

Information Seeking Behaviour Pattern among the Students and Faculty in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Libraries

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Abstract

Information is an essence of research. Agricultural University Libraries play an important role in providing information to the users. The users seek for information in different patterns. In the present study, the authors have made an attempt to know the information seeking patterns of the Under Graduate Students, Post Graduate Students and Ph.D. Scholars in Agriculture and Faculty Members of various Agricultural College Libraries of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) in Tamil Nadu. The questionnaire method was adopted to collect data. About 80% responses have been received. The study identified various modes of literature search, purpose of visit, type of information gathered, frequency of library visit and time spent in the library. The chi-square test was applied to find out the significant relationship on the opinion of the users among the colleges. The result shows that there is significant difference among the users of different colleges of TNAU in the preference of various channels of Agricultural information, modes of literature search, purpose of visit to the library and time spent in the library.

Keywords: Agricultural University Libraries, Information Seeking Behaviour, Library Users

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of a library as a repository of information is undergoing a profound change. Information is an important ingredient for research. It has its value only when it is used in time. The researchers are in search of pin-pointed, up-to-date and exhaustive information at their desktop for their research [1]. The universities being the centers of higher education and research impart advanced knowledge to provide necessary facilities to develop new knowledge. They are natural home of research and contribute significantly to research and serve as training ground for researchers. Due to information explosion and the influence of information technology, the approaches to libraries vary among the researchers [2].

2. PROFILE OF TAMIL NADU AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY

The Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has its beginning with an agricultural school at Saidapet, Chennai in 1876 which later blossomed in to a college offering Diploma and Certificate courses in agriculture. In 1907, the college was shifted to Coimbatore. In 1920, the college was affiliated to the University of Madras with the introduction of a three year B.Sc. (Agriculture) Degree programme. Till 1946, the Agricultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore was the only institute for Agricultural Education for the whole of South India. In 1958, it was recognized as a post graduate centre leading to masters and doctoral degrees. The Agriculture College & Research Institute, Madurai was established in 1965. These two colleges formed the nuclei of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, which was established during 1971 [3].

Subsequently more colleges were started across Tamil Nadu and at present the following 10 constituent colleges are under TNAU, Coimbatore namely, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore, Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, Coimbatore, Horticultural College and Research Institute, Coimbatore, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Madurai, Home Science College and Research Institute, Madurai, Agricultural College and Research Institute, Killikulam, Tuticorin, Anbil Dharmalingam Agricultural College and Research Institute, Trichy, Agricultural Engineering College and Research Institute, Kumulur, Trichy, Horticultural College and Research institute, Periyakulam, Theni, Forest College and Research Institute, Mettupalayam.

3. OBJECTIVES

- i To find out the frequency of library visit and time spent in the library.
- ii To know the various channels of information preferred by the users.
- iii To find out the association between different categories of respondents with levels of library services.

4. HYPOTHESES

- i There is a significant difference between the categories of respondents (Library Users) in library visit and time spent in the library.
- ii There is a significant difference among the categories of respondents in the preference of various sources of information literacy and library information services.
- iii There exists a significant association between different categories of sample respondents and their levels of opinion about library services.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study was mainly based on the primary data. The well structured questionnaire was used to collect data (450) from the respondents namely Under Graduate, Post Graduate, Ph.D. students in Agriculture and Faculty members of the ten constituent colleges of TNAU, Coimbatore. The population consists of 2711 UG students,

590 PG students, 251 Ph.D. Scholars and 770 Faculty during 2008-2009. The respondents were selected by random sampling technique. SPSS version 14.0 software was used for analyzing the data collected.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

It is essential for a study to process data and analyse them in accordance with the method laid down for the purpose in order to arrive at the possible results. In the present study, the main purpose of the questionnaire was to collect the data about information seeking behaviour pattern among the students and faculty in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Libraries. The data were analyzed using SPSS package 14th version. The chi-square was employed to verify the validity of the hypotheses [4]. The data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted in the following sections.

Table 1 Frequency of Library Visit by the Respondents

Sl. No	Category	Frequency	%
1	Daily	139	30.89
2	Alternative days	92	20.44
3	Weekly two times	85	18.89
4	Weekly one time	63	14.00
5	Occasionally	71	15.78
Total		450	100

It was found that regularity plays a key role in updating of knowledge of human beings. In the present study, of the total respondents, about 31% visited the library daily; 20% visited alternate days; 19% visited twice in a week; 14% visited once in a week and 16% visited the library occasionally.

