INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF THE STUDENTS AT MPKV, RAHURI (M.S): A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Information-seeking behavior Play the vital role for developing library collections, upgrading facilities, and improving services to effectively meet the information needs of users. The present era is an era of information and knowledge revolution. Many electronic resources have been made most available in the libraries. The increase in availability of information on the Web has affected Information seeking behavior. The paper deals with Information Seeking Behavior (ISB) at MPKV Library, Rahuri.

KEYWORDS

Information, Information Needs, Information Seeking Behavior, MPKV University Library.

INTRODUCTION

Information seeking behavior is a broad term which involves a set of actions that an individual takes to express information needs, seek information, evaluate and select information, and finally uses this information to satisfy his/her information needs. Varies factors may determine the information seeking behavior of an individual or a group of individuals. It is, therefore, desirable to understand the purpose for which information is required, the environment in which the user operates users' skills in identifying the needed information, channels and sources preferred for acquiring information, and barriers to information.

Information seeking is a basic activity indulged in by all people and manifested through a particular way of behavior. It is also an aspect of scholarly work most interesting to academic librarians who strive to develop collections, services, and organizational structures that facilitate seeking of information (Wiberley, 1989). There is a universal assumption that man was born innocent and should actively seek knowledge. 'Information seeking is thus a natural and necessary mechanism of human existence' (Marchionini, 1995). Information seeking behavior is the purposive seeking of information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual

information systems such as a newspaper or a library, or with computer-based systems such as the Web.

Information seeking behavior involves personal reasons for seeking information, the kinds of information which are being sought, and the ways and sources with which needed information is being sought. Information seeking behavior is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation. Scholars, students and faculty actively seek current information from the various media available in libraries, e.g. encyclopedias, journals and more currently, electronic media. Abels (2004) mentioned that the frequency of use of the internet in 1998-2000 had greatly increased. At the same time, expenditure on monographs showed steady increase.

DEFINATIONAL ANALYSIS

INFORMATION

"Data value in planning, decision making and evaluation of any programme. A data that have been subjected to some processing functions capable of answering user's query be it recorded, summarized, or simply collected that would help decision making" (Uttor 1999).

INFORMATION BEHAVIOR

The general model of information behavior needs to include at least three elements: (i) an information need and its drives, i.e. the factors that give rise to an individuals perception of need; (ii) the factors that affect the individuals response to the perception of need; and, (iii) the processes or actions involved in that response (Wilson, 1997).

INFORMATION SEEKING

Information is undertaken to identify a message that satisfied a perceived need (Wright and Guy, 1997); described information seeking as a process that requires an information seekers, or what might be called ''personal information structures' 'such as a person's cognitive abilities, his or her knowledge, skills in relation to the problem or task domain, knowledge and skills specific to a system and knowledge and skills regarding information seeking. (Ikoja-Odongo and Ocholla, 2004)

INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR

The students' information seeking behavior involves active or purposeful information as a result of the need to complete course assignment, prepare for class discussions seminars, workshops, conferences, or write final year research papers (Kakai et al., 2004).

NEED OF THE STUDY

The present human society is living in an information age and as a consequence, man has become more and more information conscious. More and more people deliberately and consciously seek information and it has become an integral part of human activity especially in the area of education, research and development, production and marketing of goods, all of which have contributed to the improvement of the quality of life. World War I and II accelerated research and development activities resulting in information explosion. The information so produced is recorded and reported in a variety of documents-printed and non printed documents. The information explosion coupled with multiplicity of documents has created problems to the generators, users, and the organizers of information.

The students of Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri. (Maharashtra) are expected to optimally utilize the university library as one of their major sources of information. However, observing and conducting studies on library use in the university environment in general establishes the fact that students do not use most of the library information resources. It is assumed that students could be experiencing technical problems in accessing information resources. This coupled with lack of knowledge and awareness of the resources resulting in the students' poor information seeking behavior was singled out as the biggest cause that needed investigation. Library information resources are expensive. They are costly in terms of their acquisition and retention. The librarians need to manage these resources and make them accessible. To attain cost effectiveness in the university library services and to promote the use of library information resources and services, this study sought to establish ways of improving the information seeking behavior of all students in MPKV Library Rahuri (MS).

