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Impact and User Observation of Online Journals in Periyar University (PU): An Empirical study

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Abstract

This paper has made an attempt to investigate the usage and impact of electronic journals or online journals among the users such as post graduate students, MPhil scholars, and PhD research candidates from the department of School of Social Sciences at Periyar University, Salem, Tamilnadu, India. It found for the analysis the filled questionnaires rate was 83% and also found among the four departments, Journalism and Mass Communication department has got ranked first with 24% to fill the questionnaire. The main purpose of this research is to analyze the impact and the utilization of electronic journals which are provided by the University Library to user community. For data analysis, a total of two hundred questionnaires were distributed among the four departments to fill the questionnaire. Out of 200, we received only 166 dully filled questionnaires at the rate 83%. The result shows that the majority of respondents were female with 61.55% whereas the remaining was male with 38.45% and the huge number of 73 (43.97%) respondents was postgraduate students. The majority of 83 (50.0%) respondents were preferred to use the pdf format out of 166 users of the department of the School of Social Sciences. 73 (43.96%) user communities were using the electronic journals weekly. Among the 166 respondents, 77 (46.39%) respondents were using the Internet to access the electronic journals.

Keywords: Electronic Journals, Online Journals, e-journals, User survey, Periyar University, Salem, India.

Introduction

University is the backbone of higher education all over the world. The University Library facilitates a number of information resources and services to user society to think new knowledge and research. The electronic resources or digital resources are different kinds such as in the form of Electronic conferences, professional and institutional websites, E-books, E-journals, Databases, CDs/DVDs, audios, videos, courseware, tutorials, guides, manuals, patents, Electronic preprints, and E-Prints, E-Reports, E-Maps, E-Pictures/Photographs, E-Manuscripts, E-Theses and Dissertations, projects, E-Newspaper, Internet/Websites - Listserv, Newsgroups, Subject Gateways, USENET, FAQs, Databases, Datasets, Digital Collections, etc. Hence, among the all the information resources or reading materials, journals play a vital role in recent research and avoid duplication toil of research.

Electronic journals are also known as e-journals or online journals, paperless journals, electronic serials, virtual journals, web journals, networked journals, scholarly electronic journals, digital journals, Zine or ezines, and Internet based journals. Wikipedia (2018) defined as “online journal articles are a specialized form of electronic document: they have the purpose of providing material for academic research and study, and they are formatted approximately like journal articles in traditional printed journals.” Harrods’s Librarian’s Glossary defined the e-journals as, “it is a journal for which the full end- product is available on optical disc, over a network or in any other electronic form, strictly a journal in which the entire process is carried out electronically.” Ashcroft and Langdon (1993) pointed out about the e-journals as “a journals that is provided by any electronic means e.g. Internet or CD-ROM, although not necessary exclusive by electronic means” which is the most common definition. Therefore, this research has been chosen to identify the usage of online journals among the user community of the School of Social Sciences department users in Periyar University as there is no such a study has been conducted to evaluate Electronic Journals so far.

Literature Review

A number of studies have conducted by many researchers and scholars by different subjects in different periods regarding the Electronic Journals or Online Journals. Hence, only recent researches have been taken into account for this current study. Mane and Kuman (2017) studied their study under the title of, Use of E-Journals among the library patrons: a survey of Indira Group of Institutions, Pune” to identify the understanding of user behavior in terms of usage of electronic journals. The main objective of this study was to know the utilization and frequency of use of e- resources. The study found that the huge number (52.0%) of both students and faculty members were highly satisfied with the availability and services of the use of electronic journals in the IGI Library. Patel and Darbar (2017) examined the user survey to know about the awareness of electronic resources among the user community of C.K. Shah Vijapurwala Institute of Management (CKSVIM) Library, Vadodara. The results indicated that 35.32% of the user community use electronic resources daily and 64.26% of the users stated that e-resources were highly useful.

