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Exploring Competitive Collection Usage and Satisfaction Among Students at Yogi Vemana University: A Study

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ABSTRACT:

University libraries play a crucial role in providing access to various information resources that are essential for academic and research development. Apart from the regular collection and services, libraries also need to focus on providing resources for competitive exams, as they help students prepare for various competitive exams and enhance their employability skills. This study focused on a specific population of competitive exam aspirants who use the Yogi Vemana University Library competitive exam section. A structured questionnaire was distributed to 200 students from various disciplines, and 192 (96%) responses were used for analysis. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents were male (61.46%) and aged between 21-25 years (35.42%). Most respondents visit the competitive cell once a week (30.21%), with the most popular exam being the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) group exams (84.90%). The most widely used type of book is the NET-JRF/SLET exam books (84.90%), and the main difficulty faced by respondents is the availability and currency of materials (73.08%). The purpose of this research is to investigate the usage and satisfaction levels of competitive collections and gain insights into how users use these collections. The study suggests that the university allocates a sufficient budget to the library for the development of competitive exam materials. Regular orientation programs and guest lectures are also recommended to create awareness of accessible online competitive sources and the latest information on competitive exams and better meet the needs and expectations of library users.

KEYWORDS: Competitive collections, Competitive exam aspirants, University library, Library services, Yogi Vemana University.

INTRODUCTION:

Academic libraries play a crucial role in supporting academic and research activities, as well as facilitating the all-round personality development of individual users. Academic libraries can help to promote lifelong learning and support the development of individuals at all stages of their academic and professional careers. One of the key roles of academic libraries is to identify and meet the information needs of their users, which includes providing access to relevant and up-to-date resources for academic

and research, as well as resources for competitive exam preparation. The eligibility requirements for these exams differ based on the particular type of exam, with certain exams necessitating a secondary school education level, whereas others may require a post-graduate level. Competitive exams, such as Civil Services (UPSC), National Defence Academy (NDA), Railways, Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Banking, IELTS, TOEFL, UGC-NET, and others, require a range of resources and materials to prepare for competitive exams. Academic libraries often have specialized collections and separate sections dedicated to competitive exam resources to meet the needs of students and other users preparing for these exams. Having a dedicated section for competitive exam resources will help users find the materials they need easily and help promote a culture of academic excellence. It's important for libraries to be aware of these differences and provide resources that are appropriate for the intended audience.

PROFILE OF YOGI VEMANA UNIVERSITY AND CENTRAL LIBRARY:

Yogi Vemana University is a relatively young university that was established in 2006. However, despite its short history, it has already made significant strides in the areas of teaching, research, and service. The university is named after Yogi Vemana, a renowned poet, philosopher, and social reformer who lived in the 17th century. The key strength of Yogi Vemana University is its campus, which is spread over 652 acres of land. The campus has been designed with sustainability in mind, and it boasts a green audit that is well-known among the university community. The campus is home to several buildings, including the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Central Library, which is an important resource for students and researchers. The library has a comprehensive collection of print and electronic resources, which includes books, journals, and databases. Its extensive collection of resources, modern facilities, and range of services make it a hub of academic and research activities and an integral part of the university community. The library has a vast collection of books specifically aimed at helping individuals prepare for academic research as well as various competitive exams, which is a testament to the university's commitment to providing its students with the resources they need to succeed. The current library collection is as follows:

Print Collection:

- ✓ Textbooks: 50,516
- ✓ Periodicals: 91
- ✓ Theses: 324
- ✓ Back volumes: 806
- ✓ Dailies: 13

Electronic Collection:

- ✓ Non-Book Materials: 520
- ✓ E-Journals & Databases
 - J-Gate Complete Core Collection
 - JSTOR
 - Economic & Political Weekly
 - India Business Insight Database
 - DELNET: Web access
 - Turnitin
 - Grammarly
 - Endnote