SCOPE & LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study is limited to MPKV University Students. The study is confined to Students of MPKV to understand their information seeking behavior. The university environment is of a heterogeneous group comprising Post Graduate Students, Research Scholars and Teaching Faculty in the purview of information seeking channel and instead of covering all the groups of users, all B.Tech, M.Tech , Ph.D students have been taken for the research study. This is the limitation of the study. This is to cover mainly a fair proportion of students representing all the departments instead of becoming a sample representation of a few departments.

RELATED STUDIES

The literature of information seeking behavior of the students and faculty members available is greatly broad ranging. An attempt has been made to cover number of works that go beyond discussions of the information seeking behavior itself and its direct applications to closely related topics such as information seeking.

Information Seeking Behaviour of   Faculty Members of Rajabhat Universities in Bangkok. In regard to information seeking behaviour of users in RUs in Bangkok, it is recommended that library staff or reference librarians could use their time in a better way by

focusing on assisting users. Reference librarians should help users to improve their skills in information seeking activities and to find the different type of information they need (Patitungkho and Deshpande, 2005).

Fulton, Kerins and Madden (2004) report the results of two empirical studies which explored the information seeking behavior of engineering and law students in Ireland. The findings reveal similar patterns in the information seeking behavior between students studying to become professionals and information seeking patterns of these groups.

Osiobe (1988) found that browsing was the most important source of finding references for undergraduate students. He concluded that respondents in the University of Botswana did seek help from University library staff with 40% receiving help from the reference librarian and approximately 32% from the subject librarian.

Suriya, Sangeetha and Nambi (2004) carried out a research work on "Information seeking behavior of Faculty Members from Government Arts Colleges in Cuddalore District." The purpose of their study was to investigate, how faculty members seek information from the library. It mentions that most of the respondents 61 (38.12 percent) visited the library several times a week to meet their information needs. Regarding the type of search made by the respondents the majority of the respondents 91 (56.87 percent) made their search by subject.

Shokeen and Kushik (2002) studied about information seeking behaviour of social scientists working in the universities located in Haryana. They reported most of the social scientists visit the library daily. The first preferred method of searching the required information by the social scientists followed by searching through indexing and abstracting periodicals, and citations in articles respectively. The social scientists use current journals followed by books.

Challener (1999) investigated artists and art historians teaching in five liberal arts colleges and three universities. Results found that they need information for teaching. The participants almost all subscribe to art journals, and many read newspapers. They visit libraries frequently, usually more than one library, and unlike previous reports, the majority are willing to ask the librarian for help. A large percentage of both art historians and artists are using computers for teaching. All 27 participants use slides extensively in the classroom, supplemented in most cases by textbooks.

OBJECTIVES

The study examined the information seeking behavior of the students in the Mahatma Phule Krishi Vidyapeeth, Rahuri Maharashtra. Precisely, the focus was on obtaining information on the nature of academic information needed by the students, the sources consulted and the general pattern of information gathering system by the students. More specifically, the objectives of the study were:

- To find out the awareness and use of library resources of the students.
- To find out the type of information sources used by the students
- To ascertain users opinion regarding usefulness and adequacy of information sources and services.
- To know the purpose of seeking information.

- To determine whether or not different kinds of information need leads to different information seeking behavior and communication channels
- To identify the information searching methods adopted while searching for information in the library
- To analyze the possible reasons for not using information sources, if any and
- To suggest measures for enhancing the use of information sources, and seeking a synthesis of theoretical elements from information science.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY & DESIGN

This study used questionnaire-based survey method. The questionnaires were personally distributed to the students of MPKV University at their library and reading room and Library in the month of May 2011. A random sample of 700 students was selected. The questionnaires were distributed to the students who were present in library and library reading room. 575 filled in questionnaires were returned by users with the overall response rate being 82.14%.The collected data were analyzed, classified and tabulated by employing statistical methods.

DATA ANALYSIS

An attempt has been made to analyze the research data collected from students from MPKV and interpret the results revealing their information seeking behavior that provides valuable source of information to the library managers and planners in designing and developing a suitable strategy in promoting the better use of valuable information sources including electronic format and thus justifying the cost effectiveness of library efforts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The results of the user observations, questionnaire schedule, interviews and participatory design sessions provide a rich description of how information seekers use various information sources, searching methods employed in obtaining desired information and problems of not using information resources, if any. The research study is confined to students of MPKV. Questions like name, Gender and educational qualification were asked.

