
Usage of Digital Resources on Information Seeking Behavior in Public Libraries in North Karnataka

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Abstract

The present study on the usage of digital resources on information-seeking behaviour in public libraries was conducted through a survey distributed to 650 participants, with 612 responses received. Statistical analysis conducted using Microsoft Excel yielded several key insights. Most users spent time, 60.62% hold a bachelor's degree, 64.49%, and Google emerged as the most frequently used search engine, favoured by 86.77% of users. The findings highlight that students are the primary users, viewing libraries as valuable spaces for learning and making productive use of time through access to e-resource materials. The public library is the best place for users to learn new things and spend valuable time, according to public library users and their positive opinions of the digital tools and reading materials.

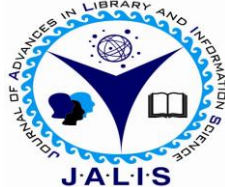
Keywords

Public Library; E-resources; Information Seeking Behavior; Public library; Digital Resources

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1. Introduction

Public libraries stand as enduring symbols of democratic societies. They serve as agents of social change and protectors of culture, acting as repositories of the intellectual legacy of our ancestors and guiding beacons for creative leisure pursuits. As public libraries play a crucial role in bolstering a nation's educational and knowledge resources, there is an ongoing need to enhance user satisfaction, thereby improving the reading and information experience. To this end, a study was conducted using structured questionnaires to examine the information-seeking behaviour of various categories of library users in public libraries across different districts in North Karnataka. We analysed the collected data using simple average percentage methods and descriptive statistical tools. The information needs of individuals within an organization vary based on their specific roles and tasks, their level of expertise and experience in their field of specialization and in using information systems and services, their particular interests and the needs they seek to fulfill, the breadth and depth of their interest profiles, and the nature of their subject or field of specialization or interest. A user's information needs, such as type, coverage, and depth, can vary significantly depending on their current activity, for example, when exploring a new research domain as opposed to addressing a particular issue in a well-known area.

2. Objective of the study

1. To assess the usage of digital resources on information-seeking behaviour in public libraries in North Karnataka.
2. To know the frequency of Time Spent in the library.
3. To investigate the extent of search engine usage in public libraries.
4. To ascertain the level of accessibility among the users of the public library's e-resources

3. Scope of the study

The present study is undertaken to find out the usage of Digital Resources on Information-Seeking Behaviour in Public Libraries, the utilisation of library e-resources, and accessibility with library collections and physical facilities in their respective

branch libraries, and similarly to discover the ways and means to develop library sources in public libraries in North Karnataka. The proposed study is limited to district libraries in North Karnataka. The study contains public libraries in Kalabugri, Yadgiri, Belagvi and Bagalkot.

4. Methodology

The questionnaire was well-structured and was designed to gather essential data for this study. We prepared the questionnaire in both English and Kannada, which is the local language of Karnataka. The questionnaire's questions were designed for public library users to evaluate user digital resources and also public library information about their use of e-sources. The method of the study, the survey method of research, was accepted, and the tool utilised for data collection was a questionnaire. A whole 650 questionnaires are randomly distributed among users, of these, 612 questionnaires are filled out and received. Data collected by simple statistical techniques will be tabulated and interpreted to arrive at valid inferences and conclusions, which will be practically useful to the Kalabugri, Yadgiri, Belagvi and Bagalkot.

5. Literature review

The study analyzed the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on library services in various universities. It involved 240 e-library users, including 15 postgraduate students and 35 academic staff from Salem University, 70 postgraduate students and 60 academic staff from Kogi State University, and 60 academic staff from Federal University Lokoja. The study found that AI technologies are enhancing user visits, streamlining cataloguing processes, and improving access to resources. However, challenges such as ethical concerns, data privacy issues, and the need for digital literacy between library staff and users were acknowledged.

In 2019, J. Arumugam, R. Balasubramani, and Pratheepan conducted research on user satisfaction with polytechnic college libraries in Coimbatore District. The findings revealed that 53.8% of participants were content with the library's collection, while 73.8% expressed satisfaction with overall facilities and services. Public library users were found to be satisfied with the assistance of users and library services, with 82.50% of responses being satisfied with the assistance. Kumar (2023) compared

user awareness of library resources and services in public and private university libraries in Haryana, India, highlighting differences in accessibility, user engagement, and satisfaction levels. The study suggested that enhanced promotional strategies and user education programs are needed to increase library resource utilization. Mahesh Kumar and Jayaraman (2014) conducted a study on users' information needs and information seeking behavior, finding that guidance in using library resources and services is necessary for students. A more aggressive information marketing strategy should be developed at both the subject library professional and librarian levels to create awareness among students.

