Information Literacy Skills Among Faculty of Government Arts and Science Colleges: A Survey

M Grace★

Librarian, Loganatha Narayanasamy Government College, Ponneri, Chennai, TN, IND.

R. Madasamy

Librarian, Government College, Krishnagiri, TN, IND.

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Information Literacy is a collection of skills that each human must have to recognise a need, search, access, comprehend, analyse, and use information effectively and efficiently. Information literacy is the framework for professional career learning and applies to all professions and educational levels. In the modern age, information literacy abilities must be acquired. This study aided in assessing the information literacy abilities of the faculty at Chennai's government arts and science colleges, as well as the need for information literacy training for the faculty.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Libraries face a dynamic and even more complex environment due to the explosive growth of information or documents and the technological advancements that has been causing changes in the generation and dissemination of content and its use (American Library Association, 2000). In the electronic information environment, it is necessary to be aware of the information system, user behaviour, requirements, expectations, and the technical instruments that enable user interaction (Akkoyunlu and Kurbanoğlu, 2000). In the electronic environment, users expect instant global search to reach the required information and utilise it to fulfil their purpose. The role of librarians in the digital environment is to help users to find the required information and to provide them with the tools to assess and use them for their needs.

★ *Corresponding author's e-mail:* gracedharma18@gmail.com (M Grace)

1.1 Objectives of the Study

- To examine the information literacy skills of the faculty in government arts and science colleges.
- To compare the information literacy skills of faculty teaching arts and science subjects.
- To assess the variation in developing their information literacy skills among the faculty in terms of their age, gender and designation.
- To identify the need and mode of information literacy programmes for the faculty.

1.2 Hypotheses

- Faculty teaching science subjects possess more information literacy skills than the faculty teaching arts subjects.
- There is a significant variation exists between the male and female faculty in developing their information literacy skills.
- Maximum faculty do not know about online catalogues and search methods.
- There is a need to provide information literacy programmes for the faculty.

2.0 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

A questionnaire has been administered to the faculty of government arts and science colleges of Chennai. Data has been collected from faculty of various departments of various colleges to assess their personal information, library use and their skills related to information searching and using the information. Out of 200 questionnaires distributed, 125 were responded to the questionnaire and the response rate 62.50%.

3.0 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The questionnaire asked about skills needed in using the online catalogue, digital library, websites, databases and their search strategies.
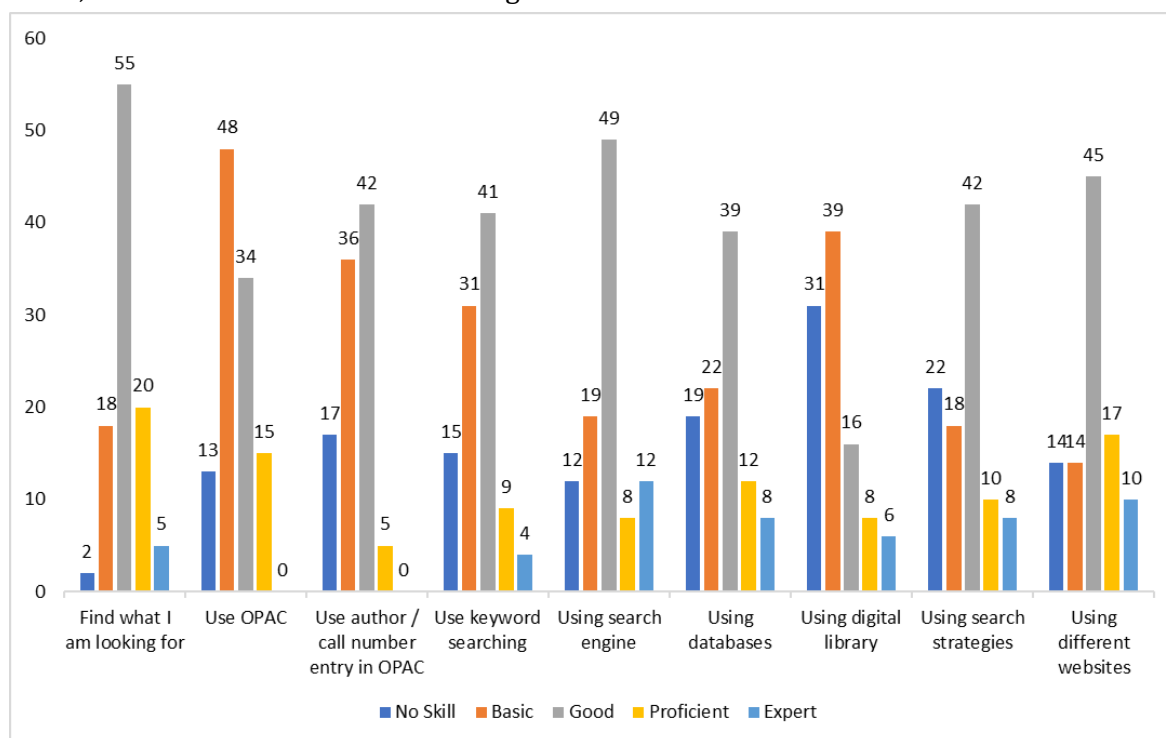

Figure 1 – Cataloguing and Information Search Strategies

Figure 1 reveals that most of the faculty has not possessed the skills in using OPAC, search method in OPAC, using the digital library, search engines and techniques used. Even though many of the faculty use keyword searching, search engines and databases, they are good enough to use them but proficient in handling them. It helps to identify the area of skill needed by identifying where they are lacking, and it stressed the need for information literacy training need to improve their proficiency in identifying the resources and using them.

