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**Use of Print and Electronic Journals by the Academic Community: A
Survey at GC University Lahore**

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Abstract

The main objectives of this study were to investigate the use of print and electronic journals by the faculty members at GC University Lahore (GCU) and to reveal problems which are faced by the faculty members while using journals at GCU. A quantitative survey method was used and the population of the study was all faculty members of GCU. After a comprehensive review of literature, a questionnaire was designed for data collection. Findings of the study reveal that majority of the participants was aware of the basics of Internet. Most of the respondents had awareness with the usage and utilization of print and electronic journals. Most of the respondents used Internet for exploring journals. Majority of the respondents used electronic journals on daily basis. Most of the faculty members were actively engaged in browsing online journals. In many cases, respondents faced the problem of accessing the required journals. They faced the barrier of accessing back volumes of print journals. Most of the respondents could not get subscription of print journals. Many respondents were unfamiliar with techniques to access e journals. Most of the respondents couldn't get off campus access of electronic journals. Findings and recommendations of this study can be a helpful source for library practitioners, educationists, organizational heads, HEC Pakistan, planners, policy makers

and decision-making bodies for increasing usage of journals by the faculty members of the universities.

Keywords: Print Journals, E-Journals, Faculty Usage, Academic Libraries, GC University, Lahore, Pakistan

Introduction

In past, researchers and faculty members preferred print journals. They did not choose e-journals mostly because of the lack of essential IT related skills. They were comfortable in using print journals in terms of accessing relevant information through these traditional resources without facing any difficulty. Some users prefer print journals because the subscription to print journals is easier. They get the personal subscription of the journals and keep receiving desired material at regular intervals. They need no IT skills to use print format journals. Dillon and Hahn (2002) explored the use of print and electronic journals among faculty and students through a web-based survey at the University of Maryland. They found that a large majority of faculty members used print journals from libraries. The users preferred the print version because they had a personal subscription and had no idea how to access the journals electronically.

In the present age of information and communication technologies, the level of awareness of online journals is higher. Users are becoming familiar to locate relevant research easily. They are using latest trends keeping in view the demands of the present age. Electronic journals have brought a revolution in the educational institutes. Boakye (2017) conducted a study to apprise the level of awareness and use of online journals by the faculty of Garden City University College (GCUC) and Christian Service University College (CSUC) in Kumasi, Ghana. A total of 178 faculty participated in the survey and the response rate was 95%. The researcher concluded that the level of awareness of e-journals was quite high however level of access was quite poor. The faculty faced some issues like slow Internet, unstable network and power cuts to access the e-journals.

A number of studies show that many researchers prefer electronic journals due to various benefits. They bring more efficiency in their work with the electronic journals. Electronic journals help the researchers to get their required information quickly without any delay. Morse and Clintworth (2000) conducted a research to make comparison of usage of print and e-journals.

The study aimed to find the preferred format of journals by the users. The findings revealed that users utilized e-journals more than print journals. They performed their desired tasks quickly and efficiently. They faced no time limitation, space problem, and finance issues to access their desired e-journals.

Open access journals are also of great value in the present era and have increased the usage of e-journals as well. These journals provide free access to relevant research papers without facing problems. Baladhandayutham (2016) did a research on the utilization of online journals by faculty of Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai. A total of 145 respondents participated in the survey. The results revealed that 86% respondents used the open access sources while three-fourth users accessed e-journals on a daily basis. They used them for writing research articles and accessed them in the library and in their departments. The study further elaborated that the participants were fully aware of e-journals. However, there was a need to teach them various search strategies to access the e-journals effectively.

Most of the faculty members in the universities of Pakistan have awareness of using online journals. They are properly trained to better utilize online journals for completing multiple tasks. They are well aware of HEC online databases, which are a great blessing for them. They make an effective utilization of the databases which are available in their universities. Arshad and Ameen (2013) explored the academic use of e-journals at University of the Punjab. The findings showed that a significant number of faculty members had excellent skills in searching e-journals through search engines and full-text databases. The university gave access to full text online journals through Higher Education Commission (HEC) National Digital Library Program. Overall academic faculty members used electronic journals more frequently than print journals to fulfil their scholarly needs. They preferred to use e-journals to keep themselves up-to-date, to write research articles, research reports and to teach students.

Journals play a great role in enhancing research culture in the educational institutes. Online journals have brought a revolution in the educational institutes. In past, researchers and faculty members preferred print journals. Information technology has brought a great revolution in all fields of life. It has also changed the routines of libraries to an amazing extent. The review of literature reveal that there is a dearth of studies on the faculty preference regarding the usage of print and electronic journals in the universities of Pakistan. Therefore, there is a need to know the

utilization of print and online journals by the faculty of universities. This study is conducted to fill the gap in this regards.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follow:

1. To know the utilization of print versus online journals by the faculty members of GC University Lahore.
2. To reveal problems which are faced by the faculty members while using journals at GCU Lahore

Research Questions

Research questions of the study were as follow:

1. What is the utilization of print versus online journals by the faculty members of GC University Lahore?
2. What are the problems being faced by the faculty members in using journals at GC University Lahore?

