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Usage of E-Books by Teaching Professionals: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Today, a greater number of electronic resources are available for retrieving information but locating relevant information in a timely manner is critical for teaching profession. Electronic books (eBooks) are one way to enhance the digital library with global 24-hours-a-day and 7-days-a-week access to easy, quick, and effective information. During the last decade, libraries and publishers have made a successful move in providing online journals and database. But, the perspective of teaching professionals and academicians on e-books is unrevealed. Electronic textbooks and reading devices had to improve teaching professionals learning experience, in order to be effective. The study was undertaken to investigate the extent of usage and acceptability of e-books from teaching professionals perspective. This study is also undertaken to examine the difference in perception of usage of e-books on the basis of teaching professionals of varied discipline of management courses. This study is based on the primary data collected from 150 respondents in Indore city. Results of this study will be beneficial to authors/ publishers uploading their e-books.

Keywords: E-books, Teaching Professionals, Management Courses etc.

1. Introduction

According to Lee (2002), "e-Book" is a term used to describe a text analogous to a book that is in digital form to be displayed on a computer". Garrod (2003) states, "if a digital library is defined as an electronic extension of functions users typically perform and the resources they access in a traditional library then e-books are a natural addition to digital collections".

According to Wikipedia (2005), the free encyclopedia, an "ebook is an electronic (or digital) version of a book. Though e-texts are available as digitally encoded books and the term is often used synonymously with the term e-book, that usage is deprecated. The term e-text is used for the more limited case of data in ASCII text format, while the more general e-book can be in a specialised file format". Also, an ebook is commonly bundled by a publisher for distribution (as an e-book, an ezine, or an internet newspaper), whereas e-text is distributed in ASCII or plain text. Ardito(2000) describes how Andries Van Dam, a professor of technology at Brown University in the US coined the phrase electronic book while working on the first hypertext system during 1967 and 1968 on an IBM 360 mainframe, and Alan Kay conceptualized an e-book called Dynabook, a portable interactive personal computer with a flat panel display and wireless communication.

The early research focused on desirable features, pedagogy, and technology issues with the usage and acceptance of e-books. The e-books were generally accessible in systems that provided access to one or possibly a few e-books at a time (Bell, McCoy, and Peters, 2002; Dearnley and McKnight, 2001; Simon, 2001; Wearden, 1998). The results of the early research concluded that e-books were not being accepted people. Though e-books are not new,

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their uptake has been slow, especially when compared to other e-formats such as e-journals and e-newspapers. One reason for this is because e-books have been available in many formats and these formats are often incompatible and non-interoperable. Snowhill (2001) confirms this in a report on an evaluation of e-books undertaken by a taskforce from the California Digital Library in 2000.

Though, ebooks are a very good classroom teaching tool and are a good device. But, in the area of technology acceptance, e-learning and the concept of subject specialization difference research among teaching professionals is yet to be explored.

2. Literature Review

People through a collection of e-books, scan relevant sentences, select a section of text, cut a desired portion, and paste the retrieved content into another application (Brown, 2001; Coyle, 2003; Safley, 2006). E-books could expand over print media by adding several specific features such as hypertext links, search and cross-reference functions and multimedia. The top three advantages of e-books were found to be greater breadth and depth of collection; ability to download; and fewer restrictions on printing and copying. The study by Chu (2003) showed around the clock availability and searchability to be the most favourable features of e-books.

In spite of these advantages, there are many reasons hindering the use of e-books due to which e-books are still not very popular. These reasons include: the technology for creating and accessing e-books (both hardware and software) is not yet mature; technology issue; lack of awareness of software/hardware available for e-books; hard to read and browse; incompatibility with hardware and software of the e-book readers; cost of hardware readers; limited availability of titles; difficulty in accessing computers or Internet; enough printed books in libraries already; people are used to reading printed books and do not want to change the habit; a lack of awareness of e-books and problems with printing and downloading (Snowhill, 2001; Tedd, 2004; Urs, 2004; Anuradha and Usha, 2006; Doman, 2001; Lonsdale and Armstrong, 2001; Chu,2003). Another survey of 118 self-selected participants, conducted as part of the California State University E-book Task Force in 2001, showed that the users were generally pleased with net library, though 60 per cent said they preferred print (Langston, 2003).

Rao (2004) provided background information on e-books, including their advantages and disadvantages in an educational context and describes how the publication of e-books on a commercial basis is gaining momentum in India. In the study, McKiel (2007) wrote that e-books had a fairly poor showing and they rank down with personal and corporate web sites. This supports eBrary's librarian survey, where 59 per cent of librarians said e-book usage was fair to poor.

