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Exploring Gender Disparities in the Utilization of Electronic Information Sources among Indian Doctoral Students: A Thematic Analysis

Jaswinder Pal Singh Mr.
Punjabi University, jaswindermehrok@gmail.com

Baljinder Kaur Dr.
Punjabi University, baljinderpup@gmail.com

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Jaswinder Pal Singh,
Researcher
Department of Library and Information Science
Punjabi University, Patiala
Librarian
Central Library,
Chitkara University, Punjab, India
jaswindermehrok@gmail.com

Dr. Baljinder Kaur,
Assistant Professor
Department of Library and Information Science
Punjabi University, Patiala
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4909-8948
baljinderpup@gmail.com

Abstract

Electronic information sources are essential for PhD students in India's expanding higher education system. This cohort's gender differences in electronic information resource access, use, and choice are examined. Inclusion and diversity in digital academia need understanding how gender affects information-seeking and resource utilization. Academic equity policies are informed by qualitative thematic analysis of gender inequality. In the digital age, higher education gender equality is crucial. This study examines Indian PhD students' electronic information use by gender. Gender-related information-seeking habits and preferences are examined to find impediments and opportunities for equal access and use. Scholarship must

address gender-related information access and use inequities to include women in academia and student resource access. This study examines electronic information resource use, literacy, and barriers in different male and female participants. Surveys illustrate how people choose, evaluate, and use digital information. Many of the analyzed population uses E-journals, E-databases (Research & Statistical Database), and E-databases (Abstracting & Indexing). Interestingly, resource consumption gender discrepancies were minor, indicating equitable access. Despite skill category differences, respondents were confident in their information literacy. These self-assessments demonstrate the need for information literacy training to empower users. Our study found that low computer skills, internet access, power supply instability, and information overload impede technology use. Address these issues for equitable digital resource access and use. This study suggests treating and supporting male and female users. Future study should address socio-economic and cultural resource use issues to create an inclusive and informed digital environment.

Keywords: Gender, Electronic Information Sources

Introduction

In the increasingly digitized landscape of higher education, the utilization of electronic information sources plays a pivotal role in shaping the academic pursuits of doctoral students in India. This study endeavours to delve into the intricate dynamics of gender disparities that manifest in the access, use, and preferences regarding electronic information resources among this cohort. As academia advances, understanding how gender affects doctorate students' information-seeking and resource use is crucial for equitable research. This research uses theme analysis of qualitative data to illuminate gender-related inequities and influence academic inclusiveness and diversity initiatives.

Creating an egalitarian and varied academic environment in higher education requires gender inclusion (Ankamah et al., 2022; Ogunbodede et al., 2022; Sonzini, 2023). Gender inclusion is examined in this study on Indian doctorate students' use of electronic information sources. This research examines how gender affects information-seeking habits and preferences to identify problems and opportunities for equal access and use. In a digital age where information is crucial to scholarship, recognizing and addressing gender-related access and usage discrepancies is crucial to gender inclusion in academia and providing doctorate students with the tools they need.

Electronic information resources represent a contemporary solution aimed at facilitating the dissemination of knowledge to a wider audience (Mashaba & Pretorius, 2023). These digital resources are distinguished by their reliability and convenience, offering unparalleled access to timely and pertinent information, surpassing the capabilities of traditional manual search methods (Bisaria, 2018; Ekhaguosa, Vincent Osamuyimen et al., 2022). To harness the expansive array of electronic resources effectively, it is imperative that students acquire and cultivate the requisite skills. As posited by (Khan et al., 2017), the competencies necessary to fully leverage the potential of electronic resources far surpass those demanded by their print counterparts. These proficiencies encompass a profound understanding of database structures, the nuanced input procedures essential for computer-based searches, and a grasp of the intricate interconnections between various search instructions (Erb & Erb, 2015; Galbraith et al., 2016; Herrera, 2016).

Gender disparities in skills, behaviours, and accomplishments have consistently held a prominent position in the realm of academic inquiry and public discourse across various domains, including education, social dynamics, economics, politics, healthcare, governance, and religion (Kim, 2010; Sethi & Panda, 2012; Sharma, 2018). Over recent decades, these gender-related discrepancies have emerged as one of the most salient trends in the field of

education. As elucidated by (Bladek, 2019; Schredl et al., 2019), gender-related concerns have been at the forefront of impassioned public conversations, particularly within the sphere of higher education. Chohan has astutely noted that the gender gap in the digital divide and the influence of emerging technologies, particularly on economic and political dynamics, assume paramount significance (Chohan et al., 2018). Moreover, as affirmed by Hamutumwa, gender remains a pertinent factor when assessing the utilization of electronic databases (Hamutumwa et al., 2017). The study conducted by Farmer & Murphy and Swain & Panda among high school students notably revealed that attitudes towards computers and their usage tended to exhibit gender-based variations (Farmer & Murphy, 2009; Swain & Panda, 2009). Waldman (2003) further highlighted that the use of electronic information resources by faculty members was notably influenced by factors such as the computing skills of academic professionals. Notwithstanding the breadth of research dedicated to gender-related issues, substantial progress toward achieving gender equality and equitable access to resources has remained notably constrained (Dhiman, 2021; Gul et al., 2016; Hamutumwa et al., 2017).

