Information Seeking Behaviour of Users in the Pharmaceutical Science College Libraries of South Kanara and Udupi Districts: A Study

By

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ABSTRACT

The academic community appears to be the largest consumer of information as their job of teaching, learning, and research involves generating, collecting, processing, storing, disseminating and using information in several forms for different purposes. Hence, this study is concerned with the information seeking behaviour of pharmaceutical science college library users, a process which the students and faculty members purposefully engage in order to enhance their state of knowledge. The best possible method to understand the information seeking behaviour is ‘user study’. User study focuses mainly on the ‘users’ to measure their information needs, seeking behaviour, and use pattern. Further, it is a systematic examination of the system and services, directly linked with the effectiveness of the library and information services as they aim at satisfying the user’s needs.

The title of the study is “Information Seeking Behaviour of Users in the Pharmaceutical Science College Libraries of South Kanara and Udupi Districts: A Study.”

The objectives of the study are

1. To identify the nature and purpose of information seeking behaviour.
2. To study the methodologies and mode of information seeking applied by the users in the colleges under study, for seeking their information.
3. To identify the information sources and types of publication used.
4. To evaluate the usefulness of the collection, services, and IT infrastructure provided by the respective libraries under study.
5. To determine the use of library for information needs and the levels of satisfaction.
6. Finally, to suggest ways and means to improve the library and information services for optimum utilization of its resources.

The study is predominantly quantitative, with the following hypotheses to establish the information “search strategies” and “seeking behaviour and problems” that students face:

a) There exists no significant relation between genders in the mode and use of IT in seeking their informational needs.
b) The infrastructure and the services provided by the institution are not significant in accessing information, particularly digital information, in a networked environment

c) The provision of the library and information services like CAS and SDI are not in accordance with the need of the users

d) Designation of users is not an influencing factor on the opinion about the adequacy of digital libraries

e) There exists significant relationship between the effective use of library resources in an IT era and user education programme

The scope and limitation of the study is

The research work "Information Seeking Behaviour of Users in the Pharmaceutical Science College Libraries of South Kanara and Udupi districts A study" is an in-depth study of the user's awareness, information seeking behaviour, expectations, experiences, and the level of satisfaction in using the library and information facilities, resources, and services provided by the pharmaceutical science college libraries under study. The study covers faculty members, research scholars, post graduate students and graduate students of various pharmaceutical science college libraries of South Kanara and Udupi districts.

The study is limited to the pharmaceutical science college library users of South Kanara and Udupi districts. The institutions which are included in the present study are Nitte Gulabhai Shetty Memorial Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, Srinivas College of Pharmacy, Karavali College of Pharmacy, Shree Devi Institute of Pharmaceutical Science, and Mampal College of Pharmaceutical Science. Further, the study does not cover the services provided by the departmental libraries of every individual department of the institution.

The methodology followed and the sample size is determined as follows.

The researcher adopted the survey method along with literature search to collect the primary data needed for study so undertaken. To conduct the survey, a questionnaire was designed and distributed among the users, also called as respondents, who had been identified as the 'samples' for the study. As a follow-up, the researcher conducted personal interviews, based on the inputs acquired from the questionnaire, the responses to which were kept strictly confidential. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was adopted as an apt method to derive a suitable sample for the study. The researcher analyzed the data collected using the SPSS software package and also used the APA style manual for reporting and presenting the study.

The sample size for the present study is determined according to the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) statistical formula as follows.
\[ s = X^2NP (1-P) - d^2 (N-1) + X^2P (1-P) \]

The population size and distribution of questionnaire among the different strata (category) is given below in Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S N</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Questionnaire Distributed</th>
<th>Responded</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>62.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Postgraduates</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>84.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>73.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>924</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>70.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The total population of 924 users of the pharmaceutical science college libraries of South Kanara and Udupi districts, 417 was the required sample size for the survey. The population was first divided into different strata based on 3 criteria, viz., undergraduates, postgraduates, and faculty members. The total population of the study was 924 which included 708 undergraduates, 71 postgraduates, and 145 faculty members. A sample of 251 UG students, 60 PG students and 106 faculty members were the required samples for the survey.

After the survey, the collected data was analyzed using software packages like SPSS and MS EXCEL. Also the mean, standard deviation, simple and multiple correlations, ‘T’ test of significance, ANOVA, and Chi square test have been used to study the association between different variables like age, gender, and designation of the respondents that influence their information seeking behaviour.