Levine-Clark (2006) in the survey of all students, teaching professionals and staff (with a healthy 2,067 respondents this time, 30.1 per cent response rate) at the University of Denver showed that e-books were used by about half of the campus community. However, most of these people used them only occasionally. About 68 per cent of teaching professionals, 57 per cent of undergraduates and 64 percent of postgraduates used them occasionally. 28 percent used e-books once only, 62 percent thought that they used them occasionally, and 10 per cent believed that they used them frequently. When asked about how they typically used e-books, of the 1,148 people saying they used e-books, 57 per cent read a chapter or article within a book, and 36 percent read a single entry or a few pages within a book, but only 7 per cent read the entire book. Levine-Clark (2007) also revealed subject differences between users. For example, humanities scholars, compared to their peers in other disciplines, were more aware of e-books and tended to discover e-books through catalogues. However, this greater awareness did not translate to greater use and they used e-books almost at the same frequency as the other respondents said they did.

E-book provider eBrary conducted a global survey in which 906 individuals representing about 300 higher education institutions from 38 countries (but mainly the USA, the UK, Canada and New Zealand) took part. Among the important findings was that half of sample said they now preferred to use online resources, while just 18 per cent said they preferred print. 89 per cent of respondents used educational, government and professional web sites for research, class preparation, or instruction, followed closely by e-journals .

Hernon et al., 2007) investigated how teaching professionals in the varied disciplines perceived e-Books differently according to the content, information etc. The subject areas of business, economics, management, computer science, and social sciences have the highest

number of accesses among net Library academic library eBook users (Carlson, 2002)

3. Objectives

- To determine the perception of teaching professionals regarding various aspects related to e-books.
- To analyze the perception of teaching professionals of various discipline of management course on the dimensions affecting the usage of e-books.

4. Research Methodology

The Study: The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature and is undertaken to provide insight into the concepts of the teaching professionals, related to usage of e-Books. The study is basically primary in nature.

The Sample: The sample of the study constituted of 150 respondents who were management teaching professionals from Indore city. Non Probability Convenience sampling method was used to select the respondents.

Tools for Data Collection: Primary data for the study was collected through a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed following a wide review of the literature on e-books. It was divided into three parts. The first part was based on personal profile of the teaching professionals. The second part was based on the general awareness of technology of e-books. The third part consisted of 55 close ended items based on five point Likert scale (Strongly Agree – 5 to Strongly Disagree – 1). In the pilot study, Item-total-correlation was calculated on data collected for 55 items to find out which items significantly contribute towards measuring the factors motivating the spirit of entrepreneurism among the Indian youth. In the first iteration four variables which were found insignificant at 0.05 level of significance, were dropped and the remaining items were retained to explore the factors. The data was finally, subjected to Principal Component Method of Factor Analysis.

Reliability of the Measures: Reliability of the measures was assessed with the use of Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha allows us to measure the reliability different variables. As a general rule a coefficient greater than or equal to 0.7 is considered acceptable and is a good indicator of reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha for the questionnaire is 0.83. Hence it is reliable and can be used for analysis.

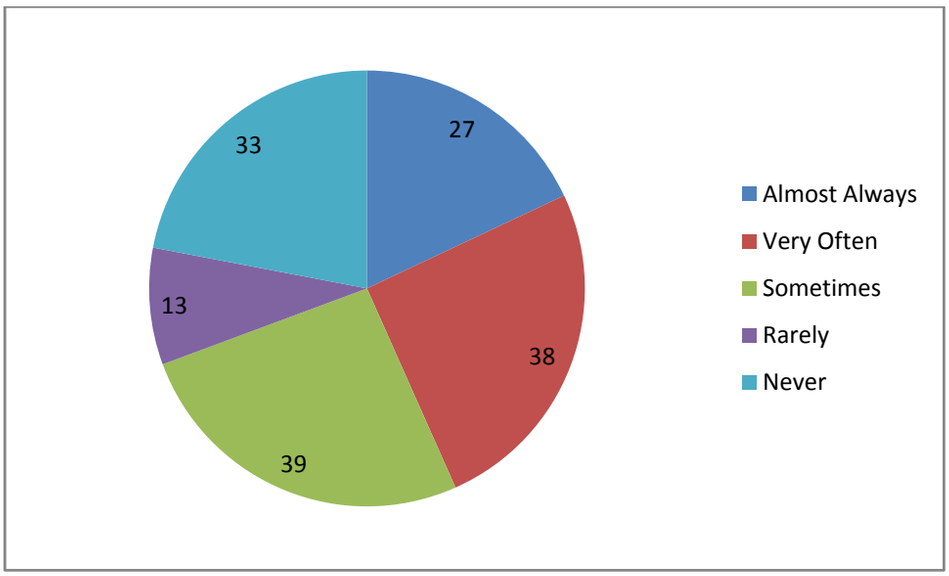
Tools for Data Analysis: The analysis of collected data was done by Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 16.0) and MS Excel 2007. Percentage analysis, Item-total correlation, factor analysis and Analysis of Variance (Anova) were used to analyze the data.