Literature Review

Movement of electronic journals is getting ground and users depend upon online journals especially faculty now prefer online contents. Rogers (2001) performed a longitudinal study on the use of e-journals among faculty and students of Ohio State University during 1998-2000. During these two years, around 300 responses were received from each group. The frequent users of e-journals belonged to the department of biological and medical science. Relatively low use was recorded from the departments of arts, humanities, business, law, agriculture and food. The study of Bauer (2001) also stated that e-journals were being excessively used by the faculty members of health sciences. The researcher claimed that users were becoming more computer savvy. They did not waste time in locating journals and for that; they used quick ways to find out their relevant material.

Old generation is habitual of utilizing print journals while modern generation is fond of using e-journals. Senior researchers are not more skilled in IT based resources. They depend upon traditional resources but in recent times, researchers mostly rely on online resources. They

are more demanding and expect access to information around the clock. Sathe, Grady, and Giuse (2002) conducted a study related to effective utilization of print and e-journals. This study also investigated the effect of journal format on research process. They found that faculty utilized both print and e-journals. It was also revealed that some older clinical and research faculty members still preferred print resources and the young faculty members acknowledged the IT change and used e-journals in their activities. Monopoli, Nicholas, Georgiou, and Korfiati (2002) evaluated the digital libraries service at University of Patras, Greece. They found that male faculty were actively engaged in exploring online journals than female faculty.

After the advent of information and communication technologies, users do not want to visit libraries for their information needs rather they prefer to follow new trends and access the information from their personal computers, tablets or smart phones. Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan has brought a great revolution in scholarly work by providing the best electronic databases through a consortium. These databases are not less than a blessing. These databases provide access to more than 36000 online journals free of cost to the faculty members of the universities. Khan and Ahmed (2013) explored the impact of HEC digital library resources on the scholarly communication of researchers in Pakistan. The results showed that the respondents were familiar with the basic searching skills of HEC online databases. They quenched their thirst of knowledge by using databases. Tahir, Mahmood, and Shafique (2010) analysed the usage of e- information resources by the Humanities scholars at University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan. They found that most of the respondents were using both print and e-journals. They highlighted the need of an awareness program about the availability of e-journals.

In order to get the full benefits of electronic resources, users should have some level of IT skills and the faculty lacking such skills face difficulty in the use of online journals properly. Therefore, they need to seek assistants from someone who is expert in this regard. Rafiq, Ameen, and Jabeen (2018) investigated barriers to digitization in university libraries of Pakistan. The purpose of this study was to identify barriers that were hindering digitization initiatives in university libraries of Pakistan. The researcher reported that faculty members could not make an effective utilization of digital content and journals that was one of the reason in delaying the digitization initiatives. In a research, Ansari and Zuberi (2010) revealed that the faculty members of University of Karachi did not have proper awareness about the importance of electronic resources. The faculty had low level of IT skills and were reluctant in using the resources.

Arshad and Ameen (2013) conducted a study to observe most frequently used resources at the University of Punjab, Lahore. They reported that the situation was no bad as compared to other universities in Pakistan. They found that a significant number of users frequently used the library website and accessed free & subscribed scholarly e-journals and e-books. The user desired accuracy and economy in the work in a short time and for this purpose, electronic resources are preferred.

Tahira and Ameen (2016) conducted a quantitative study on the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of Science and Technology faculty members of the University of the Punjab. The results of this study showed that the faculty members were making an effective utilization of e-resources. In their study, Arshad and Ameen (2013) explored the academic use of e-journals at University of the Punjab. The population of the study was the on-campus academic staff of 12 faculties of University of the Punjab. The findings showed that a significant number of faculty members had excellent skills in searching e-journals through search engines and full-text databases. The university provided access to full-text databases of e-journals, Emerald, Elsevier, and Science Direct, through HEC Online Databases. Overall faculty members used electronic journals more frequently than print journals to fulfil their scholarly needs. They preferred to use e-journals to keep themselves up-to-date, to write research articles, research reports, to teach and instruct students.

