Information Seeking Behaviour of the Users of Internet Browsing Centres in Tiruchendure Taluk, Tamil Nadu: A Study

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Abstract

The present article discusses about the Information Seeking Behaviour of the users of Internet browsing centres in Tiruchendure Taluk of Thoothukudi District. A sample of eight Internet browsing centres has been chosen for the study. About 60 respondents covering 34 males and 26 females were chosen on the basis of purposive sampling method. The required information has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. A structured, close ended questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The study recalled that majority of the respondents use Internet browsing for academic purposes. They mainly use direct URL Method and Yahoo e-mail ID.

1. INTRODUCTION

Internet is the name for a vast, World Wide system consisting of people, Information and Computers [1]. The Department of Defense, United States was interested in building up a network that could maintain itself under adverse conditions [2]. Hence, they sponsored a project called (ARPA) Advanced Projects Agency during 1968 for developing techniques to build a large-scale network [3].

The Internet allows millions of People, all over the World to communicate and share information through electronic mail [4]. It is the first global forum and the first global library. Anyone can participate at any time and the Internet never closes. One might play a game or read an electronic magazine of search for some Information on a computer in another country [5]. Then spend a half-an-hour or so looking around for interesting things. On the Internet, it is easy to move from one place to another as the persons move [6].

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The scope of the study is to analyse the information seeking behaviour of internet users in various internet browsing centres in Tiruchendure taluk, Thoothukudi district. The facilities provided by these centres make the users to visit frequently and spend more time in the browsing centres.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study is to find out the level of information seeking behaviour among the users in internet browsing centres in Tiruchendure Taluk. The other objectives are:

i   To study the socio-economic status of the users of internet browsing centres in Tiruchendure Taluk.

ii To study the various browsing techniques adopted by the internet users.

iii To study the various types of information sources browsed by the internet users.

iv To study the online news paper reading habit among the internet users.

v   To analyze the usage of online journal/ periodical articles by internet users.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To collect the required data for study, the researcher has chosen the browsing centres of Tiruchendure taluk as the field of study.

4.1 Sampling Design

The population of internet users is infinitely large. Hence, the researcher has chosen only eight internet browsing centres locating in Nazareth, Kurumbur, Arumuganeri, Udangudi, Kayalpatnam, Tiruchendure, Meignanapuram and Paramankurichi. From the selected areas, about 60 users of internet have been selected as samples on the basis of purposive sampling method. Out of the 60 respondents 34 are males and the remaining 26 are females.

4.2 Tools Used for Collection of Data

The required information for the study has been collected both from primary and secondary sources. The selected 60 respondents formed the source of primary data. The first hand information has been collected through the issue of a structured, close-ended questionnaire. The secondary data has been collected from the records   available with the taluk office , the regional centre of NIC in the BSNL office at Thoothukudi.

4.3 Tools Used for the Analysis

For analysis and interpretation of the data collected, simple statistical tools such as averages, percentages, tables and diagrams are used. In addition four point scale as well as two-way ANOVA analysis has also been used.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows the distribution of internet users age-wise. The table shows that the majority of the users (58.3%) fall under the age group of 21 to 30. People above 50 years of age use Internet very rarely.

Table 1 Distribution of Age-wise Internet Users

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Below 20	10	03	13	21.7
21 – 30	16	19	35	58.3
31 – 40	03	03	06	10.0
41 – 50	04	01	05	08.3
Above 51	01	00	01	01.7
Total	34	26	60	100

Source: Computed from Primary data.

The table shows that women in the age group of 21-30 use internet more than in the other age groups. enquiries show that majority of them are students from colleges. In fact, in this age group girls exceed boys in using internet. It is evident from Table 2 that the educational qualification of the users of internet ranges from illiterates to professionals. The majority of the users of internet are degree holders (31%) . Out of the 60 respondents, about 8 respondents covering 13% are post-graduates. About 11% of the users are professionals such as teachers, lawyers or other business executives.

Table 2 Distribution of Users of Internet -Educational Standard-wise

Qualification	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Illiterate	01	01	02	03.3
S S L C	09	03	12	20.0
Degree	16	15	31	51.7
Post-graduate	05	03	08	13.3
Professional	03	04	07	11.7
Total	34	26	60	100

Source:Calculated from Primary data

It is inferred from the Table that people with SSLC qualifications are college students. About 13 respondents who are below the age of 20 who visit the browsing centres mostly for playing games . The post-graduate students are visiting browsing centres for down loading Articles from refereed Journals or to refer to Articles connected with their project reports.

The study has revealed that the respondents use either direct URL method or use search engine method . Table 3 shows that majority of the respondents (71.7%) use direct URL method for browsing and only 28% of the respondents use search engine method.

