

Use of Electronic Information Resources by Faculty Members in Bharathidasan University: A Survey

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Abstract

A survey was administered among the academic community along with observations and informal interviews to study the use of electronic information resources by Faculty Members in Bharathidasan University. A survey of 120 faculty members was conducted through a questionnaire. The analysis of the collected data covers the use of electronic information resources and how the electronic resources are improving the academic carrier of the faculty and also what are the problems are faced in using the electronic resources. It concludes that the main intention of the use of electronic resources has been the academic interest of the users.

Keywords: *Bharathidasan University, Electronic Resources, Faculty Members*

1. INTRODUCTION

With advancement of technology the libraries are moving towards digital resources, which are found to be less expensive and more helpful for easy access [1]. These are helpful especially to distant learners who have limited time to access the libraries from outside by dial up access by the commonly available electronic resources mainly e-Journal, e-books, online databases, internet, CD-Rom etc., which are replacing the prints media [2]. Tamil Nadu state has more than 40 Universities including, Government, Aided, and private university. The Bharathidasan University is one of the prestigious universities established during the academic year 1982. The university has 14 schools in Science, Arts, Management and Engineering technology including 33 departments. This university is having faculty strength of over 223. The Bharathidasan University Library established in February 1982. The Library has 89,217 volumes of books, 7000 back volumes and subscribes 229 current journals and national and international level as print copies to cover a wide range of subject to facilitated users to access current academic and research literature. It also has on-line access to more than 8000 journal in full text and a

few database of abstract indexing journal and also 8500 Springer e-books are procured on various subjects and reading and internet facilities are also available in this library.

2. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The study is confined to the faculty members of Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli regarding the use of electronic information resources. It aims to fulfill the academic needs of the faculty members to cover electronic resources namely e-journals, e-books, on-line database, internet, and CD-Rom etc., The Study period covers August 2010 to July 2011.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the availability of different types of electronic resources in BDU library;
2. To study of use of different types of electronic resources by the faculty members;
3. To study the purpose and utilization of the electronic resources by the faculty members;
4. To find out the hindrances faced by the faculty members which accessing and using electronic resources;

5. To observe the impact of electronic resources over the traditional one, and
6. To suggest suitable recommendations to improve the electronics resources and services for the benefit of faculty members.

4. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire consisting of 12 questions was designed to elicit the opinion of the faculty members. These were distributed among the 200 faculty members out of which 120 responded to the request with a response rate of 60% and the required data was collected which were farther supplemented by informal discussions with the faculty. The analysis and interpretation of the data is presented in the subsequent section.

5. DATA ANALYSIS

The designation-wise distribution of respondent is shown in Table 1. 57.5% of the respondents are Assistant Professors, followed by 27.5% of the respondents are Associate Professors, and only 15% are Professors working in this university.

Table 1 Designation-wise Distribution of Faculty Members

Designation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Assistant Professors	69	57.5
Associate Professors	33	27.5
Professors	18	15.0
Total	120	100

Table 2 reveals that 73.33% of male members are working as faculty in Bharathidasan University whereas only 26.67% of female members are working as faculty. This is a glaring example of male-female in balance in teaching community at Bharathidasan University.

Table 3 shows that 10% of the faculty members have more than 25 years of experience in teaching and at the same time 26.67% of the faculty members have 5-10 years of teaching experience followed by 21-66% of

faculty members having less than 5 years of teaching experience, where as 13.33% of respondents have 15-20 and 20-25 years of teaching experience respectively.

Table 2 Sex-wise Distribution of Faculty Members

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	88	73.33
Female	32	26.67
Total	120	100

Table 3 Teaching Experience of Faculty members

Experience in Years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
0-5	26	21.67
5-10	32	26.67
10-15	18	15.00
15-20	16	13.00
20-25	16	13.00
Above 25	12	10.00
Total	120	100

Table 4 shows that out of 120 respondents, 32 faculty members (26.67%) use electronic resources once in a week followed by 30 (25%) who are using daily where as 18.33% of faculty members use occasionally and only 5% of faculty members never use of the electronic resources in the library.

