

Awareness and Acceptance of E-Journals Among Researchers of LIS: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract

The present study is a precise attempt to be acquainted with the awareness among researches of library and information science (LIS). While discussing the research plan, the present study presents an empirical approach to recognise the selected patterns. To conduct a methodological study, total 120 respondents, formally affiliated to the subject of LIS, have been taken into consideration. The awareness, access, and use of e-journals among researchers of LIS have been examined. The collected data are critically analysed and graphically represented.

Keywords: E-Journals, LIS Researchers

Objectives of the Study

The study is an attempt to fulfill following objectives:

- To ascertain awareness and acceptance of e-journals among researchers of LIS.
- To explore the use of electronic journals by researchers in LIS.
- To identify the users' (researcher) preference for the format of e-journals.
- To explore the use of electronic journals.
- To study the purpose of utilization of e-journals.
- To ascertain the frequency of using e-journals.

Introduction

E-journals are a new phenomenon in comparison to the print journals. These are, in fact, the technological addition to the category of journals. Undoubtedly, awareness about the e-journals among the students, researchers, and the academicians has been constantly and rapidly increasing. Obviously, the increasing awareness has accelerated the access and use of the e-journals among the information seekers. The relevance of the awareness and use of e-journals in the subject of Library and Information Science (LIS) acquire more prerequisite significance. Reasonably, the e-journal is an occurrence of LIS. Hence, it is relevant to carry out a comprehensive study to examine the scale of the awareness and use of e-journals among the researchers of LIS.

Review of Literature

Singh (2009) has discussed the print and e-journals in detail. The author stated the definitions, differences, merits, and demerits of the print as well as the e-journals. The author also justified the transaction of print to electronic media by discussing the advanced features of the latter.

Brar (2012) conducted a survey of library users of Punjabi University, Patiala to examine the awareness and use of e-journals. The author collected the data with the help of questionnaire and presented the results graphically using the percentage. The study disclosed the purpose of using e-journals, location of accessing e-journals, frequency of use, and level of satisfaction of the library users.

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Amandeep and others (2017) studied the use of the Internet for reading. The study is based on primary data collected from postgraduate students and Ph.D. researchers of Punjab University, Patiala. Their paper presents the results of 80 students and researchers on the various parameters. The study reveals that the students and researchers were more dependable on the Internet and e-resources than printed publications.

Bhupinder and others (2017) conducted a survey of 500 students from different universities of north India to examine the utilization of Internet-based resources. A structured questionnaire was used for collection of data. The study discovered that all the students were using the Internet and Internet-based sources and services. To get required information, search engines, websites, e-resources, subject gateways, portals, blogs, and Wikipedia were used in order of preference. Majority of the students had knowledge and awareness about social networking sites.

Bajpai and others (2017) checked the awareness and use of electronic resources. The study was conducted on selected special libraries of Delhi. The author discovered the purpose and difficulties in using e-resources and satisfaction level of the users with the available electronic resources. The study disclosed that 58.5% library readers visited library daily. 87.1% users were aware about different search engines and 84.2% were aware about e-journals and e-books. Majority of the users (61%) used e-resources for their course work/ study material followed by research work (57.7%) and to get current information (55.9%). The study also explored that the users were facing many technical problems while accessing the e-journals and e-resources.

Research Methodology

In the present study, the Ph.D. researchers of the subject of LIS from various universities of India were selected randomly. A questionnaire was prepared for collection of data. The data were collected personally and through email. The complete and valid questionnaires of 120 Ph.D. researches were selected, thoroughly analysed, tabulated, and graphically represented in this study.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Initially, while examining the 120 researchers, the first query was to know the preferences they give to particular format of journals, i.e. print or electronic. The respondents have expressed quite deviant views. Only 17.50% respondents have confirmed their preference to the print journals. Further, 23.33% respondents have asserted their preference to the e-journal. Noticeably, the 59.17% respondents have articulated their equal preference to both the print as well e-journals.

