61

INFORMATION NEEDS AND SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF FACULTY MEMBERS: A STUDY

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Abstract:
The library should play a pivotal role in facilitating the students in the use of Internet and e-resources and other library and information services. The library should organize the awareness programmes and seminars to educate the students on seeking information from various sources and to maximize the use of library resources and services. As there will be growing dependence on the Internet by the students for their information needs, the college library should strive to have the facilities and resources required. Information is recognized as a vital source indispensable for the development of the individual and the society. Need for information is our basic need to perform our day to-day activity. Information seeking is a conscious effort to acquire information in response to a need or gap in knowledge. This study is an attempt to study the information needs and seeking behaviour of faculty members of Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli. For evaluating the study a questionnaire was constructed and distributed among the faculty members of the University. The data were collected from the fifty respondents and statistically analyzed. Books, journals and internet are the primary resources for the respondents. The findings of the study shows that overflowing of information, low internet speed, and lack of support from library staff are the problems faced by the faculty members while seeking information.

Key Words: Information Needs, Seeking Behaviour, Faculty Members, Teachers seeking behaviour.

Introduction

The fields of information and communication sciences both contribute to the understanding of the ways in which users seek and use information, information science brings an understanding of individuals, including their cultural context, which is complementary to communications; conversely. Communications bring a theoretical background that strengthens the approaches used in Information Science (Bronstein, 2007). Information needs has been understood by information science as evolving from vague awareness of something missing and culminates in locating information that contributes to understanding and meaning. Information-seeking behavior refers to the way People search for and utilize information (Zawawi and Majid, 2001). Most times teachers' information seeking behaviour involves active or purposeful information seeking as a result of the need to write lesson note for class discussions, seminars, workshops or conferences. Foster (2005) noted that teachers find information seeking and information utilization as problems because they do not learn the basic information skills .They end up using trial and error methods of research that limits their capabilities to satisfy their needs. Wilson's model notes that in the process of seeking - information, problems are encountered. After interacting with the information sources (like in a library), what a user actually needs may not tally with what is practically available, due to constraints either within the stock or due to the users own inability. Olatoye (2002) noted that mathematicians encounter barriers like library anxiety. Users' perceptions of the library and its programs also act as an intervening variable to information utilization in the library.

Statement of the Problem

The faculty members are involved in class preparation, lecturing, publishing of papers and attending or presenting articles in conferences. Hence, they are in need of information regarding the current developments in their specific subject field. Overflowing of information and its availability in various channels and formats were the problems faced by the faculty members while seeking information. In order to satisfy the specific needs of the respondents, the librarian should find out the ways of fulfilling it. In this situation, a user study is indispensable to study the strength and weakness of the existing resources, to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the services and also to introduce new systems in the library to accommodate the various needs of the library users. This investigation is an attempt to assess the information needs and modify the retrieval techniques followed by the respondents and dissemination process of the library.

Scope of this study

This university introduced innovative methods in teaching, evaluation, research and outreach programme. It provides an environment conducive to learning and development. This university faculty member is well qualified and ready to render their service at all times. The library attached with the Bharathidasan University is well equipped and up-to-date. To make best use of information sources and services of the library, it is indispensable to conduct a user study. This study is an effort to analyze the strength and weakness of the library.

Objectives of this study

➢ To study the purpose of seeking information by the sample
➢ To explore the information needs of the sample
➢ To find out the various sources and channels of information used by the sample

Methodology

The data for this study was collected using questionnaire among the faculty members of the Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli. The researcher consulted a group of experts and modified the questionnaire based on their comments. A questionnaire containing both open-ended and closed questions was prepared and distributed to fifty teachers. The Faculty members were requested to fill in the questionnaire given to them. The sample represented the all departments. The Faculty members were requested to fill in the questionnaire given to them. The responses received from fifty faculty members were tabulated and subjected to further statistical analysis.

Data analysis and interpretation

This study is an endeavor to identify the information needs and information seeking behaviour of the faculty members. The questionnaire designed to collect information regarding the users' approach to information's, information needs and resources and services of the library. The University faculty members expressed that the departments should have more number of computers with internet and intranet facility linking the library. Each item of the questionnaire was given a score and the percentage calculated for each item separately. The teachers were asked to record their responses for each item without fail. The major results of the study are discussed here below:

Table 1: Distribution of the respondents and their faculty members used library resources

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Books	11	22
Journals	08	16
Research Reports	07	14
Reference Resources	04	08
Newspaper Clippings	05	10
Internet / Online resources	09	18
E-Journals / Databases	06	12
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals that nearly one third (22 per cent) of the respondents were used books, 18 per cent were internet / online resources, 16 per cent were used journals, 14 per cent were used research reports, 12 per cent were used e-journals or databases, 10 per cent were used newspaper clippings and remaining 8 per cent were reference resources.

Table 2: Distribution of the respondents and their purpose of seeking information

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching purpose	06	12
Research work related purpose	07	14
Writing and presenting papers	09	18
Collection of Literature reviews /References	11	22
Renewing their knowledge	03	06
General Awareness/updating knowledge	04	08
Reading/Thinking process	04	08
Discussion with Professional colleagues	03	06
Recreational purposes	01	02
Preparing/supplementing lectures	02	04
Total	**50**	**100**

Source: Primary data

The above table reveals that nearly one third (22 per cent) of the respondents were seeking for literature reviews and references, 18 per cent were writing and presenting papers, 14 per cent were research work related purpose, each 8 per cent were seeking General awareness/Updating knowledge and Reading/Thinking process, each 6 per cent were used renewing their knowledge and discussion with professional colleagues, 4 per cent were preparing supplementing lectures and remaining 2 per cent were recreational purpose.

Suggestions and Conclusion

There is an urgent need to modernize all the college libraries as early as possible for the providing Internet Access to the college library users. The frequently power failure is one of the major problem in the

college libraries. So the users are facing lots of problem in accessing to Internet and e-resources. To maintain their interest towards e-resources the colleges must ensure adequate and continuous uninterrupted power supply; Libraries are the reservoirs of knowledge. The success of each library depends on the resources and retrieval systems. The collection should meet the requirements of the user. The advent of computers and information technology has revolutionized the field of library and information services and has brought considerable changes in the information-seeking behaviour of users. Consequently, librarians must be aware of how faculty seeks information. The main role of the librarian is to be familiar with the information requirements of the users. Libraries must understand information-seeking behavior of users to re-engineer their services and provide information efficiently.

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