In an investigation conducted by Falloon in 2020, which examined students' perceptions regarding the utilization of electronic resources, it became evident that students represent the primary user demographic of these digital libraries, and their composition is notably diverse (Falloon, 2020). This observation raised a pertinent question for researchers, prompting an exploration into the potential gender-based disparities in students' attitudes toward the use of electronic resources within these library settings. This inquiry assumes significance due to the fact that electronic information resources offer valuable opportunities for both male and female students to fulfil their informational requirements in the pursuit of their educational aspirations and future pursuits.

As posited by Schredl in his work in 2019, it is intrinsic to recognize that the fundamental role of a university encompasses the preservation of existing knowledge, the dissemination of

knowledge through pedagogy, and the generation of new knowledge through research endeavours (Schredl et al., 2019). Within this context, the university library assumes a pivotal role as the primary instrument for safeguarding knowledge (Donets, 2019; Otolo et al., 2018). This is achieved through a methodical, systematic, and all-encompassing process of acquiring human communication records in various formats, whether published or unpublished, in written or oral forms (Popoola & Adedokun, 2023; Rohmiyati et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). The incorporation of electronic information resources within university libraries serves the strategic purpose of diversifying the repository of accessible information within these institutions (Brown, 2022). Furthermore, it augments the value of the content by facilitating digital accessibility, thereby ensuring that students and researchers can conveniently access these resources at any time and from any location (Ogunbodede et al., 2022).

Objectives of the Study

In light of the aforementioned contextual backdrop and the paucity of adequately documented empirical data, this study endeavours to establish potential disparities, if they exist, in the utilization of electronic information resources among male and female undergraduate students. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess the levels of information literacy skills among doctoral students in universities, differentiated by gender.
2. To investigate the various search strategies employed by doctoral students in the study cohort, with a gender-based distinction.
3. To ascertain the criteria utilized by doctoral students for evaluating information resources, taking into account their gender.

4. To examine the patterns of usage of electronic information resources within the library context, differentiating between male and female undergraduate students.
5. To identify and analyse the challenges encountered by students while accessing and utilizing electronic resources, delineating any gender-related discrepancies in these experiences.

Hypotheses

H0.1: There exists no statistically significant gender disparity in the information literacy skills exhibited by male and female doctoral students.

H0.2: There exists no statistically significant gender difference in the utilization of electronic information resources among male and female doctoral students.

Review of Related Literature

Research into gender differences reveals the intricacies involved in disentangling innate traits from learned behaviours and underscores the challenge of gauging the extent to which stereotyping influences individuals' perceptions and cognitive disparities. In a study by Parabhoi (2022) on gender disparities concerning the utilization of electronic information resources, it became apparent that the gender digital divide was evident in the notable underrepresentation of female users of e-resources when compared to their male counterparts (Parabhoi et al., 2022). Similarly, research by Zhang (2023) examining the gender analysis of electronic information resource usage indicated a correlation between gender and electronic resource utilization, with male students displaying a higher likelihood of using such resources compared to female students (Zhang et al., 2023). Contributing to this discourse, Villarroya & Boté-Vericad (2023) observed that females encountered more challenges in locating information online, expressed lower levels of confidence and comfort in using the internet, accessed the internet less frequently than males, and employed a narrower range of internet

applications (Villarroya & Boté-Vericad, 2023). Consequently, Agosto (1999) concluded that the socio-cultural context of gender continued to engender greater computer anxiety and lower self-efficacy among women (Agosto et al., 2007). Similarly, Agosto (2007) identified female computer inexperience as a significant factor influencing their attitudes and anxieties toward computers (Agosto et al., 2007).

In a related study examining gender and age differences in computer use and attitudes among students, Rohmiyati (2023) noted substantial disparities in the attitudes of male and female students toward computer applications, which bore implications for their career and educational pursuits (Rohmiyati et al., 2023). This aligns with the findings of Herrera, 2016, Zajdel & Michalcewicz-Kaniowska, 2018 and Zhang et al., 2023), all them underscored the existence of gender differences in internet usage patterns between men and women (Herrera, 2016; Zajdel & Michalcewicz-Kaniowska, 2018; Zhang et al., 2023). Additionally, Sweeper & Smith (2010) contended that gender, being a cultural and social construct, could manifest in various qualities and behaviours exhibited by individuals (Sweeper & Smith, 2010). In their research, they reported that women exhibited slightly lower internet usage rates than men, with a higher proportion of rare use or non-use of electronic information resources and a lower proportion of frequent utilization, further emphasizing the influence of gender on electronic resource engagement.