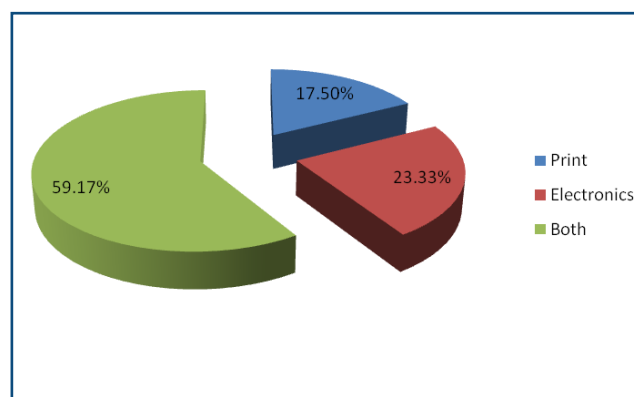


Fig 3.1: Preferences to Particular Format of Journals

The data depict that the print journals are the least preferred journals among the researchers. Reasonably, the access to the print journals requires the information seekers to visit a library and find the relevant research journals from the catalogues, which is obviously a time-consuming process. The fixed timings of the libraries also forbade the information seekers to prefer print journals. Again, the time-consuming process of selecting, publishing, and delivering the print journals results in the information seekers becoming quite impatient. Furthermore, the print journals are limited to the single-user access. But it is a fact that still 17.50% researchers prefer the print journals. It is obviously due its easy-to-read feature and moreover its capability to enhance the imagination of the reader. The data further corroborate that 23.33% researchers prefer the e-journals over print journals. The most frequent reasons for more likeliness of e-journals include their round-the-clock online access at the desktop, their access to more than one person at the same time, with less storage space and more colourful graphics at marginal cost. It is noteworthy here that

positively 59.17% researchers give equal preference to both print as well e-journals. Reasonably, it is dependent on their accessibility and choice of any particular research journal that generally varies their timely preferences to one format over the other.

Appropriate Awareness About the E-Journals

Further, it was enquired from the researchers whether they were appropriately aware about the e-journals. The term 'Appropriately Aware' was not limited only to the general information about e-journals but included the comprehensive awareness about the access, types, searching strategies, and databases of e-journals. Positively, all the respondents have declared their appropriate awareness about the e-journals.

The 100% awareness of e-journals among the researchers was reasonably because of their formal affiliation to the subject of LIS. The e-journal is the formal part of the UGC Model Curriculum of Masters of Library and Information Science. Additionally, the e-journals supplement the information required by the researchers, especially in the field of LIS. Moreover, all the researchers were quite young and familiar with the latest trends and techniques in the field of information science.

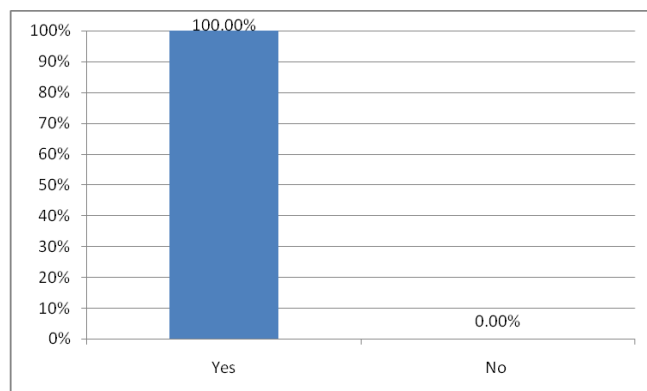


Fig 3.2: Appropriate Awareness About the E-Journals

Major Purposes of Using E-Journals

Another inquiry was conducted to be acquainted with the most frequent purposes of researchers for using e-journals. The respondents have revealed four major purposes of their using the e-journals. 13.33% respondents have claimed to be using e-journals for teaching purpose.

There are 22.67% respondents who use the e-journals for the purpose of writing the papers. The other 24% have asserted to use the e-journals for updating their knowledge. Besides, 40% of the total respondents probably use the e-journals for research work.

