5: Proficiency level of Respondents with basic ICT Skills

ICT Skills	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor	Total	Mean	SD	Variance
Word Applications (MS-Word, Libre Writer)	74 (18.83%)	97 (24.68%)	131 (14.50%)	57 (14.50%)	34 (8.65%)	393 (100%)	3.31	3.00	9.02
Multimedia Application	70 (17.81%)	189 (48.09%)	59 (15.01%)	45 (11.45%)	30 (7.63%)	393 (100%)	3.57	3.23	10.46
Spreadsheet Applications (MS-Excel, Libre Calc)	60 (15.27%)	100 (25.45%)	117 (29.77%)	76 (19.34%)	40 (10.18%)	393 (100%)	3.16	2.88	8.28
Communication Applications (email, blogging, video conferencing, etc.)	89 (22.65%)	153 (38.93%)	79 (20.10%)	58 (14.76%)	14 (3.56%)	393 (100%)	3.62	3.27	10.70

Content Access software	81 (20.61%)	148 (37.66%)	104 (26.46%)	42 (10.69%)	18 (4.58%)	393 (100%)	3.59	3.23	10.44
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Note: Data was collected on a 5point scale: 5: Excellent, 4: Good, 3: Average, 2: Fair, and 1: Poor

6.6 Preferred Search Engines by the Respondents

Table 6 and Figure 3 describes the various search engines preferred by the respondents to carry out the internet searches. The search engine is defined as the system software that is designed to allow the users to search the information through the internet. The respondents are using many search engines such as Google, Yahoo, Yahoo, Bing, DuckDuckgo, etc. The majority 293 (62.88%) of the respondents were using the Google search engine, followed by 85 (18.24%) of respondents were using the Bing search engine, while 44 (9.44%) and 24 (5.15%) of respondents were using the DuckDuckgo and Yahoo search engines and the remaining 20 (4.29%) of respondents were using the other search engines such as Baidu.com, live.com, Ask.com for searching the information through the internet. It was found that the maximum number of respondents were using the Google search engine because it is the most popular search engine used all around the world. It also provides the most simple and relevant results compared to other search engines.

Table 6: Preferred Search Engines by the Respondents

Search Engines	Frequency	Percentage
Google	293	62.88%
Yahoo	24	5.15%
Bing	85	18.24%
DuckDuckgo	44	9.44%
Any Other	20	4.29%
Total	466 (100%)	100%

(Frequency exceeded because respondents choose more than one option)