A pilot study resulted in 17 factors affecting the usage of ebooks. These factors when subjected to second order factor analysis, resulted into seven imperative dimensions of e-Books namely Environmental Collaboration, Supportive Access, Immense Efficacy, Knowledge Integration, Innovative Virtual Environment, Enhanced Personalization and Improved Timely Updates. The details of these dimensions with their factor load and factors tabularized with their item loads, Eigen values and percent of variances are shown in Annexure1. On the basis of these dimensions, following 7 hypotheses were framed. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to test these hypotheses.

5. Hypotheses

- There is no significant difference in the perception of teaching professionals of various discipline of management on the Environmental Collaboration of e-Books.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of teaching professionals of various disciplines of management on the Supportive Access of e-Books.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of teaching professionals of various disciplines of management on the Immense Efficacy of e-Books.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of teaching professionals of various disciplines of management on the Knowledge Integration of e-Books.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of teaching professionals of various disciplines of management on the Innovative Virtual Environment of e-Books.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of teaching professionals of various disciplines of management on the Enhanced Personalization of e-Books.
- There is no significant difference in the perception of teaching professionals of various disciplines of management on the Improved Timely Updates of e-Books.

Figure 1. Frequency of Use of E-book Technology



6. Result and Discussion

All the respondents were management teaching professionals from different subject of specialization 44 of them were from finance, 37 of them were from marketing, 37 were from information technology and 32 of them were from human resource.

The graph 1 depicts the frequency of e-book usage which shows that out of 150 respondents 27 had used e-books technology almost always, 38 respondents agreed that they had used this technology very often, 13 of them had used it sometimes and 33 of them never used e-books.

43 out of 150 respondents used Mozilla Firefox, 55 of them used Internet Explorer, 27 of them used Google