Table 3 Mode of Browsing Used by the Users

Mode of Browsing	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
By Direct URL	25	18	43	71.7
Through Search Engine	9	8	17	28.3
Total	34	26	60	100

Source: Primary data

As far as the mode of browsing is concerned there is no much variation between male and female respondents. It is also inferred that among in the Internet users, the users of search engine is less than respondents using URL method. Majority of the people who are using search engine for Browsing use either Yahoo or Google.

Data in Table 4 reveal the distribution of internet users according to the periodicity of browsing. It is evident from table that majority of the respondents (22) covering 36.7% are browsing once in a week. Only about 11 respondents covering 18.3% are browsing daily. About 14 respondents covering 23.3% use internet browsing occasionally.

Table 4 Internet Users According to Periodicity of Browsing

Periodicity of Browsing	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Daily	8	3	11	18.3
Once in a Week	13	9	22	36.7
Occasionally	7	7	14	23.3
Whenever Required	6	7	13	21.7
Total	34	26	60	100

Source: Prepared from Primary data.

The Internet users are browsing for various purposes. According to the importance of the purposes weightage has been given and on the basis of weightage ranking has been given for the various purposes for which Browsing is done by the respondents. Table 5 shows that majority of the Internet Users Browse mainly for academic purposes. The second rank has been given for chit chatting; the third purpose is to enrich their knowledge. Respondents Browse for entertainment has earned only fourth rank. People browse for business purpose has earned only 10th rank.

For allotting weightage the method of browsing has been taken. It is inferred from Table 5 that the majority of the respondents use internet browsing mainly for academic purposes.

Table 6 shows the details of news papers being browsed by the respondents. The analysis of the data collected shows that about nine respondents covering 15 % are browsing Thinamalar. All other papers are browsed by only a less number of respondents.

Since the main purpose of browsing is Academic affairs the Table 7 shows the distribution of internet users browsing articles appeared in Journals.

Table 5 Internet Users According to Purposes of Browsing

Purposes of Browsing	Male	Female	Total	Rank
Academic purpose	77	46	123	I
To Enrich Knowledge	67	31	98	III
Business Information	51	16	67	X
Entertainment	71	24	95	IV
Chatting	73	32	105	II
E-mail	53	33	86	V
Voice Mail	50	26	76	VI
Data Mail	61	14	75	VII
Internet Phone	49	24	73	VIII
Online Data access	38	13	51	XII
Job Opportunity	53	17	72	IX
Others	49	12	61	XI
Total	694	288	982	

Source: Calculated from the data collected.

Table 6 Browsed for News Paper Reading

Name of News Papers	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
The Hindu	2	3	5	8.4
Indian Express	3	2	5	8.4
Times of India	2	1	3	5.0
Thinamani	0	0	0	0.0
Thinamalar	7	2	9	15.0
Thinakaran	2	0	2	3.0
Thinathanthi	3	2	5	8.4
Others	0	1	1	1.8
None	15	15	30	50.0
Total	34	26	60	100

Source: Computed from Primary data

Table 7 Browsing of Journal Articles

Periodical / Journals	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
Abstract that available freely	5	3	8	13.3
Full Text of articles freely	4	4	8	13.3
For full articles that requires subscriptions	4	1	5	8.3
For access of Journal that requires subscriptions	3	1	4	6.7
None	18	17	35	58.4
Total	34	26	60	100

Source: Calculated from Primary data

6. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Since the number of respondents selected for the study is limited to be only 60 and the area of study is also limited to one single taluk, the out comes of the study can not be generalized. The finding is applicable only to Tiruchendure taluk of Thoothukudi district.

7. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The following are the major findings of the study. The objective of the study is concentrated on Information seeking behaviour among the users of internet browsing centres in the Tiruchendure taluk.

i   The study revealed that majority of the internet users fall in the age group of 21-30.

ii The study also reveals that women are equally interested in internet browsing.

iii It is learnt from the study that the internet users are mostly graduates. Even among graduates, males form the major junk of the users of Internet.

iv It is found that more employed persons use internet browsing than unemployed. Among them employed, teachers form the major percent. Internet browsing is used by business people very rarely.

v   The majority of the internet users follow direct URL method. Search engine method is followed by a less percentage of respondents.

vi People who use search engine mostly use Yahoo.

vii The study reveals that browsing for academic purpose stands fore most and ranked first. Chatting ranked second and people browsing for enriching their knowledge ranks only third position.

viii Browsing for searching for journal articles and news paper reading is in very much low. More awareness will have to be created for using these resources.

8. CONCLUSION

Even though the study has revealed that the main purpose of internet browsing is for academic purposes, the other purposes like internet banking dissemination of knowledge and knowledge sharing culture are to be popularized.

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