Sethi & Panda in 2012 underscored the presence of a statistically significant distinction between males and females concerning the utilization of electronic information resources, with females encountering greater challenges in locating information online compared to their male counterparts (Sethi & Panda, 2012). Correspondingly, Bladek's research in 2019 also identified women as less frequent and less intensive users of the internet (Bladek, 2019). Furthermore, Hsiao & Tang investigation in 2015, focusing on gender disparities in computer

literacy, revealed a positive correlation between higher levels of computer literacy and increased utilization of library resources (Hsiao & Tang, 2015).

In a complementary vein, CLARK and Terry study in 1989 and 1996 posits that gender serves as a predictor of Internet use and attitudes, with males displaying a proclivity for recreational internet browsing, while females tend to employ it primarily for work-related purposes (CLARK et al., 1989; Terry, 1996). Additionally, Goh's research in 2011 discerned that women commonly encounter greater difficulties in locating information online than men (Goh, 2011). Otolo 2018 in study revealed a statistically significant preference among men for the Internet as their primary information source (Otolo et al., 2018). Men also exhibited a predilection for non-paid electronic information resources, in contrast to women, who demonstrated a higher frequency of usage of licensed resources (Zajdel & Michalcewicz-Kaniowska, 2018). Galbraith findings in 2019 underscored a high frequency of electronic information resource usage among both male and female postgraduate students (Galbraith et al., 2019). Erb & Erb, in their 2015 investigation, identified a recurring theme of underutilization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), with females often cited as more adversely affected by the lack of relevant competencies than their male counterparts (Erb & Erb, 2015).

On the contrary, Carle & Anthes, argument in 1999 contends that the gender gap in internet usage becomes more pronounced when intensive web use is considered (Carle & Anthes, 1999). Women, according to research, are substantially less likely to be frequent users, equally likely to be infrequent users, and more likely to fall into the category of intermediate users (Zhang et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the study conducted by Alshankity, in 2008, examining gender differences in Internet usage among faculty members in Saudi Arabia, did not identify a significant gender difference in overall internet usage (Alshankity et al., 2008). This aligns with the findings of Akman & Mishra, 2010 and Wang, 2010 who reported that

neither age nor gender exhibited substantial correlations with computer anxiety, computer confidence, or liking (Akman & Mishra, 2010; Wang, 2010). Subsequently, Lin & Yu & Wang in 2008 and 2010 observed that females displayed a higher frequency of internet use than males in their examination of gender differences in computer literacy among medical students in selected southern Nigerian Universities (Lin & Yu, 2008; Wang, 2010).

Methodology and Population

Aligned with our research objectives, we crafted a meticulously structured questionnaire to gather data from doctoral students who utilize electronic resources. This questionnaire included a range of inquiries aimed at assessing participants' awareness of and engagement with electronic resources. To conduct this phase of the research, we distributed a total of 500 questionnaires in accordance with the study's parameters, ensuring an equal distribution of 250 questionnaires to both male and female participants. Subsequently, we meticulously collected the distributed questionnaires upon completion, prioritizing data completeness and validity. Of the questionnaires received, 220 were from female participants, and 210 were from male participants. To maintain equal weight age, we selected a total of 210 questionnaires from each gender based on a "first come, first received" basis. The collected data then underwent a rigorous process encompassing analysis, tabulation, interpretation, and presentation, all of which are comprehensively detailed within this research paper.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Population, sample size, Questionnaire administered, received and selected

Gender	Male	Female	Total
Distribution	250	250	500

Received	230	235	465
Selected	230	230	460

Table 1 outlines key statistics regarding the study's population, sample size, questionnaire distribution, reception, and selection process. Initially, 500 questionnaires were distributed, with an equal allocation of 250 each to male and female participants, constituting the total population. In terms of responses received, a total of 465 questionnaires were collected, representing a combined response rate of 93%. Specifically, 92% of the distributed questionnaires to males and 94% of those distributed to females were returned. Subsequently, 460 questionnaires were selected for inclusion in the study, with an equitable distribution of 230 questionnaires from both male and female participants. This careful selection process maintains gender balance in the final dataset, providing a representative foundation for our research analysis.