The data is analysed in view to the objectives mentioned in the study as follows:

SEX RATIO

Sex ratio is the ratio of males to females in a population. The primary sex ratio is the ratio at the time of conception, secondary sex ratio is the ratio at time of birth, and tertiary sex ratio is the ratio of mature organisms.

Table no. 1: Sex Ratio

Sr. No	Sex	Student	Percentage
1	Male	412	71.65%
2	Female	163	28.35%
	Total	**575**	**100.00%**

It is confirmed that the present study have out of 575 respondents 412 (71.65%) were Male and 163 (28.35%) were female.

AGE GROUP

Human facial image processing has been an active and interesting research issue for years. Since human faces provide a lot of information, many topics have drawn lots of attentions and thus have been studied intensively in that case present study has analyzed the age group of the respondents.

Table no.2: Age Group

Sr.No	Age Group	Student	Percentage
1	20-23	181	31.48 %
2	23-25	187	32.52%
3	Above - 25	207	36.00%
	Total	**575**	**100%**

It is clear from that table no 2 the Maximum user were above 25th age group, that is (36.00%) of the user.181 user were 20-23 age group and 187 users were age group 23-25 respectively.

FREQUENCY OF VISIT TO THE LIBRARY

Library and Information Centre is a knowledge bank considered to be the heart of the university enriched with variety of information sources and services in print and electronic format to support learning, teaching and research. Attempts were made to understand the habit of using the library by the students in a university. Table 3 showing the frequency of visits to the library.

Table no.3: Frequency of visit to the library

Sr.No	Frequency	Students	Percentage
1	Every Day	397	69.04%
2	2-3 Time in a Week	153	26.61%
3	Weekly	18	31.30%
4	Monthly	07	12.20%
	Total	**575**	**100.00%**

It is clear from the Table 3 that, all the respondents of the study i.e. Post Graduate students of university area in the habit of using the library. Among them about 397 (69.04%) of respondents visit the library every day, followed by 2-3 times in a week by 153 users

(26.61%). And 18 users (31.30%) were visiting the library for weekly. And 07 users (12.20%) were visiting the library by monthly respectively.

PURPOSE OF USING LIBRARY

Library should be viewed as an integral part and parcel of every academician to encourage, motivate and support not only learning and research but also to develop ideal citizens of the country. Thus, the purpose of visiting the library is equally important for optimization of respondents' knowledge to support their educational endeavor. Table 4 shows the purpose of seeking information by the respondents of the study.

Table no.4: Purpose of visit the library

Sr.No	Purpose	Students	Percentage
1	Preparation of Course Exam	127	22.09%
2	Preparation of Thesis/Dissertation	209	36.35%
3	Preparation of UPSC/MPSC Exam	412	71.65%
4	To Collect Course Material	237	41.22%
5	General Reading	178	32.52%

It is noted from the Table 4 that, about (22.09%) of respondents' purpose of visiting the library is preparing for course examinations. This is followed by respondents using the library to prepare for competitive examinations (71.65%). And (36.35%) of respondents use the library to prepare the Thesis and Dissertation work and to collect Course Material (41.22%) & general reading (32.52%). Thus general tendency for visiting the library by the students is to prepare for general examinations and prepare for competitive examinations.

USE OF LIBRARY SOURCES AND SERVICES

Table no.5: Use of library sources and services

Sr.No	Services	Students	Percentage
1	Issue/Return	479	83.30%
2	Reference Service	120	20.87%
3	Periodicals	207	36.00%
4	Seminar/Conference Proceedings	53	9.22%
5	Indexing Service	66	11.48%
6	Bibliography	43	7.48%
7	CAS/SDI	88	15.30%
8	Reprography	466	81.04%
9	IT Based Service (Krishiprabha, CeRa/jgate)etc	571	99.30%

Table no 5 shows the use of library sources and services. It was found that majority of students used IT Based Services like that Krishiprabha, CeRA and j-Gate these found in

99.30%. Issue/return of the books these found in 83.30% of users, followed by the use of the Reprography service 81.04% users and use of periodicals, Bibliography, CAS/SDI Service, were marginally used.