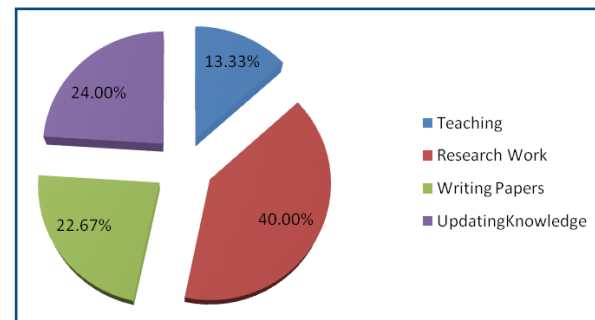


Fig. 3.3: Major Purposes of Using E-Journals

Use of e-journals for teaching purpose only by 13.33% researchers is probably because very less number of researchers are assigned the teaching work. Noticeably, the rest of 66.67% researchers use the e-journals for the works directly or indirectly related to the research.

Frequency of Using or Accessing the E-Journals

In response to the query as to how frequently the researchers use or access the e-journals, the respondents have given diverse responses. Only 7.50% of the respondents use/access e-journals every day, while 17.50% use them occasionally. Additionally, 23.33% respondents have confirmed to use e-journal once in a week and the remaining 51.67% have corroborated that they use or access the e-journals once in a month.

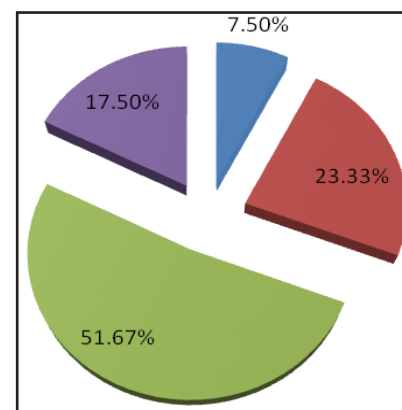


Fig. 3.4: Frequency of Using or Accessing the E-Journals

It is an evident fact that the researchers need to access the journals frequently only at the initial stage of their research. Afterwards, the journals (including the e-journals) are deemed to access occasionally or periodically, most probably after a month, as mostly the minimum periodic time for the publication of new addition of journals is one month. Consequently, very less number of researchers use e-journals every day or even after a week. Due to the similar reasons, most of the researchers access the e-journals occasionally or monthly.

Extent and Amount of Using E-journals

To examine the amount of the use of e-journals, it has been deemed relevant to ask the respondents that approximately what number of articles are accessed by the researchers within a month's time span. Noticeably, there are 11.67% respondents who access 4-6 articles in a month. In addition, 62.50% respondents have responded as accessing 7-10 articles. There are 25.83% respondents who have asserted that they access more than 10 articles from e-journals in a month.

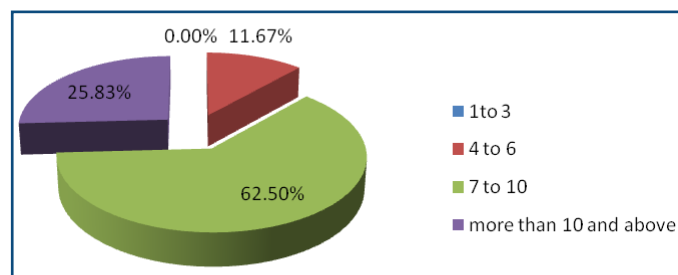


Fig. 3.5: Extent and Amount of Using E-Journals

The data divulge that the researchers make utmost use of the e-journals. It has been confirmed from the fact that the number of those researchers who access only 4-6 articles in a month is very minimal (11.67%). Contrarily, vast number of researchers (86.33%) access more than seven articles from e-journals in a month. It establishes that there is admirably acceptable trend among researchers to access the articles from e-journals.