Table 2: Information Literacy Skills Possessed

Statement	Gender	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Ability to formulate questions based on my information needs	Male	95 (41.30%)	80 (34.78%)	25 (10.87%)	20 (8.70%)	10 (4.35%)
	Female	105 (45.65%)	70 (30.43%)	20 (8.70%)	20 (8.70%)	15 (6.52%)
Ability to recognize a need for information	Male	110 (47.83%)	70 (30.43%)	30 (13.04%)	15 (6.52%)	5 (2.17%)

resources	Female	120 (52.17%)	60 (26.09%)	20 (8.70%)	20 (8.70%)	10 (4.35%)
Ability to distinguish potential information resources	Male	100 (43.48%)	70 (30.43%)	30 (13.04%)	20 (8.70%)	10 (4.35%)
	Female	110 (47.83%)	60 (26.09%)	30 (13.04%)	20 (8.70%)	10 (4.35%)
Ability to construct strategies for locating information	Male	105 (45.65%)	75 (32.61%)	25 (10.87%)	15 (6.52%)	10 (4.35%)
	Female	115 (50%)	65 (28.26%)	25 (10.87%)	15 (6.52%)	10 (4.35%)
Ability to evaluate information obtained from different sources	Male	95 (41.30%)	80 (34.78%)	30 (13.04%)	15 (6.52%)	10 (4.35%)
	Female	105 (45.65%)	70 (30.43%)	30 (13.04%)	15 (6.52%)	10 (4.35%)
Ability to organize, apply and communicate information	Male	90 (39.13%)	75 (32.61%)	30 (13.04%)	20 (8.70%)	15 (6.52%)
	Female	100 (43.48%)	70 (30.43%)	25 (10.87%)	20 (8.70%)	15 (6.52%)
Ability to organize information for practical application	Male	85 (36.96%)	70 (30.43%)	35 (15.22%)	25 (10.87%)	15 (6.52%)
	Female	95	65	30	25	15

		(41.30%)	(28.26%)	(13.04%)	(10.87%)	(6.52%)
Ability to use information in critical thinking and problem solving	Male	100 (43.48%)	75 (32.61%)	30 (13.04%)	15 (6.52%)	10 (4.35%)
	Female	110 (47.83%)	70 (30.43%)	25 (10.87%)	15 (6.52%)	10 (4.35%)
Ability to synthesize and build on existing information	Male	90 (39.13%)	80 (34.78%)	30 (13.04%)	20 (8.70%)	10 (4.35%)
	Female	100 (43.48%)	70 (30.43%)	30 (13.04%)	20 (8.70%)	10 (4.35%)
Ability to integrate new information into an existing body of knowledge	Male	85 (36.96%)	80 (34.78%)	30 (13.04%)	25 (10.87%)	10 (4.35%)
	Female	95 (41.30%)	70 (30.43%)	30 (13.04%)	25 (10.87%)	10 (4.35%)
Ability to locate and access information resources	Male	110 (47.83%)	70 (30.43%)	30 (13.04%)	15 (6.52%)	5 (2.17%)
	Female	120 (52.17%)	60 (26.09%)	30 (13.04%)	15 (6.52%)	5 (2.17%)

Male and female respondents' information literacy abilities are exhaustively dissected in the table, which displays the percentage distribution of responses across skill levels, ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree." Here is a comprehensive analysis: In the domain of

"Ability to Formulate Questions Based on Information Needs," male and female respondents are remarkably in agreement, with approximately 87% (male) and 91% (female) indicating a robust capacity to formulate questions based on their information needs. A minor segment, however, displays reluctance or disapproval. Similarly, the "Ability to Recognize a Need for Information Resources" demonstrates a similar pattern, with more than 95% of respondents from both genders indicating a high level of confidence in their information literacy regarding recognizing the necessity for information resources by either agreeing or strongly agreeing. The "Ability to Distinguish Potential Information Resources" demonstrates significant proficiency, with approximately 73% of male respondents and 74% of female respondents indicating that they agree or firmly agree that they are competent in this regard. Furthermore, respondents affirm their competence in developing information discovery strategies, with approximately 78% of male and female participants indicating approval or strong agreement. This aptitude is universally acknowledged by the surveyed cohort. Consistent with the statement "Ability to Evaluate Information from Different Sources," more than 75% of male and female respondents' express agreement or high agreement, indicating a strong sense of competence in this domain. However, the confidence level regarding the "Ability to Organize, Apply, and Communicate Information" is marginally lower, with approximately 71% of male respondents and 74% of female respondents expressing agreement or firm agreement. This suggests a minor reduction in confidence in comparison to other abilities. Similarly, the majority of respondents are comfortable with the statement "Ability to Organize Information for Practical Application," with approximately 66% of male respondents and 69% of female respondents agreeing or strongly concurring. In spite of this, this proportion is relatively lower than that of other proficiencies. With approximately 76% of both male and female respondents expressing surety in their "Ability to Use Information in Critical Thinking and Problem Solving," respondents exhibit a high degree of confidence in

this capability. Over 73% of male and female respondents firmly agree or concur with the statement "Ability to Synthesize and Build on Existing Information," indicating a moderate propensity for combining and expanding upon prior information. Furthermore, regarding the "Ability to Integrate New Information into an Existing Body of Knowledge," a substantial majority of respondents, approximately 72% respectively, both male and female, express agreement or strong agreement. The respondents' "Ability to Locate and Access Information Resources" is well-established, with approximately 78% of males and 78% of females indicating agreement or significant agreement. In conclusion, the data demonstrates that the majority of respondents have strong information literacy abilities. Although there are minor variations in confidence levels across different proficiencies, the vast majority of respondents are optimistic about their abilities in these domains, with only a small percentage displaying reluctance or disagreement. Additionally, gender disparities in these self-assessments appear to be negligible, indicating that males and females in the surveyed population possess a reasonable level of information literacy proficiency.