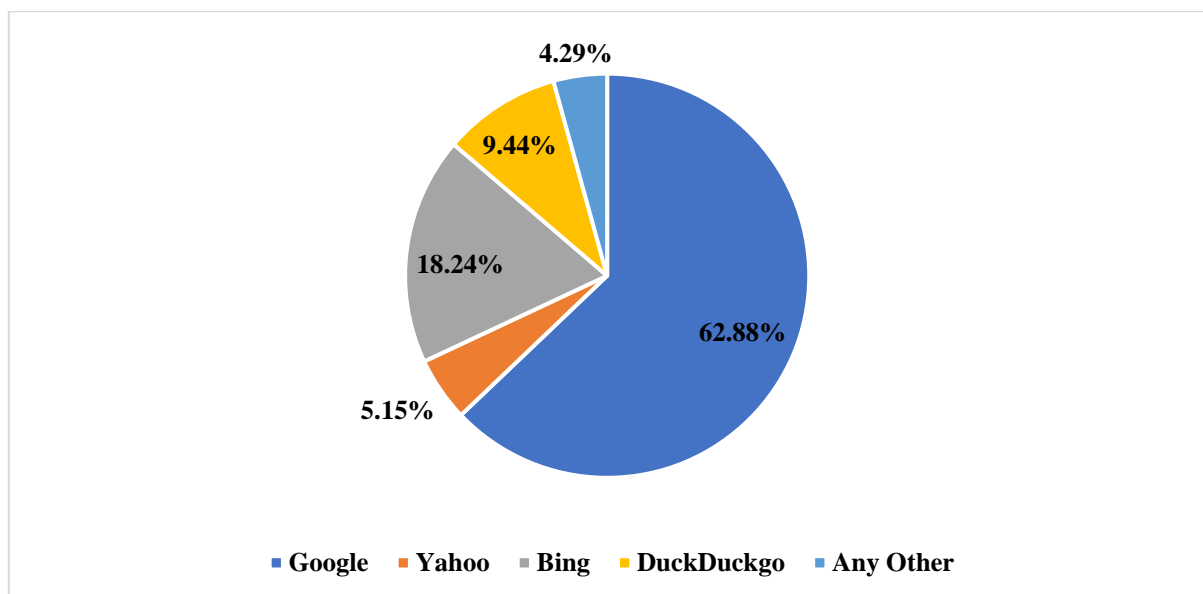


Figure 3: Preferred Search Engines by the Respondents

6.7 Preference for Searching Techniques in the Electronic Environment

Table 7 and Figure 4 illustrate the respondents' preference for searching techniques in the electronic environment. With the abundance of information available on the internet, it has become important the usage of searching techniques by the users to obtain the desired information. Searching techniques eliminate the extra information and provide the users with information related to or close to their topics. The majority 340 (64.39%) of respondents uses the field search (title/URL) to search for their required information, followed by 106 (20.08%) of respondents who uses the Boolean operators (AND, OR, NOT) to search for their required information, while 35 (6.63%) and 28 (5.30%) of respondents uses the truncation and proximity searching to search their required information and the remaining 19 (3.60%) of respondents uses the other searching strategies such as phrase searching, keyword searching, wildcard searching to search their required information. It was found that the maximum number of respondents use the field search (title/URL) to search their required information as it is an easier process to search by simply entering the title, but the respondents must also use and adopt the other strategies as it will help to obtain more specific results in less time.

Table 7: Preference for Searching Techniques in the Electronic Environment

Searching Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Field Search (title/URL)	340	64.39%
Boolean Operators (AND, OR, NOT)	106	20.08%
Truncation	35	6.63%
Proximity Searching	28	5.30%
Any Other	19	3.60%
Total	528	100%

(Frequency exceeded because respondents choose more than one option)

