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Information Seeking Behavior of Research Scholars at MUET Library & Online Information Center, Jamshoro: A Study

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Abstract

The aim of this paper was to study the behavior of the information seeking by the researcher scholars of the at Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, Jamshoro, Sindh Pakistan. The overall purpose of the research study was to find out the awareness and information requirements by the researcher for the research purposes which were provided by the Higher education commission digital library. The data was collected from 230 researchers with the help of questionnaire through the Google online form. Data was analyzed in SPSS software. Research findings were majority of researchers were use electronics resources, text books and reference books. Another major finding was students facing the problems to access the electronics resources for information seeking so they need the proper guidance for data which support them in the research.

Keyword: Information Seeking, Information Retrieval, Users Studies, Jamshoro, researchers, Sindh.

INTRODUCTION

Today's era is an information technology era of the world development. The most important and very useful element of today's society is information. Searching for information is a process in which people participate in order to progress and to change the state of their knowledge. It is also an important cognitive function associated with learning and problem solving, which is sometimes seen as a "higher cognitive process". [1] "Searching for information" is a term that describes the ways in which individuals seek to evaluate, select and use information. In the search for new information, the individual may interact with different people, representative tools, and computer-based information systems. The "information search behavior" differs from the actual "information need". "Information need" is a subjective, relative concept in the mind of the person who is suffering Information has now become one of the basic needs of man on every side.

There is no field of human activity in the world wherein information is not a component. It has an important role in decision making, planning and every developmental activity. In this highly competitive environment, those who possess right information at the right time will only succeed. Information professionals are always keen to find out why and how users seek information to enhance their information provision. Technological advances and innovations that have taken place over the years have transformed libraries from merely a warehouse of printed materials to a world of information. The library is no longer a stagnant reservoir of books/documents. Information and communication

technologies (ICTs) have brought fundamental changes to the way libraries collect, preserve and disseminate information.

Every year Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Jamshoro is spending huge money to give trainings to students as well as research scholars for available electronic resources which are provide by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan for the development of research. MUET library also provided awareness trainings regarding library resources and services on weekly base scheduled for students and also requested by researcher and students. MUET library also build the Google online form for the feedback from users regarding the services.

In this study, an attempt was used on investigation, consultant and questionnaire, personal approach as professional and filed work questionnaire distribution on information seeking behavior of researchers in the changing library situation. There are four main faculties of this university were used for study.

Review of Related Literature

This article briefly reviews few studies conducted abroad as well as in kingdom of Saudi Arabia on users' studies of information seeking behavior in chronological order. [10] Examined the use of electronic information resources and service(EIRS) among the teachers and students of Sir Chhotu Ram Institute of Engineering and Technology, Meerut (UP) India. The major findings of this study are: majority of teachers and students have been aware about electronic information resources and services. Majority of users, that is, 20(50%) of the teachers and 30(50%) of the students use EIRS for study and more than 60% of users in the library were using e-journals simultaneously. The information display on the computer screen and printed form of document is found to be the most preferred for reading articles. Nearly half of the respondents are satisfied or quite satisfied with available resources of the library [11] Conducted a study of the information seeking behaviour of faculty members of BPS Women University. The author found majority of respondents faced the common problem while seeking information that was unavailability of information. Significant findings were reported with the biggest changes because of increased utilization of electronic methods for searching, sharing, and storing scholarly content, as well as for utilizing library services. [12] Carried out a survey on the utilization of CD-ROM databases by the users of NISCAIR, New Delhi. The major findings of the study were: observed that all the user communities use CD-ROM databases as a useful source of information to satisfy their information needs. The frequency of using CDROM databases as a useful on the work situation of users. It has also found that e-journals were the most popular online resources among users. 22% users were facing problems while using CD-ROM databases unaware of computer technology or lack of computer handling skills. [13] The impact of the use of the Internet search engine with special research on the searches of OPEC in the library of the University of Punjab, Patiala, Punjab (India). The results of the study showed that the behavior of information search among academics varies greatly in the web environment. Of users explore the web to gather relevant information for academic purposes.

The majority were influenced by search engines because they also used OPAC, like the search engines. It is also clear from the study that internet search engines not only affected OPAC users in developed countries, but also impacted upon the less developed countries like India. [14] Fashioned a questionnaire to determine information needs and information-seeking behavior among rural and urban primary health care physicians in Riyadh region. The study found that the physicians in rural areas were less likely to have access to medical and health information than their equivalents in urban areas, particularly for modern sources such as online databases, medical journals and the Internet websites. Further study found, acquiring primary care physicians, particularly in rural areas with access to medical and health

information was very vital in the provision of primary health services. [15] In his paper “Chatbots in the library: is it time?” depicted a pilot at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for a chatbot that answers questions about the library and library resources. The chatbot answers questions from a variety of users from around the world. It has attracted an unexpected number of social chatters, which required some additional metadata to accommodate personal chatting and to guide questions back to the intent of the project. The majority of questions are directional or realistic questions that Pixel can address. The database proved to be a process for building and reviewing with changing office and personnel resources. [16] He revealed four patterns of search for the main information adopted by users of the system of social libraries, ie search, browsing, confrontation and control. Most users tend to combine two or more modes, but each user with a dominant style helps identify them as a researcher, browser, coincidence, or Foreman. While search is the most widely used method, browsers are the most widely used types of information seekers.