Table 3 Use of electronic information resources

Rating	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	Male	110	47.8%
	Female	120	52.2%
	Total	230	50%
Often	Male	80	34.8 %
	Female	90	39.1%
	Total	170	36.9 %

Not often	Male	40	17.4 %
	Female	20	8.7 %
	Total	60	13 %

The frequency with which male and female respondents utilize electronic information resources is exhaustively analysed in Table 3. Notably, 86.9% of the total sample utilizes these resources "Very often" or "Often," according to the data. Notably, 50% of respondents indicated that they utilize electronic information resources "Very often," with a marginally higher proportion of females (52.2%) attributing this to them than males (47.8%). Additionally, 36.9% of respondents indicated that they utilized these resources "Frequently," with a greater proportion of females (39.1%) than males (34.8%). Conversely, a lower proportion of respondents (13%) indicated that they employ electronic information resources "Not often," with males outnumbering females in this category (17.4% vs. 8.7%). In general, the results indicate that the sampled population utilizes electronic information resources to varying degrees, and that there are gender differences in utilization patterns. These insights are beneficial for comprehending user preferences and adapting the provision of information resources to satisfy the diverse needs of users.

General Evaluation: Indicating a high level of utilization, the majority of respondents (86.9%) utilize electronic information resources "Very often" or "Often." A greater proportion of females than males utilize electronic information resources "Very frequently," indicating that females may rely more heavily on these resources to fulfil their informational requirements. The fact that a smaller proportion of females than males utilize electronic information resources "Not often" suggests that females are less likely to utilize these resources

infrequently. To cater to the requirements of various user groups, it is crucial to consider these usage patterns when designing and delivering access to electronic information resources.

Table 4: Criteria for Evaluating E Resources

Statement		Gender	Yes	No
Accuracy	1. Is the information reliable? 2. Is the information error-free? 3. Is the information based on proven facts? 4. Can the information be verified against other reliable sources?	Male	160 69.57%	70 30.43%
		Female	175 76.09%	55 23.91%
		Total	335 72.83%	125 27.17%
Authority	1. Who is the author? 2. Does he or she have the qualifications to speak/write on that topic? 3. Is the author affiliated with a reputable university or organization in this subject field?	Male	175 76.09%	55 23.91%
		Female	190 82.61%	40 17.39%
		Total	365 79.35%	95 20.65%

Objectivity	1. What is the intended purpose of the information? 2. Is the information facts or opinions? 3. Is the information biased?	Male	190 82.61%	40 17.39%
		Female	180 78.26%	50 21.74%
		Total	370 80.43%	90 19.57%
Currency	1. When was the information published? 2. Is the information current or out-dated? Does currency matter in this topic?	Male	200 86.96%	30 13.04%
		Female	210 91.30%	20 8.70%
		Total	410 89.13%	50 10.87%
Coverage	1. Does the information covered meet your information needs? 2. Does it provide basic or in-depth coverage?	Male	210 91.30%	20 8.70%
		Female	220 95.65%	10 4.35%
		Total	430 93.48%	30 6.52%

Prior to deciding whether to incorporate your findings into your literature review, it is crucial to assess the resources' relevance and value. Web-based resources necessitate a more thorough evaluation to ensure their quality. A thorough examination of the criteria used to

assess electronic resources across multiple dimensions is presented in Table 4, emphasizing gender-specific responses. Detailed point-by-point analysis with percentage breakdowns is provided below: With respect to precision: The accuracy of information, which evaluates its dependability, absence of errors, factual basis, and verifiability, was deemed positive by both male and female respondents. The information was deemed accurate by 69.57 percent of male respondents, while 30.43 percent expressed scepticism. 76.09% of females are of the opinion that the information is accurate, while 23.91% express reservations. Overall, 72.83 percent of respondents believe the information to be accurate, while 27.17 percent are concerned. The credibility of information sources, including the credentials of authors and their affiliations with reputable institutions, is the primary focus of the Authority criterion. 76.09% of males believe the information originates from credible sources, while 23.91% are sceptical. The level of trust expressed by females is greater, with 82.61% responding positively and 17.39% responding negatively. Overall, 79.35% of respondents hold the information in high regard, while 20.65% continue to express scepticism. Objectiveness: Objectivity evaluates the purpose of information, including whether it presents facts or opinions, as well as whether it demonstrates bias. Male and female participants are equally confident in the information's objectivity. 82.61% of males consider the information to be objective, while 17.39% suspect bias. 782.64 percent of females consider the information to be objective, while 21.74 percent believe it may contain bias. In general, 80.43 percent of respondents believe the information to be objective, while 19.57 percent are concerned about bias. Currency: Currency assesses the relevance and timeliness of information in relation to the subject at hand. The information is deemed current by an overwhelming majority of respondents, both male (86.96%) and female (91.30%). 13.04% of males and 8.70% of females, respectively, are of the opinion that the information is obsolete. Overall, 89.13% of respondents consider the information to be current, while 10.87% consider it to be obsolete. Coverage: Coverage assesses whether the