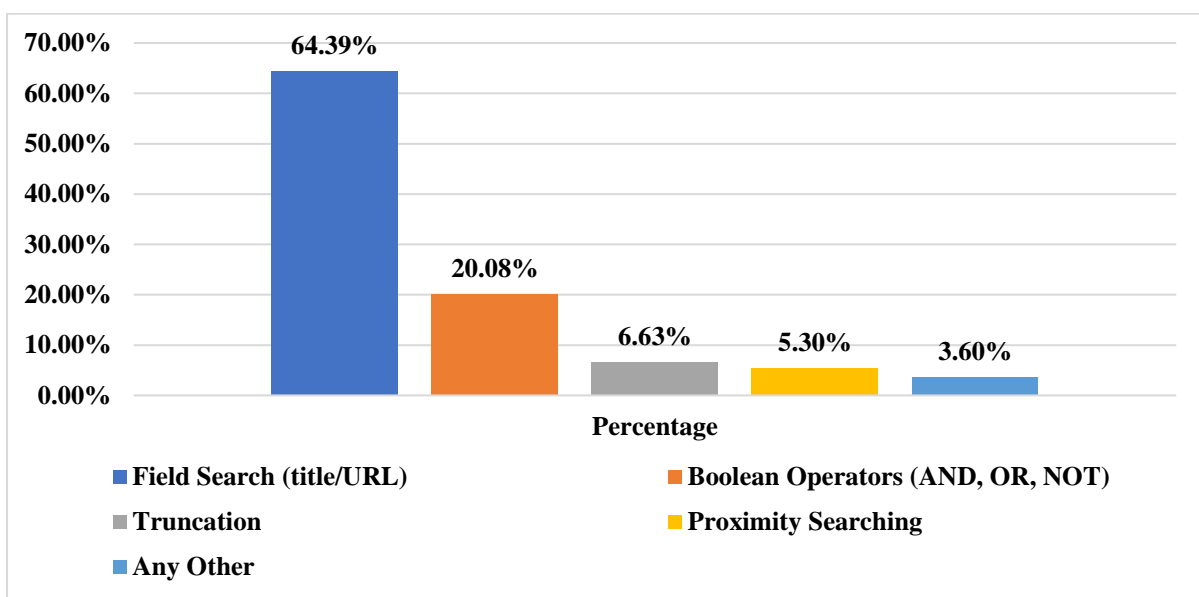


Figure 4: Preference for Searching Techniques in the Electronic Environment

6.8 Authenticity and Reliability of the Digital Resources

Table 8 and Figure 5 discussed the different ways by which the respondents establish the authenticity and reliability of the digital resources. With the fast development of knowledge in different fields, it's become important for users to check the authenticity and reliability of digital resources. The majority 151 (34.16%) of respondents focus on the author under which information is published, followed by 108 (24.43%) of respondents who focus on the frequency of updating of content, while 84 (19.00%), 66 (14.93%) of respondents focus on the coherence among content, purpose of the information respectively and the remaining 33 (7.47%) of respondents focus on the other options such as relevance, accuracy, objectivity, etc. It was found that the maximum number of respondents focuses on the author under which information is published because if the author is the subject expert in his respective field, the users will get the best information and material.

Table 7: Authenticity and Reliability of the Digital Resources

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Author	151	34.16%
Frequency of updation of content	108	24.43%
Purpose of the Information	66	14.93%
Coherence among content	84	19.00%
Any Other	33	7.47%
Total	442	100%

(Frequency exceeded because respondents choose more than one option)