Nanda (2017) examined the usage and access pattern of electronic journals through faculty members and research scholars at the Veer Surendra Sai University of Technology, Odisha. A

total of 148 questionnaires were distributed and 115 filled in questionnaires returned. The results showed that the majority of faculty members (51.78%) and research scholars (54.23%) were using the electronic journals on daily and huge number of 73.21% of the faculty members and 83.05% of the research scholars using the online journals which were provided by the University Library for their research purpose. Khan (2016) studied the use and impact of UGC INFONET online journals by the users of Gautam Buddha University. The results revealed that major proportion of users were satisfied in terms of availability of online journals usage. Velmurugan and Umamaheswari (2015) investigated to know about the reading habit of online journals and use of internet in School Libraries in Chennai. The results reflect that the huge number of nearly fifty percent of the users were well aware of the knowledge about electronic journals and well known how to use them. Velmurugan (2013) studied to examine the information seeking behavior of online journals among the undergraduate students of an Engineering College called SIFT in Chennai. The results indicated that more than 77% of the respondents of SIFT were well known about the awareness of online journals and nearly four percent of them were no idea about the electronic journals. Thanuskodi and Ravi (2011) analyzed the online resources by the PG students and doctoral candidates of Faculty of Arts at the Annamalai University. A total of 200 questionnaires distributed and 180 returned. The results represented that the majority of users were sound knowledge about the electronic information resources and almost 50% of the respondents access only electronic format and the remaining 40% of the user community preferred to read print journals.

Profile of the Periyar University

The Periyar University consists of four districts such as Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, and Krishnagiri and it has been established in 17th September 1997 in Salem. It has ranked 90th among Indian Universities by MHRD NIRF in 2018 and has occupied 12(B) and 2f status from the University Grants Commission, New Delhi. This University imparts higher education by way of three modes namely, through its departments of the study and research, the affiliated colleges, and Periyar University Distance Education (PRIDE). This University has Twenty eight (28) departments and 106 affiliated colleges. the affiliated colleges covers, 14 government colleges, 6 constituent colleges, 4 aided colleges, and 82 self-financing colleges, and also 11 community colleges are comes under Periyar University. For the present research, it has been selected only four departments i.e. Sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication and History under the School of Social Sciences. **Sociology:** This department offering programmes such as MA, MPhil, PhD and certificate course in NGO and also Management for Social development (one Year). **Psychology:** This department offering programmes such as Msc, MPhil, PhD and two supportive courses for other PG programs such as Personality and adjustment to modern life – odd semester, and Psychology for personal professional development – even semester. **Journalism and Mass Communication:** This department offering programmes such as MA in Journalism and Mass Communication and, MA - Journalism and Mass Communication (Electronic Media 5 years integrated), MPhil, and PhD. **History:** This department offering programmes such as MA in History, MPhil and PhD Programme. Among the four departments, three departments viz, Sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication have established during the year 2008 and the department of History is the recent one which is established in the year 2015.

Periyar University Central Library Digital Library

Periyar University Central Library facilitates an excellent online information sources and services to the user community. Providing Digital Library facility is one among the services which are providing in the University Central Library, Periyar University is subscribing online journals for Digital Library and it covers the following online journals and publishers.

- Journal of Educational Research,
- World Bank Economic Review,
- Sage publications' journals,
- Emerald publications
- World Scientific publications
- EBSCO Online database
- American Society of Microbiology (ASM)
- SREL Journal of Information Management journal

Moreover, more than 30 open access journals from well-known publishers such as Wiley online, Nature Publishing Group, DOAJ, Academic journals, Indian Academy of Science (IAS), Indian National Science Academy etc are providing access to the user society.

Statement of the problem

The current study entitled, “Impact and Use Observation of Online Journals in Periyar University (PU): An Empirical study” and the demand for the research is that the establishment of the School of Social Sciences covering the departments such as sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication, and History. This is the inimitable research as there is no such a study has been conducted to evaluate the School of Social Sciences department users in Periyar University and their requirements of information and information seeking behavior on Electronic Journals so far.

Objectives of the Study

The most important purpose of this current research is to examine the current challenges faced by the library users such as students from PG departments, MPhil scholars, PhD candidates and faculty members who are in the School of Social Sciences at Periyar University in Salem, Tamilnadu. The other objectives are to know the usage of print as well as electronic journals, to observe the frequency of use of library by the users, to examine the frequency of use of E-Journals among the users of Physical sciences department in Periyar University. to analyze the time spend on the use of electronic journals, to find out the problems faced while accessing e-journals, to find out the level of satisfaction with usage of e-journals and many more features are discussed.

Materials and Methods

Descriptive method was used in this research. For analysis, the data was collected through the questionnaire method. The population sample is the department of the School of Social Sciences which includes Sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication and History. A total of two hundred questionnaires were distributed among the four departments to fill the questionnaire. Out of 200 questionnaires, researchers received only 166 dully filled questionnaires at the rate 83%. The category of user community is post graduate students, MPhil students, and Research scholars of the department of the School of Social Sciences. An attempt has been made to execute the analysis of data that the survey method was used as it is the best statistical tool for large population of samples. The study was limited to the faculty members, post graduate students, and research scholars from the department of the School of Social Sciences only. This study is unique and it has been taken into account as survey research since there is no such as a study has been done so far.

