

## **Use of Information Resources by Humanities Research scholars in Calicut University**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The study aimed at finding the information resources usage of humanities research scholars in Calicut University. Questionnaire survey was used to collect the information. Investigating information resource usage of a specific category of users contributes to the enhancement of better library services. Thus this explanatory study will aid to recognize the research practice and information literacy of humanities research scholars. This study tries to find out the information resource usage by humanities research scholars in Calicut University and to identify the reason for selecting the information resources. Study also investigates the problems in searching information resources in Calicut University and user satisfaction regarding various library services in the Calicut University.*

**Key Words:** Information Resources, Calicut University, Research practice, User satisfaction

### **1. Introduction**

Research is an intellectual activity of gathering information needed to solve a problem, which in turn contributes significantly towards innovation, technical change and nation's progress. The information resources are increasingly become available due to the application of information and communication technologies.<sup>1</sup> In Library and Information science field, scholars always try to find out searching habits of library users and the problems they faced while searching the information resources and tries to find out the suggestions from users to give better services to them. Now a days research scholars are using different kinds of information resources like search engines, databases, e-journals, print resources etc. The selection of information resources depends on the ease of access, convenience etc.<sup>2</sup> A research work became successful when the needed information is accessed by research scholar. Studying the usage of information resources by humanities scholars help us to understand the type of information resources used by the humanities scholars and the reason for selecting those information sources and the factors hinder the selection of information resources etc. The quality of learning and research in any university depends upon the information resources available in the institution. According to Meadow and Yaun information is a message that changes the recipients' knowledge base. That is information

add significantly to the existing knowledge of the user. A library system should be capable of giving information services to the users in a form that they wish to have (Meadow, 1997)<sup>3</sup>.

Research scholars are in need of various kinds of information resources. University libraries play an important role in providing them to the research community. Information sources are anything that might inform a person about something or provide knowledge about it ([www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))<sup>2</sup>. Information resources are found to be a significant part in the learning, teaching and research activities (Khaiser, 2014)

## **2. Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of the study are

1. To find out the information resources usage of humanities research scholars of Calicut University.
2. To identify the gender wise usage of information resources by them.
3. To ascertain the purpose of using information resources by humanities research scholars.
4. To identify the reason for selecting particular information resources by humanities research Scholars.
5. To obtain the satisfaction level of humanities research scholars in accessing the existing information resources.
6. To investigate the problems in searching information resources by humanities research scholars in Calicut University.

## **3. Methodology**

The present study is aimed to determine the information resources usage of humanities research scholars in the Calicut University, which is a renowned University in Kerala. For the analysis of data the following are taken as variables for the study;

- Frequency of the use of information sources
- Purpose of using Information Resources
- Satisfaction of users while the use of information resources
- Problems faced in searching information resources

Structured questionnaire was administered to collect the details from the respondents. Totally 100 questionnaire were distributed among the humanities research scholars, out of which 85 filled questionnaires were received back. For tabulating and analyzing data, percentage method is used, on the basis of formulated objectives, interpretation is made through analysis.

## **4. Need and significance of the study**

Information sources are inevitable in the learning and research processes; it helps the user community to update the knowledge. Therefore noteworthy to identify the information resources usage by the research community and to realize the criteria they follow in selecting the information resources. Understanding the use of information resources and knowing the problems faced in searching information resources will definitely useful to the libraries to provide better services to their users. This study is confined to humanities research scholars. Hence, the study may not be extendable to other category of users.

## 5. Data Analysis and the Result

The analysis of the data done is given below under following headings:

### 5.1 Frequency of accessing Information Resources

The data provided by the humanities research scholars regarding the frequency of accessing information resources are presented in the Table 5.1

**Table 5.1 Frequency of accessing Information Resources**

Frequency	Frequency of accessing Information Resources				Total	
	Male		Female			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Daily	13	37.14	39	78	52	61.17
2-5 times a week	22	62.85	11	22	33	38.82
Once a week	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fortnightly	-	-	-	-	-	-
Monthly	-	-	-	-	-	-
Occasionally	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 5.1 discusses the frequency of accessing information resources by the humanities research scholars. It is found that more than half of the research scholars (61.17%) access information resources daily. The analysis shows that majority of the female scholars (78 per cent) access information resources daily. More than half of the (62.85 per cent) reported that they access information resources 2-5times a week.