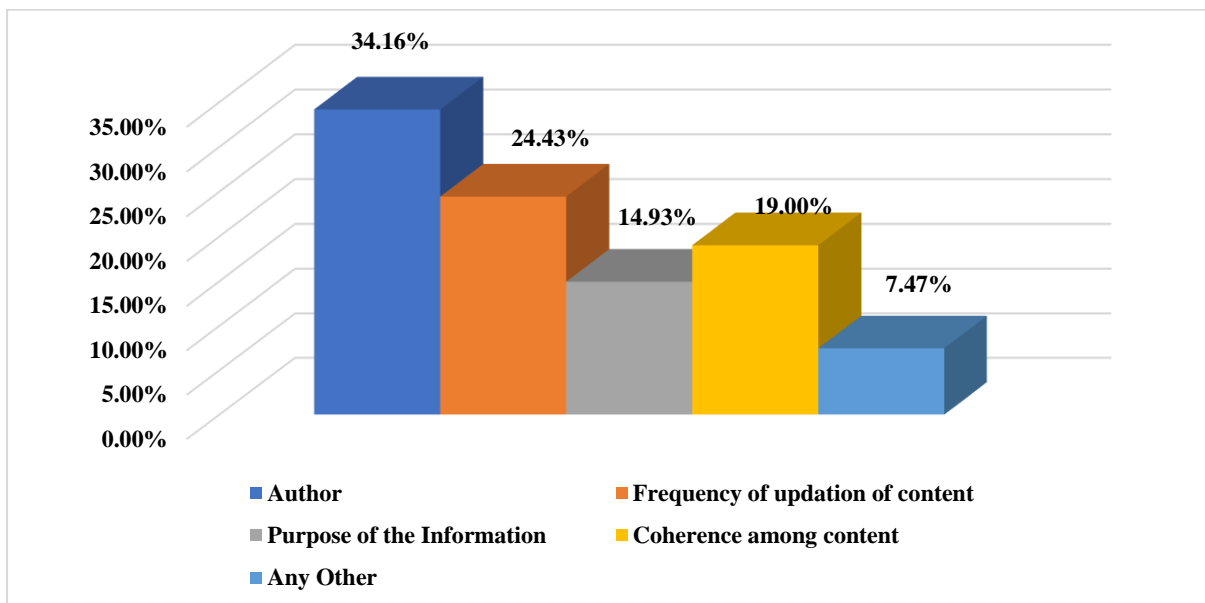


Figure 5: Authenticity and Reliability of the Digital Resources

6.9 Rating their skills in accessing, searching, evaluating, and using the information by the respondents

Table 9 describes the rating skills of respondents in accessing, searching, evaluating, and using the information. The data was collected from the respondents on a 5-point scale with 5: for Excellent, 4: for Good, 3: for Average, 2: for Fair, and 1: for Poor. In accessing information, the majority 128 (32.57%) of respondents rate their skills as 4, followed by 5,3,2 and 1 with 100 (25.45%), 87(22.14%), 57 (14.50%), and 21 (5.34%) of respondents respectively. In searching information, large number of 146 (37.15%) of respondents rate their skills as 4, followed by 5,2,3 and 1 with 97 (24.68%), 68 (17.30%), 65 (16.54%) and 17 (4.33%) of respondents respectively. In evaluation information, the majority 198 (50.38%) of respondents rate their skills as 4, followed by 3,5,2 and 1 with 75 (19.08%), 66 (16.79%), 44 (11.20%) and 10 (2.54%) of respondents respectively. However, in using information, the majority 154 (39.19%) of respondents rate their skills as 4, followed by 3,2,5 and 1 with 98 (24.94%), 53 (13.49%), 52 (13.23%), and 36 (9.16%) of respondents respectively. It was found that the maximum number of respondents were rating skills as 4 (Good) in all the different skills in accessing, searching, evaluating, and using the information.

Table 9: Rating their skills in accessing, searching, evaluating, and using the information by the respondents

Skills	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Mean	SD	Variance
Accessing information	100 (25.45%)	128 (32.57%)	87 (22.14%)	57 (14.50%)	21 (5.34%)	393 (100%)	3.58	3.26	10.62
Searching information	97 (24.68%)	146 (37.15%)	68 (17.30%)	65 (16.54%)	17 (4.33%)	393 (100%)	3.61	3.28	10.76
Evaluating information	66 (16.79%)	198 (50.38%)	75 (19.08%)	44 (11.20%)	10 (2.54%)	393 (100%)	3.68	3.28	10.77
Using information	52 (13.23%)	154 (39.19%)	98 (24.94%)	53 (13.49%)	36 (9.16%)	393 (100%)	3.34	3.02	9.11

Note: Data was collected on a 5point scale: 5: Excellent, 4: Good, 3: Average, 2: Fair, and 1: Poor

6.10 Reference Management Software preferred by the Respondents

Table 10 reveals the various reference management software preferred by the respondents. In today's academic age it is a crucial task for the users to acknowledge or cite all research works in their respective studies. Proper citation management helps in avoiding plagiarism. The majority 136 (30.91%) of respondents use the Mendeley software, followed by 115 (26.14%) of respondents using the Zotero software, while 97 (22.05%), 56 (12.73%), 21 (4.77%) of respondents use the MS-Word, Endnote and RefWorks software respectively and the remaining 15 (3.41%) of respondents use other software such as paperpile, reference manager, etc. for properly citing and managing the references. It was found that the maximum number of

respondents use the Mendeley reference software for managing the references as it is free of cost with a simple and easy interface that helps users to easily access the software. It is also an academic social network that helps users to collaborate with other users.

Table 10: Reference Management Software preferred by the Respondents

Software	Frequency	Percentage
Mendeley	136	30.91%
Zotero	115	26.14%
MS-Word	97	22.05%
Endnote	56	12.73%
RefWorks	21	4.77%
Any Other	15	3.41%
Total	440	100%

(Frequency exceeded because respondents choose more than one option)

6.11 Major Barriers faced by the respondents while using the Digital Resources

Table 11 and Figure 6 discussed the major barriers and challenges faced by the respondents while using digital resources. Using digital resources has its benefits and challenges. The majority of the respondents under the study i.e., 213 (39.89%) feel unorganized element/content in a search page is the major barrier faced by them, followed by 166 (31.09%) of respondents who feel difficulty in finding relevant information is the major barrier faced by them, followed by 91 (17.04%) of respondents feel slow access speed is the major barrier faced by them, while 41 (7.68%) of respondents feel virus problem in accessing information is the major barrier faced by them and the remaining 23 (4.31%) of respondents feel other barriers such as lack of comfort with digital technology, lack of training and awareness of digital resources, etc. are the major barrier faced by them. It was found that the maximum number of respondents feel unorganized element/content in a search page is the major barrier faced by them while accessing digital resources because there is an abundance of information available on the internet and it became difficult for the users to find the right information.