Data Analysis

Distribution of questionnaire

The questionnaire method was used to evaluate the data and distributed to selected four departments cover Sociology, Psychology, Journalism and Mass Communication and History. A total of two hundred questionnaires were distributed among the four departments to fill the questionnaire. Out of 200, we received only 166 dully filled questionnaires at the rate 83%. It found among the four departments, Journalism and Mass Communication department has got ranked first with 24% to fill the questionnaire and the least number of questionnaire filled by History department with 16.50%.

Table 1. Respondents' distribution according to the Department

S. No	Department	Questionnaire		Percentage
		Distributed	Returned	
1	Sociology	50	44	22.00
2	Psychology	50	41	20.50
3	JMC	50	48	24.00
4	History	50	33	16.50
Total		200	166	83.00

Gender wise distribution

Table 2 represents the gender wise contribution of respondents during the research. It is seen that the majority of respondents is female with 61.55% whereas the least number of respondents is male with 38.45%.

Table 2. Respondents' distribution according to Category

S. No	Users Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	64	38.45

2	Female	102	61.55
Total		166	100

Different kinds of Users

Table 3 indicates the different kinds of users who were participated in this present research. The users' categories were divided into four such as PG Students, MPhil scholars, PhD candidates and faculty members. Based on the analysis, the huge number of 73 (43.97%) respondents were postgraduate students and followed by 43 (25.91%) of the users were from MPhil scholars. it is found that the small number of 22 (13.25%) respondents were PhD candidates.

Table. 3. Different kinds of users

S. No	Users	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Faculty	28	16.87
2	PG Students	73	43.97
3	MPhil Scholars	43	25.91
4	PhD candidates	22	13.25
Total		166	100

Age wise distribution

Table 4 represents the age wise distribution by the user community of four departments. The findings of the study shows that the respondents of age group is between 18-20 were 25.90 % and followed by the between 21-30 were 34.94%, and 22.29% of the respondents' age group between 31-40 were and only 16.87 % of age group were above 41 age. The result indicates that the majority of the respondents' age group was between 21-30 ages.

Table 4. Age wise distribution

S. No	Users Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	18-20	43	25.90
2	21-30	58	34.94
3	31-40	37	22.29
4	Above 41	28	16.87
Total		166	100

Preference of journals

Table 5 shows the analysis of preference of journals to use the documents in the forms such as print, online like pdfs and both forms were measured. This research indicates that almost half of the respondents (50.61%) were preferred and willing to access and read the journal articles through online. on the other hand, 18.67% of the respondents were using print journals, and 30.72% of the respondents were using both forms of journals.

Table.5. Preference of journals

S. No	Journals preference	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Print form	31	18.67
2	Online based	84	50.61
3	Both	51	30.72
Total		166	100

Preferred format of e-journals

Table 6 represents the respondents' preference of the format of the electronic journals which are provided by the University Central Library. The formats are PDF, HTML, SGML, ASCII, and MS Word etc. The majority of 83 (50.0%) respondents were preferred to use the pdf format out of 166 users of the department of the School of Social Sciences. It is counted the least number of respondents using the various formats and found six percent of the respondents were using the ASCII format to access the electronic journals.

Table. 6. Preferred format of e-journals

S. No	Journals preference	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	PDF	83	50.00
2	HTML	24	14.46
3	SGML	12	7.23
4	ASCII	6	3.61
5	MS Word	41	24.70
Total		166	100

Frequency use of Electronic journals

The frequency based usage and utilization of electronic journals by the respondents of the School of Social Sciences. Table 7 depicts that the frequency such as every day, weekly, fortnightly, monthly, and rarely. It is seen that the majority of 73 (43.96%) user communities were using the electronic journals weekly, 26.51 percent of the user society were using the online journals in the frequency of every day, and 14.47% of the users were using fortnightly, 16 respondents were using the online journals in the monthly basis, and only 6 (5.41%) of the respondents were using electronic journals irregularly.

Table. 7. Frequency use of Electronic journals

S. No	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Every day	44	26.51
2	Weekly	73	43.96
3	Fortnightly	24	14.47
4	Monthly	16	9.65

5	Rarely	9	5.41
Total		166	100

Place of using Electronic journals

It is inferred from the below table 8 in terms of the place of using the online journals and other electronic resources by the user community where they are leaning and accessing the electronic journals. The accessing places were identified through the questionnaire and noted that Digital Library, Department, Computer Lab, and private Internet Café. It is analyzed among the 166 respondents, 77 (46.39%) respondents were using the Internet to access the electronic journals, and followed by 30.72% of the users were accessing the online journals in the Digital Library and few (5.42%) of the respondents were using Internet to access online resources in the Internet Café.

