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The Case Study of Information Literacy Abilities of Postgraduate Students at Alagappa University, Karaikudi



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ABSTRACT

This research set out to assess graduate students' information literacy in relation to their usage of digital resources at Alagappa University in Karaikudi. According to the results of the survey, most respondents used information literacy for the completion of projects and assignments. Eighty-nine percent of respondents are utilising basic keywords and thirty-nine percent are employing Boolean operators to find what they need on the internet. A little over half of respondents utilise either the copy/paste tool (73%), photocopy (62.92%), or both (73%). The bulk of respondents (88.17%) used title-based searches, while 53.93 percent used subject-based ones. The vast majority of respondents (88.76%) believe that the department should initiate an information literacy programme immediately, and 58.53% believe that students should be provided with information literacy standards.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Library patrons may benefit greatly from instruction in information literacy by learning how to conduct effective searches, how to evaluate the quality of the material they find, and how to effectively present the results of their research. The ability to recognise when information is needed and how to effectively and efficiently find it is more important in today's world. A knowledge of how to access and use digital libraries is included. As a result, we can make educated decisions and develop superior products based on the findings of our analyses and evaluations of the data we uncover (ACRL, 2005). Evaluation of students' information literacy abilities may be used to evaluate and improve instruction, modify and enhance curricula, and keep tabs on students' progress. The greater the effect of the library's contribution is, the more resources it may be able to attract, in particular for information literacy teaching.

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1.1 Objectives of the Study

1. To evaluate the level of information literacy possessed by the pupils.
2. To access insight into the methods of search that are currently in use.
3. To understand the methodology behind the data mining.
4. To learn the search phrase that will be used to locate the paper.
5. To suggest ways in which student information literacy might be enhanced.

2.0 SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND METHODOLOGY

Researchers will only be able to collect data from graduate students at Alagappa University in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu. Keeping the research's aims in mind, the questionnaire approach was employed to gather the required information for this investigation. Among the sample of postgraduate students who were sent a questionnaire, 81% (89 of 110) responded. Microsoft Excel was updated to its most recent version so that relevant statistical techniques, such as simple percentages, could be used to the data.

3.0 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

3.1 Gender-wise Distribution

From a pool of 110 graduate students, 81% (85 responses) provided us with usable data. Table I further shows that out of a total of 89 responses, women made up 58% and men made up 42%. This survey clearly shows a gender bias in favour of female respondents over male ones.

3.2 Purpose of Information Literacy Used

Based on the data in Table 2, most respondents employed their information literacy skills for Project work purposes (n=62, 69.66%), followed by Course assignment (n=54, 60.67%), and Examination Materials (n=36, 40.45%). Fewer than one-third (32.38%; n=29) of respondents said they put their information literacy skills to use in ways outside research.

3.3 Type of e-Resources Used

Information on the electronic resources utilised by postgraduate students is shown in Table 3. Based on the statistics in the table, it is evident that electronic journals are required reading for the vast majority of students (n=42, 47.19%), followed by electronic theses and dissertations (n=28, 31.6%), electronic databases (15.73%), and electronic books (14.61%). Fewer responses are necessary for e-archives and topic gateways. The vast majority of students surveyed reported using electronic journals for a range of activities.

3. 4Search Techniques and Strategies Used

Table 4 shows that 80.90 percent of respondents are doing online searches using just basic keywords. 393 people per cent and 359 people per cent employ Boolean operators and field search methods, respectively. Twenty-three percent only utilise truncation, whereas fourteen percent only use wild-card searches. From this, we may infer that the vast majority of respondents are unaware of the significance of using the many sophisticated search strategies now at their disposal for efficient retrieval of information from online sites.

3.5 Technology Used to Extract the Online Information

Technology used by respondents to obtain data from internet sources is shown in Table 5. The majority of respondents (73.3%) and the far majority (62.9%) also utilised the copy/paste tool and/or photocopied documents. Scanners were used by 27 respondents (30.34%) to get data from the internet, while audiovisual equipment was the only method used by the fewest (20.22%).

3.6 Looking for Information on Online

In today's information explosion, the capacity to pinpoint a specific information requirement and locate it are of paramount importance. Table 6 shows that 97.01 percent of respondents who went online to get information used a search engine, and 71.91 percent used a website. Three-score and one people have mentioned using the subject gateway to research a topic.

3.7 Search Terms for Finding Document

Table 7 shows that the majority of respondents (79, 88.76%) sorted the answers correctly by title, followed by 45 (53.93%) by topic, then 32 (35.96%) by author, and finally 25 (28.09%) by publisher.

3.8 Recommendations for Improving Information Literacy

Table 8 details how 79 respondents (88.76%) think the department should immediately begin an information literacy programme, 41 (46.07%) think it's necessary to begin a user education training programme, 36 (40.45%) think it would be beneficial to have more trained and skilled library personnel working in the seminar library, 52 (58.43%) think it would be beneficial to have information literacy guidelines for the students, and 18 (20.22%) have no comments about how to better improve informatics.

4.0 MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Sixty-nine point six percent of respondents relied on information literacy to complete a project, followed by 60.67 percent for the completion of an assignment and 40.45 percent for the completion of an exam. About half of all respondents (47.19%) and almost a third of all dissertation and thesis respondents (31.6%) said that electronic journals and e-theses and -dissertations met an essential information demand.
2. A whopping 80.90 percent of respondents only utilise basic keyword searches when looking for information online, while just 39.33 percent and 35.96 percent, respectively, rely on more advanced strategies like Boolean operators and field searches.
3. Respondents most often used the copy/paste feature (73%), followed by photocopy (62.92%).
4. Most people who have used the internet to get information (97.01%) found it via a search engine or website (71.91%). When asked how they would go about looking for a paper online, 88.76 percent of respondents said they would use the title, while 53.93 percent said they would use the topic.
5. The vast majority of respondents (88.76%) believe that the department should immediately begin an information literacy programme, while 46.07% believe that the need to begin a user education training programme, 40.45% believe that more trained and skilled library personnel are needed in the seminar library, and 58.52% believe that students should be provided with information literacy guidelines.

5.0 CONCLUSION

As we go more into the digital age, the need for information literacy has grown. Understanding and evaluating knowledge is crucial, regardless of where it was gathered (online, at a library, or elsewhere). This research demonstrated that postgraduate students have significant difficulties in the domain of information literacy. When designing courses, librarians' expertise should be sought out to ensure that information literacy skills are included. Teachers and librarians need to work together to create a training programme for students to learn how to use today's information creation, management, and dissemination tools, as well as how to use these tools effectively.

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