Probable Sources of Finding the E-Journals

To identify the probable source of finding the e-journals among researchers, the respondents were asked to confirm

their most probable sources. In their response, 05% of the respondents revealed library websites; 10% respondents declared email alerts and total 12.50% respondents confirmed the mailing lists as their probable source of finding the e-journals. Furthermore, the directories are confirmed as preferable source by 17.50% respondents. Noticeably, 55% of the total respondents rely on search engines to find the e-journals.

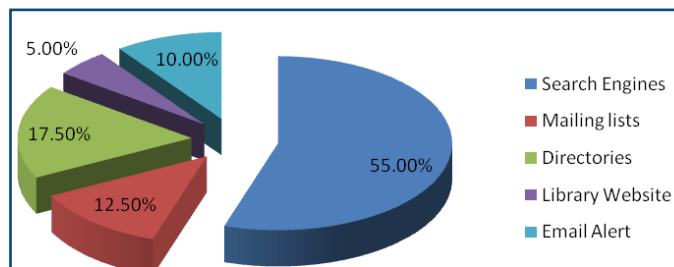


Fig. 3.6: Probable Sources of Finding the E-Journals

Although the library websites are the most formally ratified and reliable sources to find out the e-journals, the study has confirmed that very less number of researchers find e-journals from library websites. The directories, other formally ratified sources of e-journals, are also not much obliged among researchers. It has been witnessed that the general sources, in spite of the formal and particular sources, are preferred by the researchers to find out e-journals. E-mail alerts and mailing lists collectively are the second most preferable source among researchers. The general search engines are most popular among researchers for the task as a considerable majority (55%) of researchers invariably prefers search engines to find out e-journals.

Probable Locations to Access the E-Journals

To identify the probable location of researchers to access the e-journals, the respondents were asked to reveal the place where they mostly access e-journals. As many as 47.50% respondents have confirmed that library is the most probable place where they access e-journals. Further, 32.50% respondents have confirmed department; while total 17.50% have confirmed home as the most probable place. However, there are 02% respondents who prefer other places, then the above-mentioned, to access the e-journals.

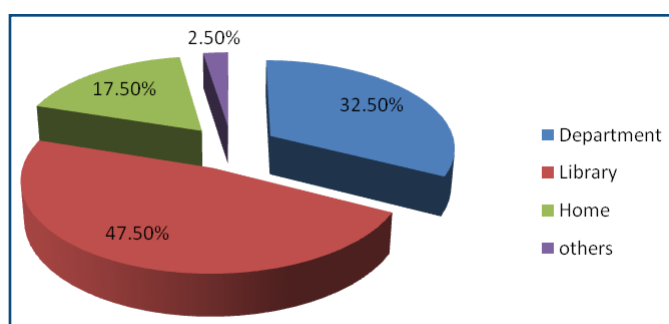


Fig. 3.7: Probable Locations to Access the E-Journals

The data confirm that as many as 80% of the total researchers prefer the university campuses to access the e-journals. Reasonably, the campus is the most appropriate place for the same as it has maintained the required infrastructure along with maintaining round-the-clock Internet accessibility with the Wi-Fi facility. In the campus too, library is always the most probable and preferable place as it is equipped with adequate subscription of e-journals, and properly maintained computer labs at minimal charges. The teaching departments are the second preferable places due to the reasons quite similar to the ones mentioned above. The data assert that the researchers having Internet access at their homes prefer to access e-journals at home also. As mostly, the researchers reside in the hostels of the university campuses, the number of researchers accessing e-journals at home is very less.

Conclusion

E-journals are the technological addition to the category of journals. Undoubtedly, awareness of e-journals

among the students, researchers, and the academicians has been constantly and rapidly increasing. Obviously, the increasing awareness has accelerated the access and use of e-journals among the information seekers. The relevance of the awareness and use of e-journals in the subject of LIS acquires more prerequisite significance. While examining empirically and observing analytically the scale and scope of awareness, access, and use of e-journals among researchers, it has been established as an obvious fact that the researchers have been providing overwhelming response while using the e-journals. The researchers are properly aware about the modes and methods to access e-journals.

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