Table 4 Frequency of Using Electronic Resource by Faculty Members

Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Daily	30	25.00
2-3 in a Day	12	10.00
Once in a Week	32	26.67
Once in a Month	18	15.00
Occasionally	22	18.33
Never Used	6	5.00
Total	120	100

Table 5 reveals that majority (72.82%) of faculty members are using electronic resources for research work followed by 43.08% of members using for finding

relevant information in the area of specialization, whereas 39.26% use to gain current information ,and fewer percentage (13.33%) of faculty members are using for communication purpose.

Table 5 Purpose of Using Electronic Resources

Purpose	No. of Respondents	Percentage
For Research Work	142	72.82
For Communication	26	13.33
For Finding Relevant Information in the Area of Specialization	84	43.08
To Update the Subject Knowledge	43	29.65
To Gain Current Information	59	30.26
Teaching Purpose	195	100

Table 6 shows frequency of use of electronic resources by the faculty members. Majority of the (42.64%) faculties are using Internet, followed by 60

faculty members (23.26%) using e-journals and 13.95% using online databases. However 28 (10.85%) respondents are using e-books.

Table 6 Use Electronic Resource by Faculty Members

Type of Electronic Resources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
E-journals	60	23.26
E-books	28	10.85
Internet	110	42.64
Online Databases	36	13.95
CD-ROM	24	9.30
Total	258	100.00

Table 7 shows the most popular methods of acquiring the necessary skills to use electronic resources. 37(30.83%) respondents take guidance from library staff. 34(28.34%) respondents learn through trial and error method, 21(17.50%) respondents learn with the help of computer staff and 15(12.50%) respondents learn from external courses through library.

Table 8 shows that 62(51.67%) respondents indicate that the information available in the electronic resources is always adequate followed by 54 (45%) indicate some time adequate and 4(3.33%) of respondents felt that the

information available in the electronic resources is never adequate.

Table 9 shows the opinion regarding hindrances in accessing the electronic resources. Majority 44(36.67%) of respondents started that too much information is retrieved as the main barrier to use electronic resources followed by 32(26.67%) opined that time consuming, 25(20.83%) felt that lack of IT knowledge to effectively utilize the services, and 12 (10.00%) respondents stated that limited access to computers as the min barrier to use electronic resources.

Table 7 Learning to Use of Electronic Resources

Learning to Use Electronic Resources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Trial and Error	34	28.34
Guidance from Library Staff	37	30.83
Course Offered by the Institution	10	8.23
Guidance from the Computer Staff	21	17.50
External Course	15	12.50
Any Other (Please Specify)	3	2.50
Total	120	100

Table 8 Adequacy of Information in Electronic Resources

Opinion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Always	62	51.67
Some time	54	45.00
Never	4	3.33
Total	120	100

Table 9 Hindrances in Accessing Electronic Resources

Hindrances	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Too Much Information is Retrieved	44	36.67
Time Consuming	32	26.67
Lack of IT Knowledge to Effectively Utilize the Services	25	20.83
Using Electronic Resources Often Distract from Doing Work	7	5.83
Limited Access to Computers	12	10.00
Total	120	100

Table 10 shows that 41(34.17%) respondents stated access to a current up-to-date information is the benefit of using electronic resources. Similarly, 29(24.16%) expressed faster access to information is the advantage, and 26 (21.67%) indicated easier access to information as the benefit to develop the academic career of the faculty members.