Research Objectives

- To identify information seeking behaviors of researchers in MUET LOIC.
- To find out the kind of information used by researchers in MUET-LOIC.
- To identify the purposes of ISB by researchers.
- To find out the problems faced by researchers for during access of information at the MUET-LOIC.

Hypothesis

There is a significant difference in the preference of channels or modes of Information, Literature and Communication among the Researchers of various disciplines.

Research Methodology

This study used questionnaire-based survey method, as many similar studies conducted earlier, have also used this method for data collection. This method is also preferred as it was less time consuming and economical for a scattered population. The questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection. Questionnaires were distributed personally at different departments and at the Central Library of the University to the research scholars and Google form also designed for data collection, Google form email to researchers for data collection. In the study researcher distributed 300 questionnaires with the help of both methods. Received 230 questionnaires from the respondent by both methods of data collection 77% respondents give the respond out of 100%. Data was analyzed in MS Excel and SPSS software.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Data collected through different research methods were examined and interpreted here in tables and figures.

A .The sample

There are large numbers of users ranging from students to teachers. A sample of all user categories was taken to see their opinion on the behavior of searching for information and services provided by the library. The table below shows user categories and sample size of the study.

Status	Numbers	% Percentage
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Teachers	75	33
Students	155	67
Total	230	100

Table 1. Sample Status

In the table 1 shows that 33% (75) of the respondents from total population of the study were faculty members and 67% (155) respondents were students.

B. Library Visit Purpose

Purpose to Visit	% Age (Teachers)	% Age (Students)
For Study	11	53
for Issuance of Books	10	64
To Access Internet in Computer Lab	5	30
For Electronic Resources Access	28	6
For Research support Tools Access	21	2
	33%	67%

Table 2. Library Visit Purpose

The table 2 shows maximum %age of teachers are visiting library for the access of electronic resources which 28%, 21% of respondent teachers are visiting the library for accessing the research support tools (journals, thesis, articles, magazines). Very low ration of teacher are using library computer lab which is only 5%. 11% of teachers are visiting library for the study purpose. In the table 2 part of students maximum 64% form total population are visiting the library for the issuance of books, 53% of respondents are using the library visit for study purpose.

C. Use and awareness of formal resources of information

Information Sources	% Age (Teachers)	% Age (Students)	Tot % age
Textbooks	90	80	83.33
Journals	96	92	93.33
Year books	72	90	84
Thesis/Dissertation	84	74	77.33
Dictionaries	68	82	77.33
Conference Processing/ Seminars	70	70	73.33
Handbook/Manual	76	85	82
Encyclopedias	82	87	85.33
Technical Reports	74	60	64.66
Patents	50	54	52.66
Bibliographic	60	91	80.66

Table 3. Information sources

Table 3 shows that (93.33%) most respondents are used journals as a formal sources of information whereas (83.3%) of respondents used text books, (77.33%) thesis/dissertation, (84%) yearbooks, (77.33%) dictionary, (85.33%) encyclopedia, (82%) manual/hand books, (86%) indexing/abstracting journals proceedings of conferences/seminars similarly. This table also depicts that (76%) used standards, (64.66%) used technical report and (80.66%) used bibliographies as a primary and secondary sources of information.

D. Use and awareness of informal sources of information

Information Sources	% Age (Teachers)	% Age (Students)	Tot % age
Discussion with colleagues	90	75	73.33
Scanning of abstracting & Indexing journal	94	72	79.33
Attain the Seminar/ conference. Workshop etc.	86	78	80.66
Through Telephone query	64	85	78
Through Fax, Email, Whatsapp	68	62	64
Personal Collection	72	68	69.33
University Library	84	80	81.33
Persona Visit to subject expert	74	58	63.33
Writing letters	60	56	57.33
Exhibition visit	50	52	51.33
Through Conversion/ Discussion	60	57	58

Table 4. Use and awareness of Information sources

The table 4 shows that (81.33%) users are use and awareness of informal sources of information like university library whereas (80.66%) users are use and awareness of informal sources of information like attains the international as well as national seminar/conferences, workshop etc. The table also deals with the use and awareness of informal information sources such as (79.33%) Scanning of abstracting & indexing Journals, (78.00%) Telephones, (73.33%) discussion with colleagues and low percentage of informal sources of information like visiting exhibitions, conversation, scanning literature etc.