It is found that more than half of the humanities research scholars access information resources daily. A considerably good number of humanities research scholars make use of information resource 2-5 times a week. As such the frequency of the use of information by the humanities research scholars is found to be satisfactory.

### 5.2 Frequency of using Library resources and services

The data provided by the humanities research scholars regarding the frequency of using different library resources and services are presented in the Table 5.2

**Table 5.2 Frequency of using Library resources and services**

Library resources and services	Frequency of accessing Information Resources							
	Frequency							
	Daily		Weekly		Frequently		Rarely	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Books	22	25.88	15	17.64	33	38.82	15	17.85
Journals	20	23.5	28	32.9	26	30.58	11	12.94

		2		4				
E-books	—	—	4	4.70	16	18.82	65	76.47
E-Journals	32	32.6 4	14	16.4 7	23	27.05	16	18.82
Databases	12	14.1 1	24	28.2 3	25	29.41	24	28.23
OPAC	9	10.5 8	17	20	8	9.41	51	60
Reference service	13	15.2 9	28	32.9 4	31	36.47	13	15.29
Book reservation service	—	—	—	-	20	23.52	65	76.47
Photo copying facility	—	—	5	5.88	63	74.11	17	20

From Table 5.2 it can be seen that a considerable number (38.82per cent) of humanities research scholars make use of books frequently. E-books are rarely used by the majority (76.47 per cent) of humanities research scholars. A good number of the research scholars (32.64per cent) use E-Journals daily. More than half of the (60 per cent) humanities research scholars rarely use OPAC service provided by the library. Reference service is frequently used by a good number of (36.47 per cent) research scholars. Majority of the research scholars (76.47 per cent) rarely use book reservation service in the library. Majority of the research scholars (74.11 per cent) frequently use photo copying service in the library.

A good number of humanities research scholars are frequently using books, reservation services and photo copying service of the University library

### 5.3 Purpose of using Information Resources

The information resources are found used for different purposes by the users studied. On the analysis of data it can be seen that almost all of the respondents (98 per cent) use information resources for their theses work. Comparatively a very good percentage (80 per cent) of humanities research scholars makes use of information resources for writing papers. A good number of humanities scholars (73 per cent) depends information resources for seminars/conferences, a considerably good number of scholars (61 per cent) use information resources for updating their knowledge in their subject.

The analysis shows majority of scholars use information resources for their research works. And writing papers is also found as one of the major purposes of using information resources.

### 5.4 Gender wise usage of Information Resources

It is an integral part of the study to know the various information resources preferred by users for accessing information to do their research works. The data provided by the humanities research Scholars are summarized in Table 5.3

From Table 5.3 it can be seen that all of the humanities research scholars (100 per cent) highly depend on lectures and library collection. A very good number of (85.71 per cent) humanities research scholars make use of search engines to access information. And a good number of (64.70 per cent) them depend on Wikipedia for information. Almost equal per cent of male (37.14 per cent) and female (32 per cent) research scholars depend on friends

and personal collections to satisfy their information needs. A very few male research scholars (8.57 per cent) and female scholars (6 per cent) consult librarians to get information.

**Table 5.3 Gender wise usage of Information Resources**

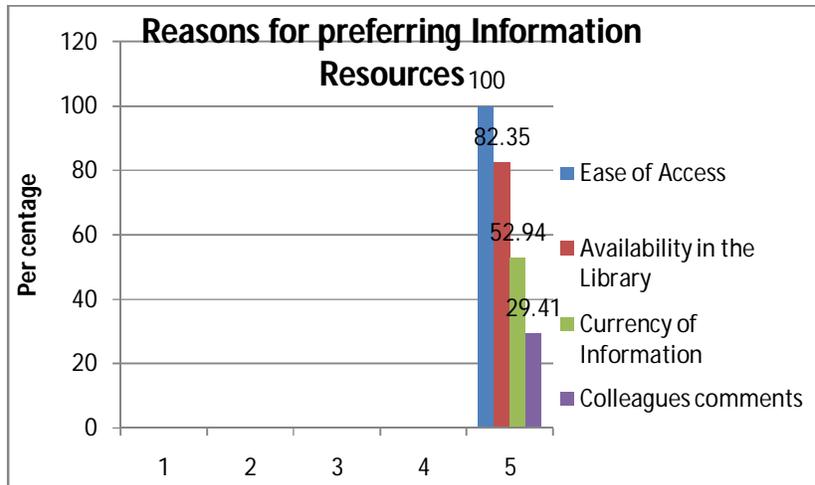
Type of Information Resources	Usage of information resources by the humanities research scholars				Total	
	Male		Female			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Search engines	30	85.71	35	70	65	76.47
Wikipedia	27	77.14	28	56	55	64.70
Friends	13	37.14	16	32	29	34.11
Lectures	35	100	50	100	85	100
Websites	20	57.14	14	28	34	40
Personal collection	4	11.42	8	16	12	14.11
Library collection	35	100	50	100	85	100
Librarians	3	8.57	3	8.57	6	7.05