Table10 Impact of Electronic Resources on Academic career

Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Access To a Current Up-to Date Information	41	34.17
Easier Access to Information	26	21.67
Faster Access to Information	29	24.16
Access to a Wider Range of Information	24	20.00
Total	120	100

Table 11 Problems Faced While Using Electronic Resources

Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Lack of hardware	15	12.5
Lack of software	21	17.5
Lack of Training	24	20.00
Lack of Information on electronic resources	21	17.05
Lack of operating funds	8	6.67
Lack of Training	31	25.83
Total	120	100

Table 13 Faculty Opinion Regarding Features of Electronic Resources as Sources for their Academic Work

Features	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Average
Accessibility	8(6.67)	34(28.33)	58(48.33)	18(15.00)	2(1.67)	3.23
Accuracy	12(10.00)	32(26.67)	54(45.00)	16(13.33)	6(5.00)	3.23
Availability	12(10.00)	24(20.00)	68(56.67)	12(10.00)	4(3.33)	3.23
Consistency	4(3.33)	24(20.00)	74(61.67)	14(11.67)	4(3.33)	3.08
Ease of use	2(1.67)	28(23.33)	74(61.67)	12(10.00)	4(3.33)	3.10
Flexibility	10(8.33)	24(20.00)	66(55.00)	18(15.00)	2(1.67)	3.18
Permanence	12(10.00)	20(16.67)	64(53.33)	22(18.33)	2(1.67)	3.15
Time liness	6(5.00)	26(21.67)	50(41.67)	34(28.33)	4(3.33)	2.95
Uniqueness	4(3.33)	34(28.33)	56(46.17)	24(20.00)	2(1.67)	3.12
Usefulness	18(15.00)	17(35.00)	52(43.33)	8(6.67)	0(0.00)	3.58

Note: Figures in the parenthesis represents percentages.

Table 13 shows the respondents rating the features of electronic resources for these academic works. Average (3%) numbers of faculty members have expressed as good towards the availability of electronic resources in the University Library.

Table11 shows that 31(25.83%) respondents have faced problems of lack of timing followed by 24(20%) faculty members indicating lack of training as the main problem while using electronic resources. 15(12.5%) and 21 (17.5%) faculties are troubled with lack of hardware and software problems respectively.

The respondents were requested to indicate the success rate in finding required information using electronic resources. Table 12 shows that 48(40%) respondents were succeeded in the range of 75-99% followed by 40(33.33%) respondents who succeeded in the range of 50-74% and least percentage (12%) of faculties were succeeded in the range of less than 25%.

Table 12 Success Rate in Finding Required Information

Success Rate	No. of Respondents	Percentage
100%	-	-
75.99%	48	40.00
50.74%	40	33.33
25.49%	20	16.67
Less than 25%	12	10.00
Total	120	100

6. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. Only 10% of the faculty members have more than 25 years of experience in teaching.
2. Majority of respondents (26.67%) are using electronic resource once in a week and of 2.82% of faculty members are using electronic resources for research work.
3. Majority (42.64%) of the respondents use internet and 60 respondents (23.26%) use E-journals. 37(30.83%) respondents are taking guidance from library staff while using of electronic resources.
4. Majority (51.67%) of the respondents indicate that the information available in the electronic resources is always adequate.
5. Regarding the hindrance of accessing the electronic resources, majority of respondents (36.67%) stated that too much information retrieved is the main barrier to use electronic resources.
6. Majority of respondents (34.17%) stated access to a current up-to-date information as a benefit of using electronic resources.
7. Regarding the success rate of finding the required information in electronic resources, 48(40%) faculty members have rated that they have succeeded in the range of 75-99%.

7. SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are made to improve the use of electronic resources among the faculty members.

1. The authority must conduct training programmes for faculty members regarding how to use the electronic resources effectively.
2. Awareness should be created to use e-journals and e-books to obtain current information.
3. More funds should be given to acquire electronic resources.

8. CONCLUSION

The electronic resources have played a vital role in all fields of human life. These have rapidly changed the way of seeking and disseminating information. The emergence of Electronic Information and Communication environment has provide the academic community of the universities with wide opportunities to satisfy their information needs. It is clear from the study that the faculty members of Bharathidasan University have developed their academic career. The speed of availability and the ease of accessibility of information make the faculty members to use electronic resources more frequently. This study helps the librarian to know the importance of electronic resources in academic environment.

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