E. Use and awareness of electronic information resources

Information Sources	% Age (Teachers)	% Age (Students)	Tot % age
Internet based resources	90	92	91.33
E-Journals	62	80	74
E-Books	44	59	54
E-Thesis	30	79	62.66
E-Mail	60	80	74.66
Online Databases	40	85	70
CD-ROM Databases	50	75	66.66

Table 5. Information sources

The table 5 reveals (91.33%) of electronic information resources used by the teachers and students Whereas (74.66%) used by the teachers and students email and e-books as a similar basis. The table also deals with (70.00%) online databases used by users as followed by (66.66%) CD-ROM databases used by the teachers and students. The least numbers of users used electronic information resources such as (62.66%)E-thesis as well (54.00%) of e-books.

F. Information seeking through current contents

Detail	% Age (Teachers)	% Age (Students)	Tot % age
Library Subscriptions	60	66	64
Personal Subscriptions	60	66	64

Journal articlesXeros from library	50	35	40
E-journals Subscription	40	15	23.33
Open Access Journals	64	21	35.33
Document Delivery Services	16	4	8
To Present Research Paper in Seminar/Conference	24	10	14.6
Citation at end of the book chapters	48	29	35.33
Retrospective searching of indexing/abstracting periodicals	24	15	18
personal communication	28	17	20.66
browsing back volumes	36	19	24.66
others	30	18	22
	4	4	4

Table 6. Information seeking through current sources

The table 6 shows that the majority of respondents i.e.(64%) who were seeking Information through journals\periodicals subscribed by the library as well as personal.The table also shows that (40%) respondents who are seeking information through journals\periodicals by Xeroxcopy of subject related information from library. This was the best way to information seeking through open access journals as well as to present research paper in seminar\conference\symposia etc. i.e. (35.33%) similarly. The least number of respondents who were seeking information through personal communication, journals subscription,retrospective searching of indexing/abstracting periodicals,Inter Library Loan etc.

G. Barriers of Information seeking behavior

Detail	% Age (Teachers)	% Age (Students)	Tot % age
Lack of support from library Staff	60	58	58.66
Lack of access to all information	52	36	41.33
Lack of reading materials	36	56	49.33
Lack of Knowledge information	30	29	29.33
Lack of Knowledge for uses of the library resources and services	32	25	27.33
Lack of support from library Staff	20	15	16.67
Lack of time for searching	18	0	6

Table 7.Barriers of Information seeking behavior

The table 7 shows 88(58.66%) teacher and students who was facing problems of information seeking due to lack of time for searching, while 74(49.33%) users have lack of access in reading materials to the library. In this table also deals with the 62(41.33%) users felt to lack of access the seeking of information whereas 44(29.33%) users say due to lack of knowledge for information seeking behavior.The very low percentage of users were facing the problems of information seeking behavior such as lack of organizational information, lack of knowledge for uses of the library resource and services and lack of support from library staffs.

H. Purpose of seeking information

Purpose	% Age (Teachers)	% Age (Students)	Tot % age
For Study	64	28	40

to Solve immediate practical problems	78	92	87.33
To keep up to date	44	22	29.66
To write an article and research paper	30	33	38.66

Table 8.Purpose of Seeking Information

The table 8 indicates that the purpose of information seeking i.e. 131(87.33%) teachers and students who was the most preferred response to solve immediate practical problem. It followed by the reasons that include seeking information for career development, keeping up-to-date and the being to write articles and research papers.

Finding and Conclusions

The analysis and interpretation of data is revealed that characteristics of the information need and information seeking behavior of the teachers and students. The findings evolved out of this study provide sufficient scope of the study of the two groups, while students are using libraries more whereas the reverse affects for teachers whose understanding of Electronic Information Services (EIS) and IT very widely as observed.

The present study revealed that the teachers and students visit the library to borrow books. However, it was observed that the majority of the teachers and students are visiting library daily. It is recorded that maximum percentage of users both teachers and students are visit to the library for study while teachers and students go to the library to read newspapers and magazines. The teachers and scholars visit the library generally for reference sources and specific information depending upon their needs. Hence, the purpose of users visit to the library largely depends on the free time available to them to know the development in their respective fields.

It has been found that majority of respondents used journals as formal sources of information while most of the respondents used text books as a second preference. It has also found that majority of users used central library after that attaining seminar, conference, symposia, workshop national as well as international that comes under the informal information sources. Most respondents prefer "internet services/resources". Other electronic information resources mentioned were electronic mail and e-journals for use and awareness of e-information resources respectively.

The majority of users used information through library subscription as well as personal subscriptions of journals/periodicals and most preferred response to solve immediate practical problem.

It has been noticed that majority of the users were facing a problem for lack of time for searching of information. It is found that the satisfaction with overall functions of the library is good as well as fair as most of the users gave response in this regard.

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