Table 1 – Information Literacy Skills of Faculty of Government Arts and Science Colleges

	SD	D	N	A	SA
Realise the need/problem exists that requires information	2	2	51	38	7
Identify and define the information needed	2	5	34	50	9
Determine the existence of needed information	0	6	31	43	20
Find the required information	0	4	19	59	18
Create unavailable information that I need	0	14	44	30	12
Understand the found information	2	12	34	45	7
Go for help if needed to understand the information	2	12	31	45	10
Organise, analyse, interpret and evaluate the information	5	2	29	52	12
Evaluate the information and its sources	2	2	40	46	10
Communicate and present inappropriate manner	0	3	34	49	14
Utilise the information to meet the need	5	2	25	58	10
Preserve, reuse and archive for future use	2	2	30	52	14
Dispose of information is no longer needed; protect when needed	2	5	36	48	9

From Table 1, it has been found that most of the faculty (80%) possess information literacy skills. But the skills varied among them 40 - 55% of faculty agree that they are applying their skills in finding and using the information. Another 30 % of the faculty is neutral in applying those information literacy skills. Very few are strongly agreed that they possess and also apply information literacy skills when searching for information.
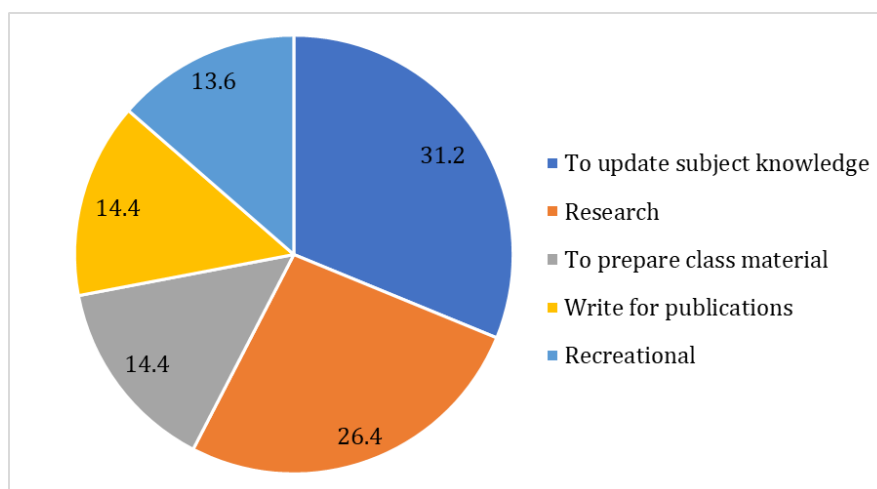
Figure 2 – Purpose of Using Electronic Resources

Figure 2 illustrates that the majority of professors utilise electronic resources to refresh their expertise in their individual subject area, and 26.4% use electronic resources for research assistance.

4.0 MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

31% of the faculty is using the library frequently to locate their resources to meet their needs. 38 % of the faculty possess a PhD and 40% of the faculty possess M. Phil. as their qualification. 58% of the faculty is working as Assistant Professors. The majority of the faculty belongs to the age group of 36 - 45 yrs. It has been identified that 48% of the faculty have not possessed skills in using OPAC and search strategies and 52% of the faculty are familiar with using OPAC. Most of them (53%) gained knowledge to use OPAC through the internet, and 32% of them gained through friends and colleagues. It has been found that still many of the faculty (45 %) needed their information in Print format.

To educate faculty members, the institution should launch information literacy programmes. The university should provide the appropriate infrastructure to facilitate the use of electronic information. Information literacy skills are introduced into the curriculum to help students build abilities that will benefit their research work. The library must provide information literacy training programmes for the faculty and the students to understand the latest technologies, databases, and search strategies to maximise the utilisation of information resources.

5.0 CONCLUSION

With the fast development of technology and the explosion of information, there is an education disparity among information users. It is critical for the teaching and research communities to educate individuals and promote the effective and efficient use of information. The institution should take the lead in improving faculty and student information literacy abilities in the electronic age.

REFERENCES

American Library Association (2000) "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education", Chicago: The Association of College and Research Libraries. Available at http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.

Akkoyunlu, B., & Kurbanoğlu, S., (2002) "A Study on Equipping Students with Information Literacy Skills", *Turkish Librarianship,* 16(2), pp. 123-138.