6. Data Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Features of Respondents

Gender	respondents	Percentage%
Male	397	64.49
Female	215	35.13
Marital status	respondents	Percentage%
Married	97	15.84
Unmarried	515	84.15
Residing	respondents	Percentage%
Rural	351	67.97
Urban	261	32.02
Age	respondents	Percentage%
Below 15 years	24	3.92
16-25	366	59.81
26-35	150	24.51
36-45	33	5.39
Occupation	respondents	Percentage%
Students	401	65.53
Private Employed	46	7.52
Govt. employed	20	3.26
Business man	13	2.12
Unemployed	109	17.81
House wife	09	1.48
Private aided Employed	05	0.81
Qualification	respondents	Percentage%
SSLC	40	6.54
PUC	97	15.85
UG	332	54.24
PG	118	19.29
PhD	08	1.31
Diploma /ITI	11	1.79
Others Degree	06	0.98

Table 1 indicates the number of characteristics of respondents. It shows that 64.49% of respondents are male and only 35.13% of respondents are female. The

marital status of the respondents. The table clearly shows that the majority of users are unmarried, 84.15%, and the remaining 15.84% of users are married. Table 1 indicates that 67.97% of respondents are from rural areas, while 32.02% are from urban areas. Surprisingly, 59.81% of respondents fall under the age group of 16 to 25 years, and 3.92% of respondents come under the age group of below 15 years, and 24.51% of respondent's average the age of 26 to 35 years. Table 1 reveals that 401 (65.63%) of

the respondents were students; distantly followed by this were unemployed 109(17.81%), private employees 46(7.52%), Govt. employed (3.46%), Business man (3.93%), and Private aided Employed. 5 (0.81%) This suggests that students consist of a majority of library users. The educational qualification of respondents. Out of 612 respondents, the majority (54.24%) of users are UG students, and about (19.29%) of users mention PG students.

Table 2: Frequency of Time Spent in Public Library

Time Spent in the Public Library	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Daily	371 (60.62%)	142 (23.21%)	49 (8.01%)	26 (4.24%)	24 (3.92%)
Weekly	179 (29.25%)	293 (47.89%)	75 (12.25%)	33 (5.39%)	32 (5.22%)
Twice in a week	164 (26.79%)	273 (44.60%)	116 (18.96%)	31 (05.07%)	28 (04.58%)
Monthly	135 (22.06%)	263 (42.97%)	110 (17.98%)	63 (10.29%)	41 (06.70%)
Others	115 (18.79%)	228 (37.26%)	155 (25.33%)	58 (09.47%)	56 (9.15%)

Above, Table 2 indicates the frequency of e-resources in the library. The table reveals that a greater number of respondents, the majority of respondents, 371 (60.62%), use the library daily, while about 179 (29.25%) of respondents use the library weekly. 164 (26.79%) respondents rarely use it, 135 (22.06%) use the library twice a week, and 115 (18.79%) use the library for other reasons, respectively.

Table 3: Usage of Search Engine

Search Engine	Yes	No
Google	531 (86.77%)	81 (13.23%)
Yahoo	117 (19.12%)	495 (80.89%)
MSN (Microsoft Network)	82 (13.40%)	530 (86.61%)
AltaVista	69 (11.28%)	543 (88.72%)

Above Table 3. The results show that the data in the table reflects the usage preferences of various search engines among a group of respondents. Google emerges as the most widely used search engine, with 531 individuals (86.77%) indicating they use it, and only 81 (13.23%) not using it. This suggests a strong dominance of Google in terms of user preference and

popularity. In contrast, Yahoo is used by 117 respondents (19.12%), while the majority, 495 (80.89%), and do not use it. Similarly, MSN (Microsoft Network) and AltaVista have low usage rates, with only 13.40% and 11.28% of respondents using them, respectively.