It was found that majority of the respondents depend on lectures and library collection to get information for their study irrespective of gender, and only a very few depends on librarians to get information. Search engines and Wikipedia also found as the major sources of information by the humanities research scholars.

### 5.5 Reasons for preferring Information Resources

Users prefer different types of Information Resources because of various reasons. So it is worth full to know the major reasons for preferring information resources. Humanities research scholars were asked the reasons for preferring different information resources. The data provided by the scholars are presented graphically in the Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1 show that all of the users (100 per cent) chose their information resources because of their ease of access. A very good number of humanities researchers (82.35 per cent) agree their preference of choosing information resources due to their availability in the library. A considerable number of humanities research scholars (52.94 per cent) prefer information resources due to the currency of information it contains.



**Figure 5.1 Reasons for preferring Information Resources**

It is revealed that majority of the respondents agree their preference of use of information resources due to their ease of access. Availability in the library is also found to be the major reason for preferring information resources.

### 5.6 Knowledge about the services provided by the University library

Calicut University Library is providing different services to its users. Humanities research scholars were asked to express their opinion about the services provided by the library. The data provided by the students are presented in the Table 5.4

**Table 5.4 Knowledge about familiar services provided by the library**

Library services	Knowledge about familiar services				Total	
	Male		Female		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Book reservation	12	34.28	29	58	41	48.23
Photo copying	30	85.71	45	90	75	88.23
User orientation	2	5.71	3	6	5	5.88
Reference services	35	100	50	100	85	100

From Table 5.4 it can be seen that all the humanities research scholars (100 per cent) are aware of the reference services provided by the library. A very good number of (88.23 per cent) humanities scholars are aware of the photo copying facility in the library. It can be seen that only a few humanities scholars (5.71 per cent) are aware of the user orientation programmes conducted by the library. More than half of the female humanities research scholars (58 per cent) are aware of the book reservation service in the library. Majority of the male scholars (85.71 per cent) and female scholars (90 per cent) are aware of the photo copying facility in the library. It is found that a very few research scholars (5.88 per cent) are aware of the user orientation programmes conducted by the library.

It was found that majority of the respondents are aware of the book reservation, reference and photo copying services provided by the library. Only a few are aware of the user orientation programmes conducted by the library.

### 5.7 Satisfaction regarding library services and information resources

As the user's satisfaction is an inevitable parameter for the study, the user's response is sought. The satisfaction level of user community with existing resources and services is shown in the Table 5.5

**Table 5.5 Satisfaction regarding library services and information resources**

Description	Satisfaction Level							
	Fully satisfied		Satisfied		Moderately satisfied		Not satisfied	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Print resources	6	7.05	46	54.11	22	25.88	11	12.94
Electronic resources	4	4.70	29	34.11	39	45.88	13	15.29
Helpful staff	3	3.52	15	17.64	36	42.35	12	14.11
Convenient library hours	50	58.82	26	30.58	4	4.70	5	5.88

Table 5.5 shows the satisfaction level of different library services and information resources. More than half of the humanities research scholars are (54.11 per cent) satisfied with the print resources. A good number of respondents are (45.88 per cent) moderately satisfied with the electronic resources provided by the library. A considerably good number of respondents (42.35 per cent) reported that they are moderately satisfied with the helpful library staffs and majority of the humanities research scholars are (58.82 per cent) fully satisfied with the library hours.