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

There have been a great number of studies that have investigated the efficacy of various information sources and services for competitive examinations. These include test preparation materials, coaching sessions, internet resources, and mobile apps. Some studies have focused on the use of technology in test preparation, including the use of online forums and social media for sharing study tips and resources. **Kadeeja and Abdul (2021)** highlighted the important role that college libraries play in supporting civil service aspirants in autonomous colleges in Kerala, India. The study findings indicate that most of the libraries failed to create awareness about competitive exam-related awareness as well as information resources for the users. Overall, the study provides valuable insights into the role of college libraries in supporting civil service aspirants in Kerala, India, and highlights areas where libraries can improve their services to better meet the needs of their users. **Kumar and Ramesh (2020)** stressed the importance of public libraries in providing resources for competitive exam aspirants and the need for outreach to attract non-members to the library. The finding that most respondents were interested in preparing for Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission (TNPSC) exams indicates a need for the library to prioritize resources related to this exam. It's encouraging to see that a majority of respondents visited the central library daily for exam preparation, but there may be opportunities to provide additional services or resources to support their preparation efforts. **Balakrishnan and Jeysankar (2019)** provide valuable insights into the digital literacy skills of competitive exam aspirants who use the Anna Centenary Library in Chennai. The study highlights the importance of digital literacy skills for aspirants in the current job market and competitive exam preparation. Recommended organizing training programs on digital literacy skills in using software applications and digital tools that could go a long way in preparing them for competitive exams and future employment opportunities. **Swamy (2018)** conducted a study to examine the adequacy of information sources and services for competitive examinations in Career Information Centers of Public Libraries in Karnataka. Based on the study's findings, it was suggested that these libraries played a crucial role in providing information resources and services for career and job aspirants in the region. The study provided valuable insights into the role of public libraries and career information centers in supporting competitive exam aspirants and highlighted the need for continuous efforts to enhance the adequacy and quality of information sources and services available in these institutions. **Thanuskodi and Kalyani (2018)** conducted a study on the utilization of information resources among Civil Service Exam aspirants in Chennai. The study focused on four dimensions: information competency, awareness, accessibility, and problems. The researchers collected reliable and valid data using a survey method and

a questionnaire. The study found that the Department of School Education in Tamil Nadu should have conducted awareness programs at the high school level to increase students' awareness of civil service exams. It highlighted the need for activity-based learning in the syllabus to enhance students' analytical and logical skills. The study also suggested that the Department of Public Libraries should have strengthened its collections for civil service exams, offered free Wi-Fi, created audio-video rooms, and conducted mock interview sessions for successful mains candidates to improve accessibility and equity in accessing resources and training for civil service aspirants. **Prakashe and Lengure (2017)** investigated the information requirements of students preparing for competitive exams in Arts colleges in Nagpur City. The study recommended allocating budgetary provisions for competitive exam-related materials, organizing regular user orientation programs, creating separate display and notice boards for upcoming exams, and keeping a record of successful students are also useful strategies to enhance library services. **Ramesh and Kumar (2016)** examined the practices and resources utilized by aspiring candidates for competitive exams in the Karaikal District, Tamil Nadu. The study found it interesting that aspiring candidates for competitive exams in the Karaikal District, Tamil Nadu, primarily obtained their resources from training centers rather than other sources. It is suggested that training centers play a crucial role in providing access to relevant resources and support for exam preparation. The study's recommendation to increase awareness and utility of available free resources is also crucial.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this study are:

- To examine the practices followed by aspirants in competitive exams.
- To identify the sources used by the aspirants to procure resources for competitive exams.
- To determine the effectiveness of resources used by competitive exam aspirants.
- To evaluate the level of satisfaction of competitive exam aspirants with the resources they use.