information satisfies the requirements of the participants and offers either basic or comprehensive coverage. Both sexes indicate a high level of satisfaction with the information coverage. Among men, 91.30 percent believe the information fulfils their requirements, while 8.70 percent believe it does not. 95.65% of females believe the information satisfies their requirements, while only 4.35% believe it is insufficient. In general, 93.48 percent of respondents are satisfied with the coverage, while 6.52 percent believe it is inadequate. The analysis concludes that the majority of respondents, irrespective of gender, have confidence in the electronic resources, especially in terms of their precision, authority, objectivity, currency, and coverage. There are, however, some variations in perceptions, with females frequently expressing marginally greater trust in these criteria than males. In general, this information indicates that the reliability and quality of the assessed electronic resources were viewed favourably.

Table 5: Type of Electronic Information Resources Frequently Used

Statement	Gender	Yes	No
E-journals	Male	180 (78.3%)	50 (21.7%)
	Female	190 (82.6%)	40 (17.4%)
	Total	370 (80.4%)	90 (19.6%)
E-books	Male	140 (60.9%)	90 (39.1%)
	Female	160 (69.6%)	70 (30.4%)
	Total	300 (65.2%)	160 (34.8%)
E-databases (Research & Statistical	Male	200 (87.0%)	30 (13.0%)

Database)	Female	180 (78.3%)	50 (21.7%)
	Total	380 (82.6%)	80 (17.4%)
E-databases (Patent Resources)	Male	120 (52.2%)	110 (47.8%)
	Female	140 (60.9%)	90 (39.1%)
	Total	260 (56.5%)	200 (43.5%)
E-databases (Abstracting & Indexing)	Male	180 (78.3%)	50 (21.7%)
	Female	200 (87.0%)	30 (13.0%)
	Total	380 (82.6%)	80 (17.4%)
E-dissertation and theses	Male	200 (87.0%)	30 (13.0%)
	Female	180 (78.3%)	50 (21.7%)
	Total	380 (82.6%)	80 (17.4%)
E-newspapers	Male	90 (39.1%)	140 (60.9%)
	Female	110 (47.8%)	120 (52.2%)
	Total	200 (43.5%)	260 (56.5%)

The gender distribution of the categories of electronic information resources that are frequently utilized is thoroughly analysed in Table 5. The percentage and quantity of respondents who selected "Yes" and "No" for each resource category are displayed. The following is a detailed examination of the table:78.3% (180) of males indicated that they utilized electronic journals, while 21.7% (50) did not. E-journal usage was reported by 82.6% (190) of females, while 17.4% (40) did not. A substantial majority of respondents (80.4%)

indicated that they utilized electronic journals, while 19.6% indicated that they did not utilize this resource.60.9% (140) of males indicated that they utilized electronic literature, while 39.1% (90) did not. A total of 69.6% (160) of females reported utilizing electronic literature, while 30.4% (70) did not. 65.2% of respondents indicated that they utilized electronic literature, while 34.8% did not. E-databases (Research & Statistical Database): A significant majority of males used E-databases of this type (87.0% or 200), while only 13.0% (30) did not. 78.3% (180) of females indicated that they utilized these electronic databases, while 21.7% (50) did not. In this category, 82.6% of respondents utilized electronic databases, while 17.4% did not. Patent Resources E-databases: Of males, 52.2% (120) indicated that they utilized Patent Resources E-databases, while 47.8% (110) did not. 60.9% (140) of females utilized these resources, whereas 39.1% (90) did not. 56.5 percent of respondents utilized electronic databases for patent resources, while 43.5 percent did not. In terms of abstracting and indexing, 78.3% (180) of males indicated that they utilized E-databases, while 21.7% (50) did not. 87.0% (200) of females utilized these resources, while 13.0% (30) did not. In this category, 82.6% of respondents utilized electronic databases, while 17.4% did not.87.0% (200) of males reported the use of electronic dissertations and theses, while 13.0% (30) did not. These resources were utilized by 78.3% (180) of females, while 21.7% (50) did not. The utilization of electronic dissertations and theses was observed in 82.6% of the respondents, whereas the remaining 17.4% did not partake in such utilization. The utilization of electronic newspapers was reported by a significant majority of males, specifically ninety-nine percent (39.1%). Conversely, a smaller proportion of males, amounting to sixty-nine percent (140), did not engage in the use of electronic newspapers. The aforementioned resources were employed by a total of 47.8% (110) of the female participants, whereas the remaining 52.2% (120) did not make use of said resources. According to the survey results, a majority of the participants, specifically 56.5%, reported that they refrained from utilizing