Figure 2. Type of Browser Used

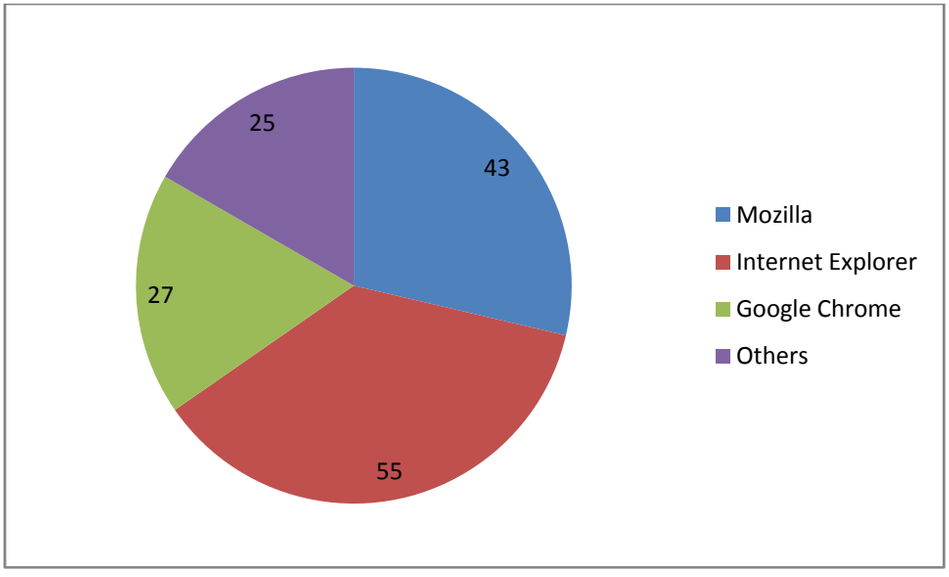


Figure 3. Type of Operating System Used

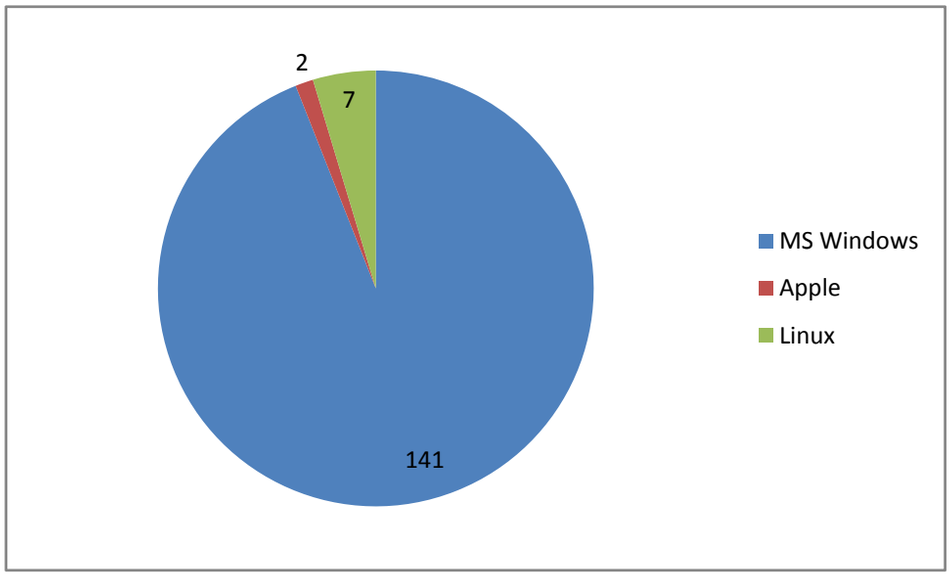
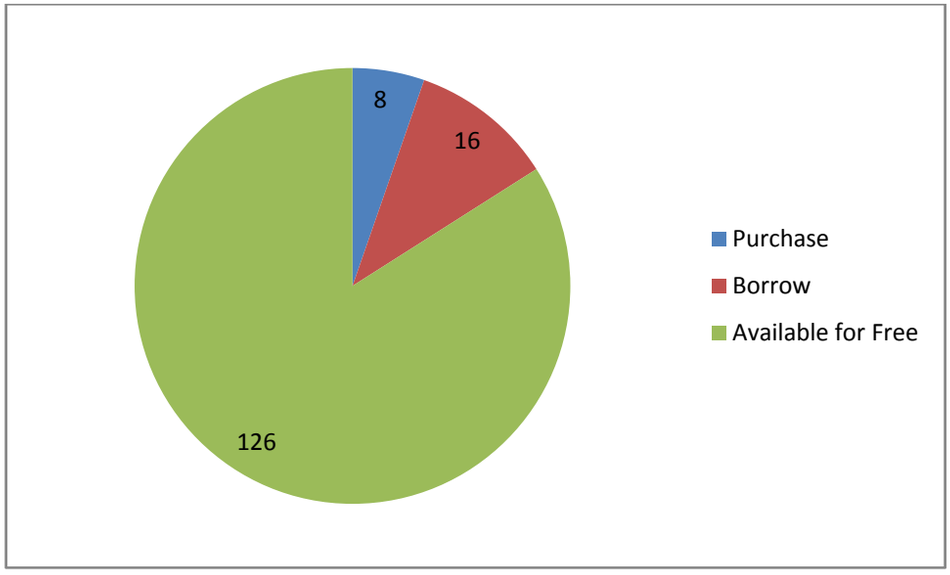


Figure 4. Mode of Getting E-Book



Chrome, 25 of them used some other browser while surfing for the e-books.

From the figure above, it's clear that 141 used Microsoft windows, 2 respondents used Apple Mac while 7 of the used Linux. Some of the teaching professionals used Linux which indicate that there is an inclination to the newest technology.

Figure 4 depicts that 126 teaching professionals agreed that they used only those e-books which are available for free. 8 of them borrowed it from someone and only 16 respondents were interested in purchasing e-books.

The figure 5 describes the purpose of reading e-books which revealed that 79 out of 150 people used e-books for the academic purpose only whereas 8 of them used it for leisure only 63 people used e-books for both leisure as well as academic purpose.

In response to satisfaction level of teaching professionals about e-books, it was found that 6 respondents were very