METHODOLOGY:

The study focused on a specific population of competitive exam aspirants who use the Yogi Vemana University Library competitive exam section. The researchers used a structured questionnaire, which was personally distributed to 200 postgraduate students of various disciplines between 22nd March and 15th April 2023. Out of the 200 students, 192 (96%) responded, and their responses were used for the analysis. The collected data was presented in a simple tabular form with percentages.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

1. General Information

AGE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Below 20	41	21.35%
21 - 22	68	35.42%
23 - 25	59	30.73%
26 and above	24	12.50%
	192	100.00%
GENDER		
Male	118	61.46%
Female	074	38.54%
	192	100.00%
DISCIPLINE		
Humanities & Social Science	79	41.15%
Science & Technology	61	31.77%
Management & Commerce	52	27.08%
	192	100.00%
AREA		
Rural	46	23.96%
Urban	62	32.29%
Semi-Urban	84	43.75%
	192	100.00%

Table 1 shows the respondents' demographic data, including their age, gender, discipline, and area. There were a total of 192 participants in the study. In terms of age, most of the respondents 68 (35.42%) were between the ages of 21-22, followed by 23-25 years old 59 (30.73%), and below 20 years old 41 (21.35%). Only a small percentage 24 (12.5%) of respondents were 26 years old and above. Regarding gender, 118 (61.46%) of the respondents were male, followed by 74 (38.54%) were female.

In terms of discipline, the respondents were from various fields of study, with the highest percentage from the Humanities and Social Science 79 (41.15%), followed by Science and Technology 61 (31.77%) and Management and Commerce 52 (27.08%).

Regarding the area of residence, the respondents were from rural 46 (23.96%), urban 62 (32.29%), and semi-urban 84 (43.75%) areas. These demographic data provide a basic understanding of the characteristics of the respondents, which can help interpret the study's results.

2. Frequency of visiting the competitive cell in the library

Frequency	Humanities & Social Science	Science & Technology	Management & Commerce	TOTAL
Daily	25 (13.02%)	11 (5.73%)	19 (9.90%)	52 (27.08%)
Twice a week	19 (9.90%)	08 (4.17%)	13 (6.77%)	40 (20.83%)
Once a week	22 (11.46%)	24 (12.50%)	09 (4.69%)	58 (30.21%)
Fortnightly	13 (6.77%)	18 (9.38%)	11 (5.73%)	42 (21.88%)
Total	79 (41.15%)	61 (31.77%)	52 (27.08%)	192 (100.00%)

Table 2 shows the frequency of visiting the competitive cell in the library based on the respondents' field of study. A total of 192 respondents participated in the survey, with 79 (41.15%) from Humanities and Social Science, 61 (31.77%) from Science and Technology, and 52 (27.08%) from Management and Commerce. The results show that most of the participants 58 (30.21%) visited the competitive cell once a week, followed by those who visit daily 52 (27.08%). The least frequent visitors were those who visited fortnightly 42 (21.88%).

In terms of discipline, the highest frequency of daily visitors was from the Humanities and Social Science 22 (11.46%), followed by Management and Commerce discipline 19 (9.90%), and Science and Technology 11 (5.73%). On the other hand, the highest number of weekly visitors are from Humanities and Social Science 25 (13.02%), followed by Science and Technology 24 (12.50%) and Management and Commerce 9 (4.69%). Overall, the respondents from the Humanities and Social Science field had the highest frequency of visiting the competitive cell in the library, with 79 (41.15%) of them visiting the cell at different frequencies. The Science and Technology field had 61 (31.77%) of their respondents visiting the cell, while the Management and Commerce field had 52 (27.08%) of their respondents visiting the cell. These findings can provide valuable insights for the library in terms of understanding the demand for competitive cell resources and services and developing strategies to better serve users' needs.