Table.8. Location of using Electronic journals

S. No	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Digital Library	51	30.72
2	Department	29	17.47
3	Computer Lab	77	46.39
4	Internet Café	9	5.42
Total		166	100

Purpose of using Electronic journals

It is seen from the below table 9 indicates that how the respondents are using the electronic journals and what are the reasons to access the online journals. Hence, the analysis shows that the huge number of 65 (39.15%) respondents was using the online journals for their research papers preparation for publication. 24.70 percent of the respondents were using for the purpose of assignments to submit in time, and 14.46 percent of the respondents were using for academic purpose ie to learn about the subjects. it is found the only few (9.04%) of the respondents were using the online journals to update their knowledge now and then.

Table.9. Purpose of using Electronic journals

S. No	Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	For academic purpose	24	14.46
2	For seminars and conference	21	12.65
3	For assignments	41	24.70
4	For articles preparation	65	39.15
5	For updating knowledge	15	9.04
Total		166	100

Time spend using Electronic Journals

Table 10 depicts the time spending on accessing the Electronic Journals by the user community. It is examined that the maximum number of users (51.82%) preferred to access the Electronic journals between 1- 2 hours, and followed by 24.69% of the respondents were using to access online journals within ‘an hour’, and the small percentage of (9.04%) respondents were using Internet to access the electronic journals above 3 hours.

Table.10. Time spend using Electronic Journals

S. No	Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	An hour	41	24.69
2	Between 1-2 hours	86	51.82
3	Between 2-3 hours	24	14.45
4	Above 3 hours	15	9.04
Total		166	100

Problems faced while accessing Electronic Journals

It shows table 10 regarding the problems faced by the respondents while using internet to access the electronic journal. The problems such as network connection, downloading papers, lack of training, and overload information etc. The analysis indicates that among the 166 respondents, the huge number of 62 (37.35%) respondents felt that there is no proper training and lack of knowledge in terms of accessing online journals, and followed by 27.71 percent of the respondents though that the information overload. 21.08 percent of the users felt that taking too much time to getting the paper to download, and 13.86% of the respondents indicates that there is no proper network facility and connectivity to access the electronic journals during the research period.

Table.10.Problems faced while acceding Electronic Journals

S. No	Facing difficulties	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Connectivity problem	23	13.86
2	Getting delay for downloading	35	21.08
3	Overload of information	46	27.71
4	Lack of knowledge and training to access e-journals	62	37.35
Total		166	100

Level of satisfaction

Researchers asked the question to the user community during the research period regarding the satisfaction level in terms of online journals availability and services. The range of satisfaction levels were ‘Excellent’, ‘Good,’ ‘Moderate’, and ‘No opinion’. Table 11 represents that among the 166 user community who were involved in this present research, the majority of 68 (40.96%) respondents thought that the availability and their services of the central library were ‘Excellent’

satisfaction and followed by 28.31% of the user society felt 'Moderate' satisfaction, 21.69 percent of them were 'Good,' and few of the (9.04%) respondents felt 'No opinion'.

Table.11. Level of satisfaction

S. No	Satisfaction Level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Excellent	68	40.96
2	Good	36	21.69
3	Moderate	47	28.31
4	No opinion	15	9.04
Total		166	100

Findings

The research concluded with selected findings based on the data and analysis and they are listed below.

- It found for the analysis the filled questionnaires rate was 83% and also found among the four departments, Journalism and Mass Communication department has got ranked first with 24% to fill the questionnaire.
- The majority of respondents were female with 61.55% whereas the remaining was male with 38.45% and the huge number of 43.97% of respondents was postgraduate students.
- The majority 50.0% of respondents were preferred to use the pdf format out of 166 users of the department of the School of Social Sciences.
- It examined the majority of 43.96% user communities were using the electronic journals weekly.
- It analyzed among the 166 respondents 46.39% of respondents were using the Internet to access the electronic journals.
- It investigated the huge number of 65 (39.15%) respondents was using the online journals for their research papers preparation for publication.
- Among the 166 respondents, the huge number of 37.35% respondents felt that there was no proper training and lack of knowledge in terms of accessing online journals.
- The majority of 40.96% respondents thought that the availability and their services of the central library were 'Excellent' satisfaction.

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