electronic newspapers. Conversely, a minority of the respondents, precisely 43.5%, indicated that they did engage with electronic newspapers. The table effectively presents the diverse levels of utilization of various electronic information resources among respondents of both genders. Based on the survey data, it appears that individuals tend to make more frequent use of E-journals, E-databases (Research & Statistical Database), and E-databases (Abstracting & Indexing) compared to E-newspapers. The aforementioned findings offer valuable insights into the preferences and tendencies exhibited by the sampled population in relation to the utilization of electronic resources.

Table 6: Constrains To the Use of Electronic Information Resources

Statement	Gender	Yes	No
Inability to seek, obtain and evaluate information	Male	60 (26.09%)	170 (73.91%)
	Female	50 (21.74%)	180 (78.26%)
	Total	110 (47.83%)	350 (52.17%)
Lack of requisite computer use skills	Male	80 (34.78%)	150 (65.22%)
	Female	70 (30.43%)	160 (69.57%)
	Total	150 (65.22%)	310 (134.78%)
Lack of knowledge of availability of resources	Male	110 (47.83%)	120 (52.17%)
	Female	100 (43.48%)	130 (56.52%)
	Total	210 (91.30%)	250 (108.70%)
Unstable power supply	Male	120 (52.17%)	110 (47.83%)

	Female	130 (56.52%)	100 (43.48%)
	Total	250 (108.70%)	210 (91.30%)
Poor internet connectivity / Failing to download or browsing	Male	145 (63.04%)	85 (36.96%)
	Female	155 (67.39%)	75 (32.61%)
	Total	300 (65.22%)	160 (34.78%)
Inadequate facilities for using e- resources	Male	175 (76.09%)	55 (23.91%)
	Female	180 (78.26%)	50 (21.74%)
	Total	355 (77.17%)	105 (22.83%)
Do not know URLs	Male	110 (47.83%)	120 (52.17%)
	Female	120 (52.17%)	110 (47.83%)
	Total	230 (50.00%)	230 (50.00%)
Getting too much information	Male	130 (56.52%)	100 (43.48%)
	Female	140 (60.87%)	90 (39.13%)
	Total	270 (58.70%)	190 (41.30%)
Failed to access full text	Male	70 (30.43%)	160 (69.57%)
	Female	60 (26.09%)	170 (73.91%)
	Total	130 (56.52%)	330 (43.48%)

In relation to the matter of "Inability to Seek, Obtain, and Evaluate Information," it is noteworthy to mention that a significant proportion of female respondents (43.48%) and

nearly half of male respondents (47.83%) have reported encountering challenges in this particular facet. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a significant majority of the participants demonstrated an astute awareness of the matter pertaining to "Inadequate Competence in Computer Utilization." According to the citation provided, it has been observed that approximately 65.22% of male participants and 69.57% of female participants have identified this particular factor as a constraint. Furthermore, the participants have astutely recognized a noteworthy impediment, namely the "Deficiency in Awareness Regarding the Accessibility of Resources." A significant percentage of female participants, amounting to 56.52%, and a substantial majority of male participants, totalling 91.30%, indicated a lack of awareness regarding the availability of resources. Furthermore, it is worth noting that a significant proportion of the participants, to be precise, 91.30% of the female respondents and 108.70% of the male respondents, expressed their concern regarding the issue of "Unstable Power Supply." Furthermore, it is imperative to highlight a significant impediment that emerged, namely the challenge pertaining to insufficient internet connectivity or the arduousness encountered in the processes of downloading and browsing. It has been duly noted that a considerable cohort of individuals, encompassing both genders, encountered significant challenges in relation to this specific facet. Moreover, it is worth noting that a significant percentage of the male participants (76.09%) as well as the female participants (78.26%) expressed their observation regarding the limitation pertaining to "Inadequate Facilities for Utilizing Electronic Resources." The constraint regarding the lack of knowledge of URLs was uniformly distributed among individuals of both genders, with an equivalent proportion of male and female participants acknowledging this particular challenge. The phenomenon of "excessive information consumption" has been observed to be prevalent, as a considerable percentage of male (58.70%) and female (41.30%) participants have reported experiencing a sense of being overwhelmed due to the copiousness of accessible information. In summary, it

is worth noting that a significant proportion of female participants (43.48%) and a majority of their male counterparts (56.52%) expressed encountering challenges when attempting to access comprehensive research materials. In summation, the data elucidated in this scholarly investigation signifies that the participants encountered numerous limitations when employing electronic information resources. The study revealed several limitations, including insufficient computer proficiency, difficulties with internet connectivity, and concerns regarding power supply. It is of notable importance to acknowledge that a considerable portion of both male and female participants conveyed comparable limitations, namely "Insufficient Infrastructure for Accessing Electronic Resources" and "Information Overload," thereby indicating that these impediments are frequently encountered. Moreover, it is of utmost importance to address and overcome these limitations in order to optimize the utilization of electronic resources among individuals of all genders.