3. Preparation for competitive exams

Competitive exams	Humanities & Social Science N=79	Science & Technology N=61	Management & Commerce N=52	TOTAL N=192
Civil Services / UPSC	26 (32.91 %)	11 (18.03 %)	9 (17.31%)	46 (23.96%)
National Defence Academy exams	12 (15.19 %)	16 (26.23%)	13 (25.00%)	41 (21.35%)
Staff Selection Commission (SSC)	49 (48.10%)	18 (47.54 %)	33 (50.00 %)	100 (48.44%)
Indian Railways	38 (62.03 %)	29 (29.51%)	26 (63.46%)	93 (52.08%)
Banking sector exams	52 (65.82%)	36 (59.02%)	43 (82.69%)	131 (68.23%)
NET / JRF / SLET exams	64 (81.01%)	41 (67.21%)	39 (75.00%)	144 (75.00%)
Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) Group exams	71 (89.87%)	49 (80.33%)	43 (82.69 %)	163 (84.90%)

(Multiple Choice)

Table 3 shows that the most popular exam across all three categories is the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) Group exams, with 163 (84.90%) respondents preparing for it. This is followed by NET/JRF/SLET exams with 144 (75.00%) respondents and banking sector exams with 131 (68.23%) respondents. In the Humanities and Social Science category, the highest number of individuals, 71 (89.87%), are preparing for APPSC, while in the Science and Technology category, the number is 49 (80.33%), and in the Management and Commerce category, the majority of individuals, 45 (86.54%) are preparing for the same. The data suggests that there may be regional differences in exam preferences, with APPSC being the most popular among all three categories.

4. Utilization of Competitive exam books

Subject Competitive exams books	Humanities & Social Science N=79	Science & Technology N=61	Management & Commerce N=52	TOTAL N=192
English language (TOEFL, IELTS, etc.)	33 (41.77%)	21 (34.43%)	29 (55.77%)	83 (43.23%)
Quantitative aptitude / Logical reasoning / Current affairs	48 (60.76%)	41 (67.21%)	36 (69.23%)	125 (65.10%)
NET - JRF / SLET exam books	68 (86.08%)	49 (80.33%)	46 (88.46%)	163 (84.90%)
Civil Services / UPSC materials	39 (49.37%)	16 (26.23%)	21 (40.38%)	76 (39.58%)
Group discussion/interview techniques	51 (64.56%)	25 (40.98%)	39 (75.00%)	115 (59.90%)
Specific subject books	62 (78.48%)	39 (63.93%)	31 (59.62%)	132 (68.75%)

(Multiple Choice)

Table 4 shows the distribution of the types of books used by respondents preparing for competitive exams across three major fields: Humanities and Social Science, Science and Technology, and Management and Commerce. The data reveals that the most widely used type of book across all three categories is NET-JRF/SLET exam books, with 163 (84.90%) respondents using them, followed by specific subject books, which are used by 132 (68.75%) respondents. Quantitative aptitude / logical reasoning / current affairs books are the third most popular types of books, with 125 (65.10%) respondents using them. When we look at the category-wise distribution, we find that the Humanities and Social Science category has the highest number of respondents using NET-JRF/SLET exam books, with 62 (78.48%) out of the total respondents in that category using them. Similarly, the Science and Technology category has the highest number of respondents using NET-JRF/SLET exam books, with 49 (80.33%) out of the total respondents in that category using them. Additionally, the Management and Commerce category also has a high proportion of respondents using NET-JRF/SLET exam books, with 46 (88.46%) out of the total respondents in that category using them. The data indicate that respondents preparing for competitive exams across all three categories primarily use NET-JRF/SLET exam books. However, the proportion of respondents using them varies by field of study.

5. Do you face any difficulties while accessing competitive materials?

Opinion	Humanities & Social Science	Science & Technology	Management & Commerce	TOTAL
Yes	71 (36.98%)	46 (23.96%)	39 (20.31%)	156 (81.25%)
No	08 (4.17%)	15 (7.81%)	13 (6.77%)	36 (18.75%)
TOTAL	79 (41.15%)	61 (31.77%)	52 (27.08%)	192 (100.00%)

Table 5 indicates that the vast majority of the participants, 156 (81.25%) answered "yes" to the statement or question presented in the survey. In terms of the different categories, the highest percentage of "yes" responses was in the Humanities and Social Science category with 71 (36.98%), followed by Science and Technology with 46 (23.96%), and Management and Commerce with 39 (20.31%). On the other hand, a relatively small percentage of respondents 36 (18.75%) answered "no" to the question presented in the study. The percentage of "no" responses was lowest in the Humanities and Social Science category with 8 (4.17%), followed by Management and Commerce with 13 (6.77%), and Science and Technology with 15 (7.81%). Overall, the data suggests that the majority of respondents hold a positive opinion towards the statement or question presented in the study and that the Humanities and Social Science category has the highest percentage of positive responses.