Figure 5. Purpose of Reading E-Books

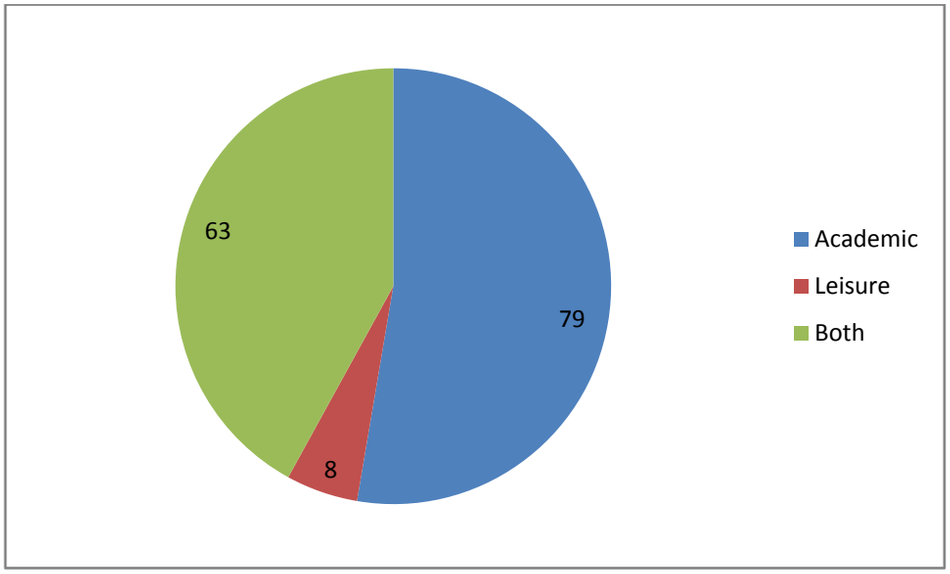
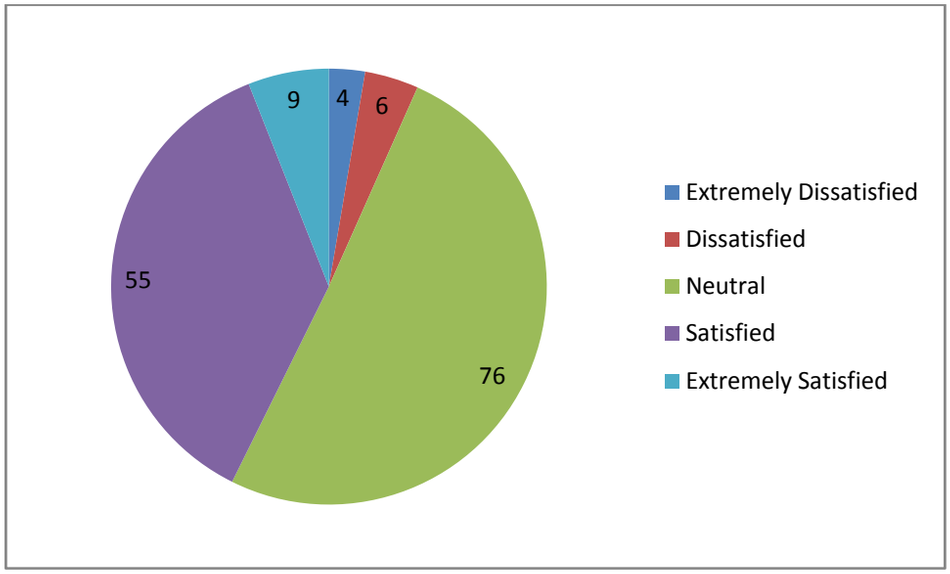


Figure 6. Satisfaction Level Towards E-Books



unsatisfied, 8 of them were founded to be unsatisfied ,100 of the were satisfied to some extent whereas 76 of the were satisfied, only 10 of them were extremely satisfied.

Survey respondents were also asked to indicate the types of e-books that they would be interested in reading and the results shows that 100 of them were interested in reference Materials, 34 of them in finding Technical Books, 11 of them Recreational Books (fiction etc) and 5 of them were interested for some others reasons.

As to their future use of e-books the following responses were given:

27 of them said that they will definitely use or purchase it again, 50 of them replied that they would probably use or purchase it, 52 of them respond that they might or might not use or purchase , 18 said they probably would not use/ purchase, 3 said that they will never use or purchase it again.

In response to recommendation to friends or relatives to use of e-books 61 said that they will definitely suggest,