Conclusion

The findings and comments of this study shed light on the consumption of electronic information resources, perceptions of barriers, and differences between male and female respondents. E-journals, E-databases (Research & Statistical Database), and E-databases (Abstracting & Indexing) are the most common types of electronic resources, but a significant percentage of the population that was sampled uses electronic resources. Most respondents were confident in their information literacy capabilities, with some slight variances. Importantly, gender differences in self-assessments were modest, suggesting that the surveyed population had similar information literacy levels. E-resource issues for both genders were also examined. Computer skills, internet connectivity, power supply, and information overload are these restrictions. Effective use of electronic information resources and equal access for all users require addressing these difficulties. This study shows that gender differences in electronic information resource use in Indian universities are

unjustified. Gender equality is especially important when using electronic resources and improving ICT skills. The study suggests that gender differences in electronic resource utilization are insignificant. Based on this study's findings, we recommend:

- Promote Gender-Neutral Access to Electronic Information Resources: The study shows that gender discrepancies in accessing Electronic Information Resources are minor. Schools should give equal access to these tools to all pupils, regardless of gender. University libraries should actively eradicate gender-based resource access restrictions.
- Increase Information Literacy Education: Universities should invest in information literacy programs to help men and women use computerized information resources. These programs should help students of both genders navigate and use digital resources by improving their information-seeking skills.
- Increase ICT Skill Development: The study emphasizes the importance of ICT skills in maximizing electronic resource use. All students should have access to comprehensive ICT skill development programs at universities. These programs should teach basic computer skills, internet literacy, and sophisticated digital resource management skills.
- Keep Resources Available: University management should commit to continuous electronic resource and database subscriptions. This gives pupils of all genders current, relevant information. It's crucial to remove gender-related obstacles to these services.
- Encourage male and female students to become computer-literate and encourage a digital learning environment. This includes campus computers, online courses, and digital tools in the curriculum.

- Tech concerns like internet access and power supply volatility can affect resource use, thus institutions should address them. Providing a reliable technical infrastructure will help all students use electronic resources.
- Set up regular monitoring and evaluation of resource utilization trends. This will identify gender-related inequities and enable timely solutions.
- Social and Cultural Factors: Study how socioeconomic and cultural factors affect electronic information resource use. Understanding these effects can guide inclusive interventions.
- Encourage Self-Initiated Resource Access: Let pupils access electronic resources themselves. This involves encouraging personal inquiry and internet resource awareness.
- Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing: Encourage students, educators, and library staff to exchange electronic resource use knowledge and experiences. This collaborative approach fosters academic support and inclusion.

In higher education, these guidelines encourage gender equality and inclusivity in electronic information resource use, improving the academic experience for all students. This study should be considered when building interventions and support systems to improve information literacy and reduce restrictions. Male and female users can use electronic information resources more effectively and fairly by tailoring resources and training. Further research might examine socio-economic and cultural aspects that affect information literacy and resource use. This ongoing study will guarantee that electronic information resources continue to promote research, teaching, and decision-making across broad user groups.

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Jaswinder Pal Singh is based at the University Library, Chitkara University, Punjab, India, and is a doctoral student of the Department of Library and Information Science, Punjabi University, Patiala, India. He is a University Librarian with more than 16 years of experience. His research on Media and Information Literacy, Knowledge Sharing, Plagiarism, Information retrieval, knowledge management in libraries, collections development and way finding in libraries.

Dr. Baljinder Kaur has been working as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Library & Information Science, Punjabi University, Patiala. She has 10 years of teaching and research. She also has 16 years of experience in Library. She obtained her BLIS and MLIS from Kurukshetra University and got her PhD on Use and Impact of Electronic Resources in Technological institutions of India from Thapar University, Patiala, India. She was council member of the IATLIS for the term 2014-2017 and Joint Secretary of the IATLIS for 2017-20. She has attended various national and international seminars, conferences, workshops, training workshop. Many publications are to her credit in various national and international journals, conference proceedings and edited books. She has also presented many papers in the National/International Conferences. A research paper at the University of Toronto, Canada is also in her credit. She has supervised four PhDs and five students have been pursuing PhD under her guidance. She is a life member of the associations like Indian Library Association (ILA), Indian Association of Teachers of Library and Information Science (IATLIS), and Punjab Library Association (PLA). Her areas of specialization are: Media and Information

Literacy (MIL), Knowledge Organization and Information Processing, Information and Communication Technology, Library Resources and Services, and Dewey decimal classification Practices, Users Study, E-Resources and Services, Resource Sharing, Information and Communication Technology.