Table 11: Major Barriers faced by the respondents while using the digital resources

Troubles	Frequency	Percentage
Slow access speed	91	17.04%
Difficulty in finding relevant information	166	31.09%
Virus problem in accessing information	41	7.68%
Unorganized element/content in a search page	213	39.89%
Any Other	23	4.31%
Total	534	100%

(Frequency exceeded because respondents choose more than one option)

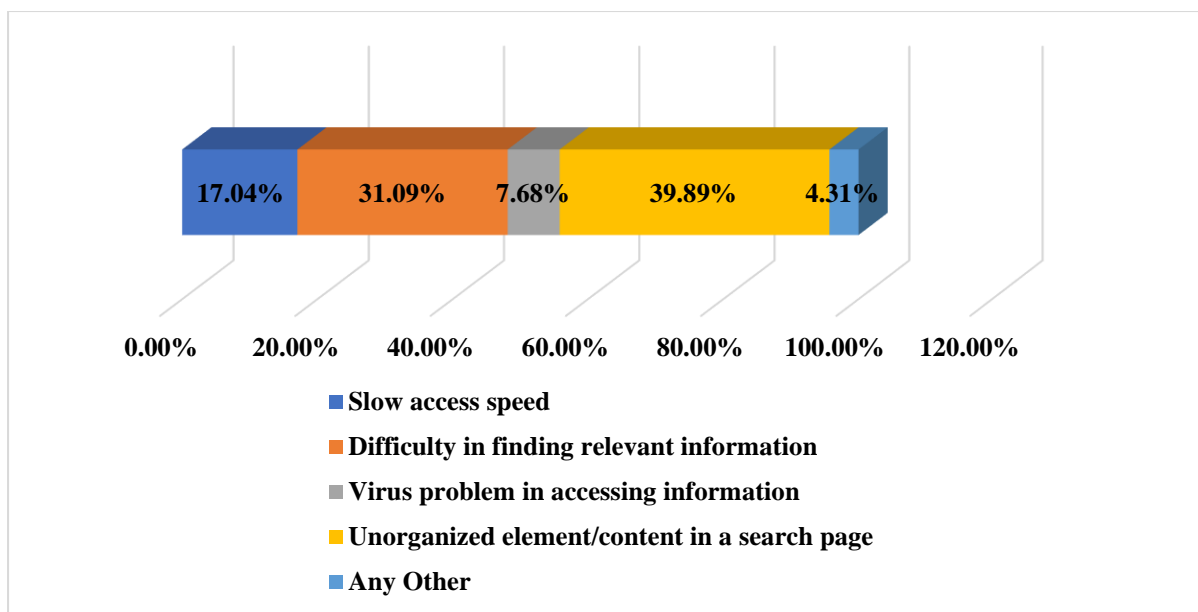


Figure 6: Major Barriers faced by the respondents while using the Digital Resources

7. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Digital literacy has become the foundation for learning in our contemporary environment of continuous technological change. Digital literacy has become an important skill in delivering applicable and relevant services to every citizen of the society, due to the increase of the information available the online or electronic sources. The growth of information resources has also increased the need for digital literacy skills among citizens. The present study highlights that the majority of the respondents at the University of Jammu were female (54.96%) and between the age group 23-26 years age group (36.90%). The majority of the respondents were familiar with the concept of digital literacy. 42.38% of respondents consult the internet websites as it is an easy and fast source for finding the required information. The majority 62.88% of respondents were using the Google search engine because it provides the most simple and relevant results compared to other search engines. The majority 34.16% of respondents focus on the author under which information is published. 64.39% of respondents use the field search (title/URL) to search for their required information. A maximum of 30.91% of respondents use the Mendeley reference software to manage the references. It is free of cost with a simple and easy interface that helps users easily access the software.

8. SUGGESTIONS

The suggestion and feedback on the given data, the following recommendations are given to the respondents of the University of Jammu to help to improve digital literacy skills:

- Interactive sessions and awareness programs should be organized by the University of Jammu for the students at regular intervals.
- All the educational websites should be open and accessed for free without any barrier on the university campus.
- Campus libraries must be upgraded and equipped with more online resources.

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