Research Design

Appropriate research design is highly significant for meeting objectives of any study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the comparative popularity of print and electronic journals among the teaching faculty of GC University Lahore. A quantitative research approach was adopted and a survey method was selected for this study. Survey is an effective and most commonly used method in social sciences because it provides the possibilities of quick and flexible data collection. The target population of this study was the all-academic faculty members of GC University Lahore. They consist of 400 faculty members including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, lecturers and visiting faculty members. On the basis of literature available and by guidance of LIS experts, a questionnaire was developed to achieve the objectives of the research. A pilot test was conducted before the data collection and the faculty involved in the pilot testing was not included in the final data collection. The researchers visited

all the departments personally and distributed questionnaires among the faculty. Follow up activity was made through visiting their departments and sending them emails after a waiting period of three weeks. Finally, 314 questionnaires were received with the response rate of 79 percent. After the data collection process, the data was analysed using SPSS software (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 19.0.

Data Analysis and Findings

Faculty Experience Regarding Use of Internet

The respondents were asked to mention their experience about the use of Internet. They were given different year-ranges to get suitable answers. Results show that only three (0.9%) respondents were using Internet for less than one year, 14 (4.5%) respondents were using Internet from 1 to 2 years, 29 (9.2%) had the experience of 3 to 5 years while majority of respondents 268 (85.4%) had more than five years of experience regarding Internet use. A similar study conducted by Arshad and Ameen (2013) in Pakistan that also supports the similar findings that majority of faculty members have more than five years of experience in using the Internet. Further, Murray and Tschernitz (2005) also revealed that faculty members were greatly benefited due to the arrival of the Internet. They were becoming habitual of using the Internet. Internet had also increased the efficiency of the faculty members. The reason behind the usage of Internet is that it has brought a revolution in all field of life. People are considered illiterate if they do not use Internet. Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of respondents' experience to use the Internet.

Table 1- Respondents' Experience of Using the Internet

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than one Year | 3 | 0.9 |

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1-2 Years | 14 | 4.5 |
| 3-5 Years | 29 | 9.2 |
| More than 5 years | 268 | 85.4 |
| Total | 314 | 100.0 |

Awareness and Use of Print & Electronic Journals

This section provides the analysis of the level of awareness and use of print & electronic journals. It also includes the purpose, experience of respondents to use both print and electronic journals to fulfil their information needs.

Experience to use research journals in print form

The respondents were asked to mention that for how many years they had been using research journals in print form. They were provided different year-ranges to get suitable answers. Acquired results show that 20 (6.4%) respondents were using research journals in print form for less than 1 year, 89 (28.3%) respondents were utilizing from 1 to 5 years, 109 (34.7%) respondents were using from 5 to 10 years and 86 (27.4%) respondents were availing research journals for more than 10 years. Curtis, Weller, and Hurd (1997) conducted a study related to the information-seeking behaviour of the faculty members of Health Sciences and reported that the faculty members preferred to subscribe print journals. They did not make an excessive use of technology to access their required research. Table 2 presents the frequency distribution of respondents' experience to use research journals.

Table 2- Respondents' Experience of Using Research Journal in Print Format

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than one Year | 20 | 6.4 |

| | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1-5 year | 89 | 28.3 |
| 5-10 years | 109 | 34.7 |
| Over 10 Years | 86 | 27.4 |
| Missing | 9 | 2.9 |
| Total | 314 | 100.0 |

Experience to use research journals in electronic form

The respondents were asked to mention that for how many years they have been using research journals in electronic form. They were provided different year-ranges to get suitable answers. The findings show that 28 (8.9%) respondents were using research journals in electronic form from less than 1 year, 114 (36.3%) respondents were using from 1 to 5 years, 112 (35.7%) respondents were using from 5 to 10 years and 46 (14.6%) respondents were availing research journals for more than 10 years. It is encouraging to note that most of the faculty have a good experience of using electronic journals. It may be because the users who have good IT related skills enjoy reading in electronic form. In a study, Rusch-Feja and Siebeky (1999) concluded that computer literate users preferred e-journals on print journals. Table 3 shows the frequency distribution of respondents' experience to use research journals in electronic form.

Table 3- Respondents' Experience of Using Research Journal in Electronic Format

| Statement | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Less than one Year | 28 | 8.9 |

| | | |
|---------------|------------|--------------|
| 1-5 year | 114 | 36.3 |
| 5-10 years | 112 | 35.7 |
| Over 10 Years | 46 | 14.6 |
| Missing | 13 | 4.1 |
| Total | 314 | 100.0 |