The study reveals that majority of the humanities scholars are satisfied with the existing print resources, a good number of scholars reported that they are moderately satisfied with the provision of electronic resources in the library and helpful staffs in the library. Majority of the research scholars are fully satisfied with the convenient library hours.

### 5.8 Problems faced while searching the Information Resources

It is important to know the major problems faced by the humanities research scholars while searching the information resources. Table 5.6 shows the difficulties faced in searching information resources by the study group.

**Table 5.6 Problems faced while searching Information Resources**

Problems faced	humanities scholars				Total	
	Male		Female		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Lack of time	10	28.57	15	30	25	29.41
Poor attitude of library personnel	3	8.57	4	8	7	8.23
irrelevant information resources	14	40	19	38	13	15.29
Information resources are hard to find on shelves	5	14.28	12	24	17	20
Lack of awareness about accessible information resources	26	74.28	35	70	61	7.76
Lack of guidance in locating information resources	22	62.85	43	86	65	76.47
Uncomfortable ambiance for studying	-		-			
Unavailability of required information resources	18	51.42	25	50	43	50.58

Table 5.6 shows that majority of the respondents (76.47 per cent) reported that lack of guidance in locating information resources is the basic problem they faced while searching for information, followed by lack of awareness (74.28 per cent) about accessible information resources. Unavailability of required information resources is also found to be one of the basic problems while searching for information resources by a good number (50.58 per cent) of humanities research scholars. A very good per cent of male (74.28 per cent) and female scholars (61 per cent) reported that they lack awareness about accessible information resources. Half of the female research scholars reported that unavailability of required information resource is the problem they faced while searching for information.

Majority of the respondents reported that lack of guidance in locating information resources is the basic problem they faced while searching for information, followed by lack of awareness about accessible information resources and unavailability of required information resources in the university library.

### 5.9 Competency of Research Scholars

Competency of a research scholar to locate, evaluate and use the information resources depends on their skills to search information resources. It was asked to rate humanities research scholars skill to locate, evaluate and use materials from library. The data are provided in the below Table 5.7

**Table 5.7 Competency of research scholars**

Competency of science research scholars	Humanities research scholars				Total	
	Male		Female			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Excellent	3	8.57	7	14	10	11.76
Good	22	62.85	16	32	38	44.70
Average	5	14.28	19	38	24	28.23
Poor	5	14.28	8	16	13	15.29

Table 5.7 shows the details of competency of humanities research scholars to locate, evaluate and use information resources. From the table it is evident that a good number of humanities research scholars (44.70 per cent) are good at locating evaluating and using information resources. And a considerably good number of humanities scholars (28.23 per cent) reported that they are average at locating evaluating and using information resources. Only a few humanities scholars (15.29 per cent) opinioned that, they are poor at locating evaluating and using information resources. It can be seen that a considerably good number of male research scholars (62.85 per cent) have good skill to locate, evaluate and use information resources. A considerably good number of female scholars reported that they are (38 per cent) average at locating evaluating and using information resources.

A considerable number of humanities research scholars have good competency in locating evaluating and using information resources. And a fairly good number of humanities scholars are average in locating evaluating and using information resources. . Only a few humanities scholars admitted that, they are poor at locating evaluating and using information resources

### **5.10 Suggestions for improving library services**

Following are the suggestions put forward by the respondents for improving the library services in the Calicut University.

- Library should acquire more documents
- Continuous user training and literacy programs should be provided in the use of information resources.
- Fully computerized library operations

### **6. Conclusion**

Present study focuses on usage of information resources by humanities research scholars in Calicut University. The collected data were analyzed and attained certain findings. It was found that majority of the respondent depends on lectures and library collection to get information for their study irrespective of gender, and only a few depends on librarians to get information. The analysis shows majority of scholars use information resources for their research works, and writing papers is also found as the one of the major purposes of using information resources. It was found that majority of the humanities research scholars are aware about the book reservation, reference and photo copying services provided by the library. Only a few are aware of the user orientation programmes conducted by the library. The study reveals that majority of the scholars are satisfied with the existing print resources, a good number of scholars reported that they are moderately satisfied with the provision of electronic resources in the library and helpful staffs in the library. Majority research scholars are fully satisfied with the convenient library hours. It was suggested that acquiring more documents and fully computerized library functions will improve the library services in the Calicut University.

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