6. Difficulties faced while accessing competitive materials

Difficulties	Humanities & Social Science N=79	Science & Technology N=61	Management & Commerce N=52	TOTAL (N= 156)
Books are not properly arranged on the shelves	21 (29.58 %)	13 (28.26 %)	19 (48.72%)	53 (33.97%)
The available books are not updated as per the current Syllabus	55 (77.46 %)	31 (67.39%)	28 (71.79%)	114 (73.08%)
Lack of infrastructure to sit and read inside the library atmosphere	42 (59.15 %)	28 (60.87%)	16 (41.03%)	86 (55.13%)
The borrowing facility is not allowed for competitive books	59 (83.10%)	32 (69.57%)	21 (53.85%)	112 (71.79%)

(Multiple Choice)

Table 6 shows the difficulties faced by individuals preparing for competitive exams in the Humanities and Social Science, Science and Technology, and Management and Commerce fields. The available books are too old and not updated as per the current syllabus: This was the most common difficulty faced by respondents across all three categories, with 114 (73.08%) of the total respondents reporting this issue. The borrowing facility is not allowed for competitive books. This was the second most common difficulty faced by respondents, with 112 (71.79%) of the total respondents reporting this issue. Lack of infrastructure to sit and read inside the library atmosphere: This was the third most common difficulty faced by respondents, with 86 (55.13%) of the total respondents reporting this issue. Books are not properly arranged on the shelves. This was a difficulty faced by a significant proportion of respondents in the Management and Commerce category 53 (48.72%), but less so in the other two categories.

Overall, the data suggest that the main challenges respondents face when accessing competitive materials are the availability and currency of materials, as well as borrowing restrictions and inadequate infrastructure.

7. Satisfaction Level on Competitive Collection

1 = Satisfied 2= Neither satisfied or Dissatisfied 3 = Dissatisfied

COLLECTION	Humanities and Social Science N=79			Science and Technology N=61			Management and Commerce N=52			TOTAL (N=192)		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
English language (TOEFL, IELTS, etc.)	19 (24.05%)	38 (48.10%)	22 (27.85%)	8 (13.11%)	29 (47.54%)	24 (39.34%)	9 (17.31%)	25 (48.08%)	18 (34.62%)	27 (14.06%)	92 (47.92%)	64 (33.33%)
Quantitative aptitude / Logical reasoning / Current affairs	42 (53.16%)	28 (35.44%)	9 (11.39%)	13 (21.31%)	28 (45.90%)	20 (32.79%)	23 (44.23%)	14 (26.92%)	15 (28.85%)	55 (28.65%)	70 (36.46%)	44 (22.92%)
NET - JRF / SLET exam books	38 (48.10%)	25 (31.65%)	16 (20.25%)	32 (52.46%)	17 (27.87%)	12 (19.67%)	18 (34.62%)	22 (42.31%)	12 (23.08%)	70 (36.46%)	64 (33.33%)	40 (20.83%)
Civil Services / UPSC materials	14 (17.72%)	46 (58.23%)	19 (24.05%)	13 (21.31%)	22 (36.07%)	26 (42.62%)	15 (28.85%)	26 (50.00%)	11 (21.15%)	27 (14.06%)	94 (48.96%)	56 (29.17%)
Group discussion/interview techniques	10 (12.66%)	30 (37.97%)	39 (49.37%)	18 (29.51%)	31 (50.82%)	12 (19.67%)	11 (21.15%)	24 (46.15%)	17 (32.69%)	28 (14.58%)	85 (44.27%)	68 (35.42%)
Specific subject books	31 (39.24%)	22 (27.85%)	26 (32.91%)	21 (34.43%)	18 (29.51%)	22 (36.07%)	12 (23.08%)	27 (51.92%)	13 (25.00%)	52 (27.08%)	67 (34.90%)	61 (31.77%)