Figure 7. Type of E-Books Used

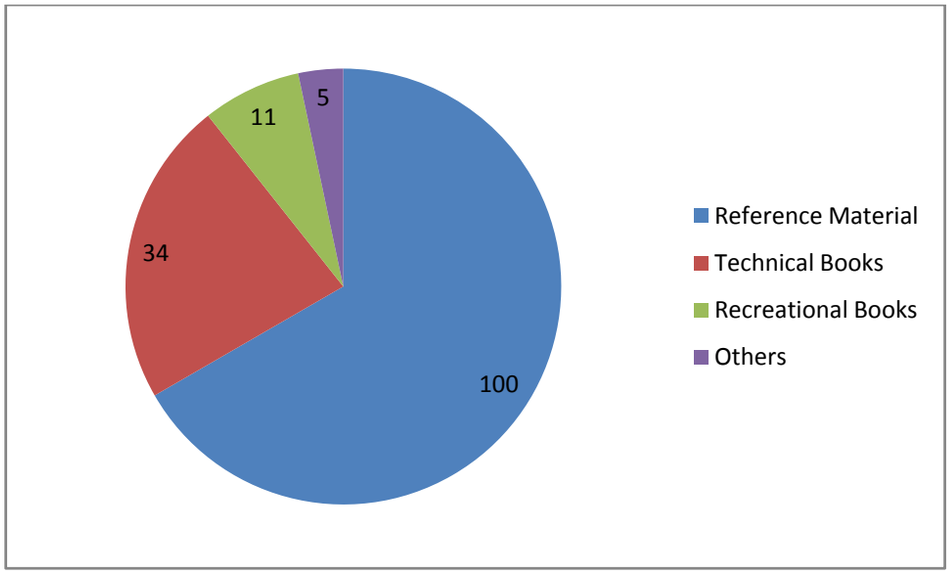
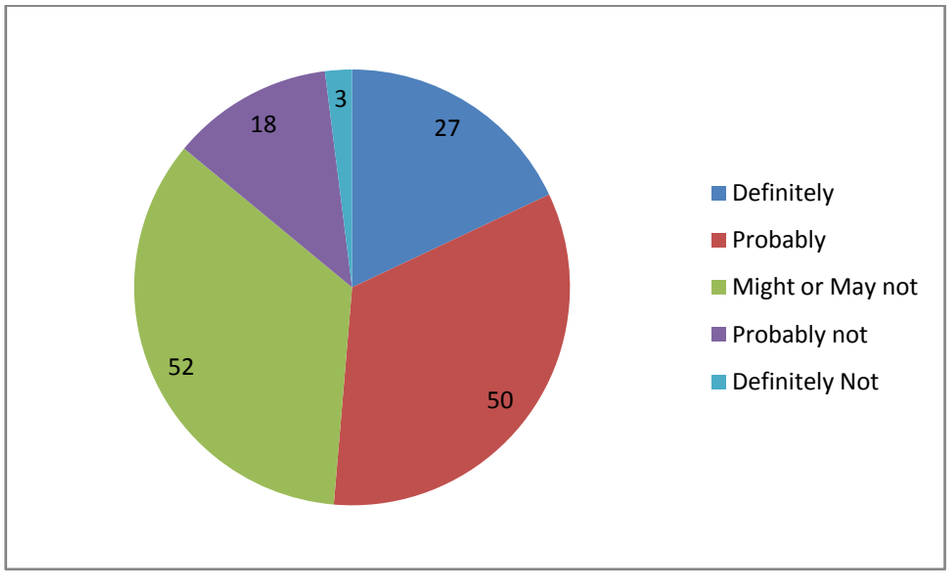


Figure 8. Decision to Purchase E-Books Again

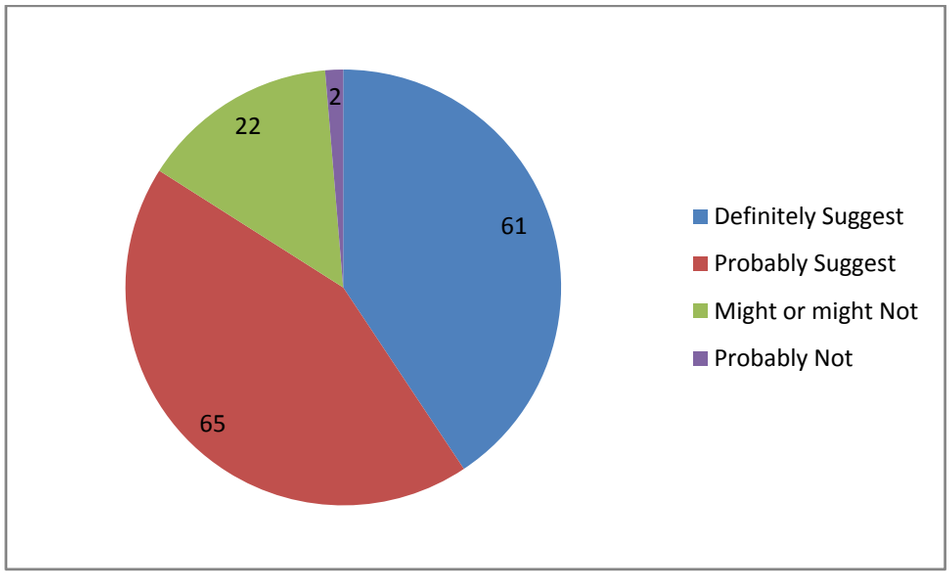


65 replied probably, 22 said might or might not, 2 said probably not and none of them said that they will never recommend e-books to others.