PURPOSE OF SEEKING INFORMATION

Table no.6: Purpose of seeking information

Rank						
Sr. No	Purpose	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Total
1	Career Development	472 (82.09%)	55 (9.57%)	43 (7.48)	5 (0.87%)	575 (100.00%)
2	To Solve Problem	332 (57.24%)	167 (29.04%)	61 (10.61%)	15 (2.61%)	575 (100.00%)
3	To Keep up to date	515 (89.57%)	33 (5.74%)	16 (2.78%)	11 (1.91%)	575 (100.00%)
4	To write an article	247 (42.96%)	188 (32.70%)	103 (17.91%)	37 (6.43%)	575 (100.00%)

Table no 6 indicates the decreasing rank order of information seeking on a scale of four. To Keep up to date 515 (89.57%) & Career development with 472 (82.09%) out of the 575 respondents was the most preferred response for seeking information. This was followed by the reasons that include seeking information for problem solving, keep up-to date and the need to write an article or research paper.

PURPOSE OF USING INTERNET

Table No 7.Purpose of Using Internet.

Sr. No	Purpose of Using Internet	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Fill up competitive Exam Form	415	72.17%
2	Face book	378	65.74%
3	Research Project	208	36.17%
4	Collection of Course Material	88	15.30%
5	Chatting	49	8.52%
6	Mailing	11	1.91%
7	Entertainment	13	2.26%
8	Don't Use	2	0.35%

It is seen from the table 7 that, quite surprisingly internet is used mainly for fill up comparative exam form (72.17%) than for Facebook (65.74%) and Research Project (36.17%). However, the other purposes of using internet by the respondents are for Chatting (8.52%), entertainment (2.26%) and mailing (1.91%). Thus the result shows that, research projects, communication and downloading programs are the purposes of using internet.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The significant findings of the study are given below:

- All the respondents are in the habit of using the library and more than half of them visit the library everyday and one-fifth visit the library every alternate day and a very negligible portion do not use the library and they are having their personal book collection.
- The observation of all respondents Male is the maximum respondents.
- The age group of respondents is maximum of the users or students are above Twenty five years means master degree holders in Agri.
- The main purpose of visiting the library is to keep up to date and currier development and, followed by preparing for competitive examinations and dissertation work.
- Educational information is the pre-dominantly used information-need for the respondents useful for their academic and research activities followed by employment and job related information.
- All the respondents of the study undertake information searching on their own to meet their desired educational needs.
- Almost all the respondents use internet technology for their academic and research activity and social networking sites.
- The main purpose of using internet is for Fill Up the competitive exam form, research project than for mailing, chatting and entertainment.
- Browsing website and search engines are the most preferred methods for finding information on the internet.
- E-reference books and e-journals are the types of electronic information sources browsed on the internet by the respondents.
- Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that information resources in the university library are adequately stocked.
- More than four-fifth of the respondents indicated the availability of adequate books on competitive examinations.
- University has doing one non credit (PGS-501 0.1 Credit) compulsory Course in title "Library and Information Services" according to revised P.G. Syllabi recommended by NCG, ICAR, New Delhi.

SUGGESTIONS:

A holistic view of information seeking process comes near to ideas of inquiry learning. They both emphasize an iterative question-driven process of finding, managing and evaluating information. An additional aspect of inquiry learning is its collaborative nature, which gives rise to a challenge of arranging collaborative situations of information seeking with heterogeneous groups of students. A naïve way of students' information seeking process emerged through empirical studies. Instead of being a holistic process, it manifests itself in the form of information gathering only, and uncritical acceptance of information. When learning activities are focused on information gathering, such important phases as refining the question, evaluating and synthesizing information, is easily neglected.

The usage of the MPKV University Library, its resources and services needs to be increased. Student oriented information resources such as text books, reference materials, journals, internet facility, database etc., should be facilitated. Importantly, the library should provide exhibition programme and the lecture on use of the library sources and services for every year. And University has doing one non credit (PGS-501   0.1 Credit) compulsory Course in title "Library and Information Services" according to revised P.G. Syllabi recommended by NCG, ICAR, New Delhi.

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