Table 7 displays data on the satisfaction level of competitive collection among students in three different fields indicating the order of level of satisfaction. Overall, the majority of respondents across all three fields are satisfied with NET-JRF/SLET exam books 70 (36.46%), followed by Civil Services/UPSC materials 94 (48.96%), and then group discussion/interview techniques 68 (35.42%) respectively, selecting them as their first choice. In the Humanities and Social Science category, the highest number of respondents, 42 (53.16%), are satisfied with quantitative aptitude /logical reasoning/current affairs, while in the Science and Technology category, the highest number of respondents, 32 (52.46%), are satisfied with NET-JRF/SLET exam books. In the Management and Commerce category, the majority of respondents, 23 (44.23%), are satisfied with quantitative aptitude /logical reasoning/current affairs.

FINDINGS:

- The majority of the respondents, 68 (35.42%), were between the ages of 21 and 25.
- Most of the respondents, 118 (61.46%) were male.
- The preponderance of respondents, 79 (41.15%) were from the Humanities and Social Science.
- The largest share of respondents came from semi-urban areas, 84 (43.75%).
- The largest proportion of respondents, 58 (30.21%), reported visiting the competitive cell once a week, while 52 (27.08%) visited daily.
- The most popular exam across all categories is the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) Group exams, with 163 (84.90%) respondents preparing for it.
- The second most popular exam across all categories is the NET/JRF/SLET exams, with 144 (75.00%) respondents preparing for them.
- The most widely used type of book across all three categories is the NET-JRF/SLET exam books, with 163 (84.90%) respondents using them, followed by specific subject books, which are used by 132 (68.75%) respondents.
- The majority of respondents hold a favorable opinion towards the statement or question presented in the study, 156 (81.25%), with Humanities and Social Science students having the highest percentage of positive responses, 71 (36.98%).
- The main difficulties most respondents face when accessing competitive materials are the availability and currency of materials, 114 (73.08%).
- The majority of respondents across all three fields are satisfied with the NET-JRF/SLET exam books, 70 (36.46%).

SUGGESTIONS:

The Yogi Vemana University authorities need to allocate a sufficient budget to the library for the development of competitive exam materials, as well as for the provision of digital gadgets and apps that enable students to practice and test their knowledge in the competitive world. By doing so, the library can become a valuable resource for students who are preparing for competitive exams.

It is mandatory and important for the university authorities to establish a collaborative working relationship between the competitive exam cell authorities and

the library staff members. By doing this, it can be ensured that both the requirements of users are fulfilled and students are provided with the necessary resources and assistance to excel in their challenging examinations.

Furthermore, regular orientation programs and guest lectures should be conducted in the university to create awareness of accessible online competitive sources and the current notification and changes in the competitive exams. This will help students stay up-to-date with the latest information and developments in the competitive exam landscape and make informed decisions about their exam preparation.

CONCLUSION:

Yogi Vemana University's library is committed to supporting academic and professional growth by providing access to academic and research resources, specialized collections, and competitive exam preparation materials. A recent study was conducted to improve the range of services provided, investigate user satisfaction levels and gather data-driven insights. The library recognizes the importance of competitive exam preparation and allocates a sufficient budget for development and provides digital gadgets and apps for practice. Collaboration between the competitive exam cell authorities and the library staff members, orientation programs, and guest lectures can create awareness and empower students to achieve academic excellence. The library continually assesses and evaluates its offerings and services to improve user satisfaction and empower students to achieve their full potential.

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