7. Hypothesis Testing

Seven hypotheses were set to study the perception of teaching professionals of various discipline of management over these dimensions. ANOVA was carried and the results are tabulated in annexure 2. The results indicated that the sig. values ('p') for hypothesis H_{03} was more than 0.05 and therefore the hypothesis was not rejected at 5% level of significance. Rest all the hypotheses were having significant values less than 0.05 and therefore, rejected. It was found that there is no significant difference between the specialization subjects on Immense Efficacy dimension of e-Books. This seems to be true, since efficient feature of e-books is not dependent on the different disciplines.

Figure 9. Recommendation of e-books to others



The study also found a significant difference between perception of teaching professionals of varied specialization subjects for dimensions like Innovative Virtual Environment, Enhanced Personalization, Improved Timely Updates, Knowledge Integration, Environmental Collaboration and Supportive Access.

Innovative Virtual Environment is moiré prevalent in Information Technology subjects or new subjects hence variation on the basis of disciplines seems to be true. Besides, Improved Timely updates are also provided with subjects/technology/concepts/cases which change very frequently for example laws/advertising like subjects require timely updates while accounting like subjects do not require timely updates. Knowledge Integration also varies with the subject, since it is depended on the subject and utility of e-book hence differentiates. Besides, for some exclusive subjects, e-books are not easily available and without cost, hence some teaching professionals could find it less knowledge integrated and some could find it more knowledge integrated.

Enhanced Personalization of e-Books is being contributed by various parameters which may attract each user for better readability. Though every user has a quest for more technological associations and better utilization, enhanced personalization cannot be done effectively by a non IT friendly teaching professional. Similarly, Supportive Access seems to vary with the discipline since advanced technological practices of e-Books are not known to non IT friendly teaching professionals.

8. Conclusion

Since, the use of e-books is the best choice for teaching professionals to get current information at a better economical and comfort level, it is important for publishers and authors to utilize these for providing quality books that may be perceived effective by readers. The study showed that Immense Efficacy dimension was perceived same by the teaching professionals of various subjects while rest six dimensions were found to be significantly affected by the specialization subject of teaching professionals. The e-book industry would find these results helpful in understanding what factors make for e-book acceptance among teaching professionals, who are considered to be the greatest users of e-book learning.

9. Limitations

Finally, the findings reported here are likely to be limited to the e-Books and may not be generalized to e-Journals and other online sources. The sample of the study constituted of the management teaching professionals studying in Indore. The view of the respondents may differ from those who are studying in engineering, medical and other streams. Responses may also vary of people who

are staying in big cities and using advanced technology of reading e-Books. This limitation may be minimized by extending the future studies to other cities for further investigation. However, results of this study are providing a foundation for future studies on e-Books.

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Annexure 1: Dimensions and Factors of e-books

Dimension	Dimension Load	Eigen Values	% of var	Factors	Factor Load	Item	Item Load
Environmental Collaboration	2.436	2.217	10.89	Ever-Accessibly	0.655	e-Books are always available, without ever going "out of print" ,	0.79
						e-Books saves time in purchasing	0.65
						e-Books are easily searchable in terms of words, definitions or chapters	0.58
				Trouble-Free Circulation	0.635	Production cost is low in e-Books	0.79
						e-Books allow for easy self-publishing	0.79
						It takes less time in publishing e-Books	0.49
				Environmental Conscious	0.587	e-Books helps to save physical space since the library is as big as the disk drive	0.83
						e-Books are mobile since we can carry entire library within our pocket	0.57
						e-Books uses less raw material	0.43
						Production of e-Books is cheaper than p-Books	0.41
				Technological Affable	0.559	Delivery time is very less in e-Book.	0.77
						Many recent titles are published as eBooks only	0.56
						Peer to peer lending is possible in e-Books	0.52
Supportive Access	1.832	1.501	8.663	Easy Acquisition	0.648	e-Books can be printable in an inexpensive way,	0.72
						e-Book can be discarded easily without having the guilt of throwing out	0.65
						Distribution of e-Books is easier than p-Books	0.61
						Information of titles of back-listed or out-of-print books can be fetched	0.6
				Better Security Measures	0.599	Creating a backup of library is possible which is impossible with a physical library	0.87
						Fire-proofing is not required in e-Books	0.4
				Well-Supportive	0.585	e-Books help in purchasing of one digital format that can later become large-print	0.74
						e-Books can be modified to various languages	0.56
						e-Books has ability to link to dictionary	0.56