Table 4: The e-resource reading materials are in use in the public library

E-resource	Yes	No
E-Books	581 (94.93%)	31 (5.07%)
e- Pamphlets	235 (38.39%)	377 (61.60%)
Technology E-Books	359 (58.67%)	253 (41.33%)
e- Magazines	357 (58.33%)	255 (41.66%)
Government Publications	414 (67.64%)	198 (32.36%)
e-Comics Books	174 (28.43%)	438 (71.56%)
Virtual Story Times	200 (32.68%)	410 (66.99%)
Online News Papers	157 (25.65%)	455 (74.34%)
E-Journals	366 (59.80%)	246 (40.19%)

DVD- Rom	99 (16.17%)	513 (83.82%)
Audio Resources	116 (18.95%)	496 (81.04%)

Table 4 above indicates an overview of respondents' preferences for different types of reading materials. Traditional books are overwhelmingly favoured, with 581 individuals (94.93%) reporting they use them, highlighting the enduring popularity and trust in printed books. Government publications also show relatively high engagement, with 67.64% of respondents using them. E-books and rare collections

have a moderate usage rate of around 58%, indicating growing acceptance of digital and specialised reading materials. In contrast, pamphlets are used by only 38.39%, online newspapers by 25.65%, e-journals/magazines by 59.80%, DVD-ROMs by 16.17%, and audio resources by 18.95%, suggesting limited appeal or relevance. Similarly, digital newspapers and virtual story times are among the least utilised, with only 28.43% and 32.68% usage, respectively.

Table 5: Accessibility of online/web resources

Attributes	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The available Internet facilities enable the readers to get information easily	314 (51.31%)	167 (27.29%)	72 (11.76%)	36 (5.89%)	23 (03.75%)
Internet Speed is reasonably good	173 (28.26%)	259 (42.32%)	86 (14.06%)	62 (10.13%)	32 (05.23%)
Accessing reference facilities online is enabled	176 (28.75%)	221 (36.12%)	136 (22.23%)	54 (08.82%)	25 (04.08%)
Guidance to access e-Resources is good	177 (28.92%)	209 (34.16%)	127 (20.75%)	68 (11.12%)	31 (05.05%)
Online Journals and References are fulfilling the minimum needs of the readers	167 (27.28%)	251 (41.02%)	115 (18.79%)	49 (08.01%)	30 (04.90%)

Table 5 contains information about users' perceptions of internet-related services and access to digital resources. A significant majority of respondents 314 (51.31%), followed by 167 (27.29%) say that the available internet facilities help them access information easily, indicating general satisfaction with the library or institution's internet setup. When it comes to internet speed, perceptions are slightly more moderate, with 28.26% and 42.32% agreeing, but a notable portion (15.36%) expressing disagreement, suggesting room for improvement in speed and consistency. Regarding online reference access, about 64.87% of respondents believe such facilities are available, though a considerable 22.23% remain neutral, possibly reflecting unfamiliarity or limited use. Similarly, guidance for accessing e-resources received moderate positive feedback, with 63.08% expressing satisfaction, but over 16% disagreeing to some extent, pointing to potential gaps in user support or training.

Table 6: Opinion about the Accessibility of e-resources

Accessibility of e-resources	Respondents	Percentage
Very Good	313	51.14
Good	168	27.45
Neutral	90	14.71
Not Satisfied	28	04.57
Satisfactory	13	02.13

The table above shows that more than 313 (51.14%) of respondents say they are very good, followed by good 168 (27.45%), and neutral 90 (14.71%). Not Satisfied 28 (04.57%), and Satisfactory 13 (02.13%). It is recommended to further investigate the reasons behind the lower satisfaction levels and develop targeted support or training programs to uplift this segment. Enhancing feedback mechanisms and offering personalised development opportunities could help convert neutral and dissatisfied respondents into more confident individuals.

6. Findings of the study

- The educational qualifications of respondents. Out of 332 respondents, the majority (54.24%) of users are UG students.
- It shows that 64.49% of respondents are male and only 35.13% of respondents are female.
- The 16-25 age group's responses to the public library are (59.81%).
- The majority of users' occupation responses (65.53%) are public library students.
- The table reveals that a greater number of respondents, the majority of respondents (60.62%), use the library daily,
- The usage preferences of various search engines among a group of respondents. Google emerges as the most widely used search engine, with 86.77%.
- The traditional books are overwhelmingly favoured, with 94.93% reporting they use them
- The opinion about the accessibility of e-resources. A majority of (51.14%) of respondents say they are very good.

7. Conclusion

The study concludes that digital resources have a substantial influence on the information-seeking behaviour of young public library users in North Karnataka. Increased accessibility to e-resources has enhanced research engagement, learning effectiveness, and general information literacy; all have improved as e-resources have become more accessible. However, despite these gains, challenges such as limited digital infrastructure, inadequate awareness programs, and insufficient training among library staff and users still hinder optimal utilization. Addressing these gaps through regular user training, resource upgrades, and policy interventions will be critical to connecting public libraries with the evolving digital information landscape.

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