Frequency to Use research journals in print and electronic form

The respondents were asked to mention as to how frequently they use research journals in print and electronic form. They were provided different options from daily to rarely to get suitable answers. Results revealed that a good number of respondents 106 (33.8%) used the print while 107 used electronic journals (34.1%) on weekly basis. Rogers (2001) surveyed at Ohio state university and concluded that the use of e-journals on weekly basis has been increased 19% to 36% during 1998 to 2000. Similarly, the study of Kaur and Verma (2008) also supports the same findings that the trend to use electronic journals on weekly basis is common among academic faculty. The trend to use the print and electronic journals on daily basis is not common because 91 respondents (29%) used the electronic journals and only 40 respondents (12.7%) used the print journals on daily basis that showed the faculty used electronic journals more than print journals on daily basis. These results contradict the findings of Khan and Ahmed (2013) that the use of e-journals on daily basis is common. The findings further showed that 61 (19.4%) and 40 (12.7%) faculty used print and electronic journals respectively on monthly basis. Whereas the remaining 73 (23.2%) and 52 (16.6%) respondents used the print and electronic journals occasionally. Possible reason of the researcher's dissimilarity with the previous research is that now it is an era of information and communication technologies. Due to the growing use of the

IT, now trends have changed and users are becoming habitual of using e-resources. The library users and researchers are now skilled enough to locate relevant pieces of information quickly and efficiently.

Table 4- Respondents' Frequency to Use Research Journals in Print and Electronic Form

| Statement | Print Form | | Electronic form | |
|--------------|------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| | Frequency | Percent | Frequency | Percent |
| Daily | 40 | 12.7 | 91 | 29.0 |
| Weekly | 106 | 33.8 | 107 | 34.1 |
| Monthly | 61 | 19.4 | 40 | 12.7 |
| Occasionally | 73 | 23.2 | 52 | 16.6 |
| Rarely | 20 | 6.4 | 10 | 3.2 |
| Missing | 14 | 4.5 | 14 | 4.5 |
| Total | 314 | 100.0 | 314 | 100.0 |

Problems/barriers in using journals

Respondents were asked to indicate their problem/barriers, which they faced when using the research journals both print and electronic format. They were given five-point Likert scale to mark their opinion on each statement. Their responses are presented in table 5.

All the respondents agreed with the problems/barriers listed below which they faced when using the research journals. While the High subscription rate to “personally subscribe the e-journals” ranked as a major problem with a mean score of 3.82. The other reasons such as “Printed journals are not received in time”, “Back volumes of print journals are not easy to access” and “E-journals are not accessible at home” were also major problems to use the

research journals. The lowest ranked problem was “Poor quality of text, graphics, and tables in printed journals” with mean value 3.15.

Table 5- *Problems/barriers in using journals*

| Statement | Mean | SD |
|--|------|---------|
| High subscription rate to personally subscribe the e-journals | 3.82 | 1.03252 |
| Printed journals are not received in time | 3.67 | 1.06685 |
| Back volumes of print journals are not easy to access | 3.57 | 1.05404 |
| E-journals are not accessible at home. | 3.54 | 1.21643 |
| Required print journals are not available in the library. | 3.32 | 1.20803 |
| Unfamiliarity with techniques to access e-journals | 3.29 | 1.28523 |
| Poor quality of text, graphics, and tables in printed journals | 3.15 | 1.20643 |

Note: 1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=No Opinion, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

The results show that academic faculty are interested to use the research journals but they faced the problems of the high subscription fee, back volumes issues, unavailability of print journals and the unfamiliarity in searching techniques to access the e-journal which caused the non-use of print and electronic journals. The results confirm the findings of Bar-Ilan and Fink (2005), Dilek-Kayaoglu (2008), Khan and Ahmed (2013) and Kumar and Reddy (2014) that academic faculty faced the barriers of high subscription fee of print and electronic journals. They sometimes faced the issues of poor graphics quality of e-journals which caused the eyesore and the poor technical skills of browsing the journals.

Conclusion

Academic faculty is well aware of print and electronic journals. Most of the faculty members have the expertise to use the Internet. Faculty members utilize both print and electronic journals. The trend to use the research journals at home/off campus is not common among the faculty members of GC University Lahore. They use journals to remain updated, teaching, supervising researchers and writing research theses and articles. They are not interested to personally subscribe/purchase print and electronic journals. Academic faculty faces problems in accessing online journals at home. Faculty members prefer electronic journals due to the 24/7 access, accessibility of back issues immediately, email alerts, download article with references on a single click. Academic faculty members use journals for various purposes. They face few problems while accessing journals such as high subscription rate, printed journals are not received in time; and e-journals are not accessible at home. Faculty members do not have sufficient IT skills to access online journals efficiently.

Recommendations

Following are recommendations on the basis of the findings of the study:

1. Off-campus access to the research journals should be provided to the faculty members for their convenience.
2. Journals covering all disciplines should be acquired so that faculty members of all departments may benefit from them.
3. E-mail alerts should be sent to the faculty members about the arrival of new journals for their awareness about the resources.
4. Library professionals should arrange training and information literacy programs for the faculty members to make a fruitful usage of online journals.
5. Library professionals should have full knowledge about databases and they should always remain abreast of the rapid changing in technology so that they can provide help to library users including faculty.

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