Dimension	*Dimension Load*	*Eigen Values*	*% of var*	*Factors*	*Factor Load*	*Item*	*Item Load*
Immense Efficacy	1.344	1.318	8.238	Cost-Effective	0.77	It is easy to purchase and download an e-Book	0.81
						e-Books save money since there is no shipping and packing cost	0.55
						e-Books are cheaper than printed books	0.54
				Improved Flexibility	0.574	Adjustment of background color, screen contrast and orientation improves readability	0.69
						They can be modified according to age groups	0.57
Knowledge Integration	1.511	1.28	8.121	Functional Navigation	0.756	Navigation is easy in e-Books.	0.88
				Distinguished Learning	0.755	It may be possible to recover a new copy of e-Books without cost from the distributor	0.76
						e-Books has ability to take notes in the margins	0.7
						e-Books can be read in the dark	0.55
						e-Books helps to share notes for group study	0.52
						e-Books helps in portability of reading devices	0.5
						They take less time for repair & replacement	0.46
						It is easier for authors to collect data of users	0.45
Innovative Virtual Environment	1.846	1.235	7.736	Interactive Technology	0.643	Multimedia (graphics, audio, video) features of e-Books properly conveys author's message	0.75
						View is enhanced by customized font size/style	0.67
				Ecological Friendly	0.618	e-Books avoid pollution caused by inks & dyes	0.68
						e-Books saves trees and paper	0.66
				Effortless Recoverability	0.585	e-Books prevent them from being lost or stolen.	0.777
						Bookmarks remain at same place in e-Books	0.742
						they can be recovered in case of loss/damage.	0.638
						Just-in-time acquisition is possible in e-Books.	0.618355
						e-Books allows to add/delete many bookmarks	0.374863
Enhanced Personalization	1.419	1.175	7.297	User Friendliness	0.788	Information to user of updations is fast & easy	0.79
						e-Books can be accessed from anywhere	0.54

Dimension	Dimension Load	Eigen Values	% of var	Factors	Factor Load	Item	Item Load
						e-Books promises a hands-free use	0.36
				Enhanced Customization	0.631	Highlighting and annotating capabilities of e-Books promotes better readability	0.86
						Flash applications in e-Books allows the reader to interact better	0.54
Improved Timely Updates	0.885	1.065	6.66	Timely Updates	0.885	It is possible to purchase an e-Book at any time	0.83
						It is easy to update e-books by the author	0.45

Annexure 2: Table Showing the Results of Hypothesis Testing

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	F	sig.
Environmental Collaboration	Finance	44	50.61364	4.918952	0.74156	3.678	0.013
	Marketing	37	48.48649	4.167477	0.685129		
	Information Technology	37	50.13514	4.42946	0.728199		
	HRM	32	47.75	3.15206	0.557211		
	Total	150	49.36	4.398413	0.359129		
Supportive Access	Finance	44	36.36364	4.346027	0.655188	3.631	0.0144
	Marketing	37	34.37838	2.82205	0.463942		
	Information Technology	37	35.45946	3.594707	0.590966		
	HRM	32	33.59375	4.647992	0.821657		
	Total	150	35.06	4.013785	0.327724		
Immense Efficacy	Finance	44	18.90909	2.021031	0.304682	1.747	0.159
	Marketing	37	17.94595	2.924475	0.480781		
	Information Technology	37	19.05405	2.356385	0.387387		
	HRM	32	19.0625	2.513672	0.444359		
	Total	150	18.74	2.472479	0.201877		
Knowledge Integration	Finance	44	29.11364	2.517066	0.379462	4.96	0.002
	Marketing	37	29.62162	3.156575	0.518938		
	Information Technology	37	29.97297	2.409316	0.396089		
	HRM	32	27.5	3.302003	0.583717		
	Total	150	29.10667	2.951843	0.241017		
Innovative Virtual Environment	Finance	44	35.65909	4.159289	0.627036	2.96	0.034
	Marketing	37	33.67568	3.472544	0.570883		
	Information Technology	37	33.67568	4.607084	0.7574		
	HRM	32	33.40625	2.905605	0.513643		
	Total	150	34.2	3.961221	0.323432		
Enhanced Personalization	Finance	44	18.77273	2.409899	0.363306	3.24	0.023
	Marketing	37	18.10811	2.306799	0.379235		
	Information Technology	37	18.54054	2.316542	0.380837		

		N	*Mean*	*Std. Deviation*	*Std. Error*	*F*	*sig.*
	HRM	32	17.21875	1.896251	0.335213		
	Total	150	18.22	2.31096	0.188689		
Improved Timely Updates	Finance	44	7.295455	1.230986	0.185578	3.63	0.014
	Marketing	37	7.162162	1.343989	0.22095		
	Information Technology	37	7.324324	1.081513	0.1778		
	HRM	32	6.46875	1.243937	0.219899		
	Total	150	7.093333	1.260375	0.102909		