Table 2 Hours Spent at the Library by the Respondents

Sl. No.	Frequency	Hours per Day					Total
		1 Hour	2 Hours	3 Hours	4 Hours	Above 4 Hours	
1	Daily	73 (16.22 %)	34 (7.56%)	20 (4.44%)	5 (1.11%)	7 (1.56%)	139 (30.89%)
2	Alternative	32 (7.11%)	33 (7.33%)	15 (3.33%)	10 (2.22%)	2 (0.44%)	92 (20.44%)
3	Weekly two times	15 (3.33%)	32 (7.11%)	15 (3.33%)	12 (2.67%)	11 (2.44%)	85 (18.89%)
4	Weekly one time	19 (4.22%)	16 (3.56%)	15 (3.33%)	9 (2.00%)	4 (0.89%)	63 (14.00%)
5	Occasionally	35 (7.78%)	11 (2.44%)	22 (4.89%)	2 (0.44%)	1 (0.22%)	71 (15.78%)
Total		174 (38.67%)	126 (28.00%)	87 (19.33%)	38 (8.44%)	25 (5.56%)	450 (100%)

* Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage on 450 total respondents

* Each percentage in the parenthesis is based on total respondents

The Table 2 shows that about 39% of the respondents spent one hour in the library at different frequency of visit while 28% of the respondents spent 2 hours; 19% spent 3 hours; 8% spent 4 hours and 6% spent above 4 hours.

Table 3 Usage of Library Resources by the Respondents

S.No.	Library Resources	Purpose	
		To Read	To Refer
1	Text Books	375 (83.33%)	240 (53.33%)
2	Reference Books	213 (47.33%)	319 (70.89%)
3	General Knowledge Books	308 (68.44%)	127 (28.22%)
4	Back Volumes	117 (26.00%)	231 (51.33%)
5	Journals	297 (66.00%)	261 (58.00%)
6	News Papers	373 (82.89%)	101 (22.44%)
7	Thesis	93 (20.67%)	217 (48.22%)
8	Reports	142 (31.56%)	249 (55.33%)
9	Non-Book Materials	142 (31.56%)	263 (58.44%)
10	Internet	271 (60.22%)	261 (58.00%)

* Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage on total respondents N=450

It is clear from the Table 3 that the highest percentage of the respondents who used to read text books was about 83% while the lowest percentage of the respondents who used to read theses was about 21%. The highest percentage of the respondents who used to refer reference books was about 71% while the lowest percentage of the respondents who used to refer news papers was about 22%.

The Table 4 shows that the calculated chi-square value is 22.34. The tabulated chi-square value for 12 degrees of at 5% level of significant is 21.03. Since the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value there exists a significant association between different levels of opinion about library services and different categories of respondents.

7. FINDINGS

- It is observed from the analysis that 31% of the respondents had daily; 20% alternative days; 19% weekly times; 14% weekly one time and 16% occasionally visit to the library.
- The response show that majority of the respondents spent at least one hour (39%); 28%, 19%, 8% and 6% of the respondents visit the library two hours, three hours, four hours and above four hours respectively.

Table 4 Association between Different Categories of Respondents with Different Levels of Opinion about Library Services

Library Services	Respondents				Total	χ^2 -Value
	UG	PG	Ph.D	Faculty		
Poor	2 (20.00)	2 (20.00)	2 (20.00)	4 (40.00)	10 (100)	22.34*
Moderate	109 (53.43)	50 (24.51)	18 (8.82)	27 (13.24)	204 (100)	
Good	81 (65.85)	17 (13.82)	7 (5.69)	18 (14.64)	123 (100)	
Very good	47 (60.26)	11 (14.10)	6 (7.69)	14 (17.95)	78 (100)	
Excellent	20 (57.14)	7 (20.00)		8 (22.86)	35 (100)	
Total	259 (57.56)	87 (19.33)	33 (7.33)	71 (15.78)	450 (100)	

* Significant at 5 % level. The Figures in the parentheses indicate percentage to the row total

- iii It is revealed from the study that the highest percentage (83%) of the total respondents is using the library to read textbooks and the smallest percent (21%) to read theses. The highest percentage of the total respondents (71%) is using library to refer reference books and the lower percentage (22%) to refer newspaper.
- iv It is found that there exists a significant association between different categories of respondents (UG, PG, Ph.D students and Faculty) and different levels of opinion about reference services

8. CONCLUSION

The study on "Information Seeking Behaviour Pattern among the Students and Faculty in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University Libraries" is very helpful in documenting Information Literacy and Library Information Services. The respondents in this study area have varied levels of knowledge on information services. The study also quantified the respondent's time allocation to visit library. Majority of the respondents have utilized the library only to read text books. The research helped to find out the association between different levels of respondents and opinion about the reference services. Based on the use pattern of the university libraries, care has been taken to attract the users to visit library more frequently and spend their valuable time in the library to

exploit the agricultural university library information resources, facilities and services to meet their user's needs.

9. REFERENCES

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