The major findings of the study are

- The sample consisted of 266 (63.79%) male and 151 (36.21%) female persons. The designation-wise distribution of the sample shows that, 251 (60.19%) respondents are undergraduate students group, 60 (14.39%) postgraduate students, and 106 (25.42%) respondents are faculty members.
- Majority 281 (67.37%) respondents irrespective of their gender, designation, and age group seek information to keep themselves up-to-date in their respective subject area.
- It is found that 171 (43.63%) of the respondents seek current information through print journals.
- As many as 309 (74.1%) respondents opine that their main objective in visiting the library is to read books followed by journals/magazines.
- 166 (39.81%) of the respondents visit the library two to three times a week as well as 138 (33.09%) of them visit the library daily.
- It observed that maximum number of the users, i.e., 180 (43.17%) remain in the library for 30 minutes to one hour.
- Only 82 (19.66%) of the 417 respondents agree to the fact that there are adequate number of computers provided in the library.
- Further, only 36.45% of the sample agrees to the fact that the LAN facility of the campus is adequate enough.
- As many as 260 (62.35%) of the total respondents opined that the internet facility provided by their respective institution is adequate. Further, majority i.e., 333 (79.86%) of the respondents use the internet facility for general browsing only.
- It found that 152 (37.17%) of the sample agree with the statement that there are adequate current awareness services provided.
- It is noticed that majority of the users are not satisfied with the digital library services. There are only 38.25% undergraduates, 20% postgraduates, and 30% faculty members who are satisfied with the digital library services and facilities provided in the library.
- A minority agree with the statement that they are provided with adequate e-resources and services. This amounts to 139 out of 417 respondents which is 33.33% of the total sample.
- Among the various databases subscribed to by the respective institute, 342 (82.01%) of the respondents are aware of only the Science Direct journals from their Elsevier publishers. Further, most of the respondents, i.e., 102 of the 417 members of sample use Science Direct only when they need it.
- Problems encountered while using online databases reveal that majority, i.e., 405 of the 417 respondents face difficulty in finding the appropriate database from which they can get the required information.
- 312 respondents indicated that reading articles/books is a highly preferred information seeking habit. 207 male and 105 females opted for this option.
- The major problems encountered by the respondents are lack of infrastructure 128 (30.69%) followed by comprehensive book collection 64 (15.34%) and lack of printed journals-48 (11.02%).
- It is significant to note that 61% of the respondents are satisfied with the overall resources available in the library. Further, 223 (53.47%) of the respondents are satisfied with the overall information services provide by the library.

The entire hypothesis formulated in the present study is tested and the results are...
Hypothesis 1  There exists no significant relation between the genders in the mode of and use of IT in acquiring their informational needs. The test of correlation and the Chi-Square test was conducted. Both tests proved that the hypothesis is positive and valid.

Hypothesis 2  The infrastructure and services provided by the institution are not significant in accessing information, particularly digital information, in a networked environment. Only 19.66% of the users responded positively that there are adequate numbers of computers in the library. Further, 36.45% and 11.51% of the respondents agreed on the adequacy of the LAN facilities and the reading room facilities, respectively. This low percentage of response towards adequate infrastructure facilities of the respective institutes under study proves that the study hypothesis is sustained.

Hypothesis 3  The provision of the library and information services like CAS and SDI are not in accordance with the need of the users. ANOVA test was used to test the adequacy of CAS and SDI among the respondents. The test of ANOVA for CAS services (ANOVA=8.873 (5), F=2.450, Sig=0.033) and the test of ANOVA for SDI services (ANOVA = 12.672 (5), F=3.544, Sig=0.004) shows that there exists a significant difference among the respondents about the opinion on adequacy of CAS and SDI services provided by the respective libraries. Hence, the research hypothesis is sustained.

Hypothesis 4  Designation is not an influencing factor on the opinion of users about the adequacy of digital libraries. The test of correlation was conducted to test this hypothesis. The test of correlation was conducted to test this hypothesis. It found Pearson correlation = 0.1373 for significance value 0.0050, which shows that there exists a significant relation between the variables ‘Designation’ and ‘Opinion on the digital library facility’. Hence, the original hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 5  There exist significant relationship between the effective use of library resources and user education programme. The study has revealed that a large majority 371(88.97%) of the respondents opined that user education program is necessary for the effective use of library resources. The higher percentage of response towards the need of training or user education programme for the effective use of library resources proves that the study hypothesis is valid and sustained.

Based on the findings of the study the following suggestions are made:

- To include information literacy classes in the academic curriculum.
- Librarians should work along with the faculty members and to treat integrate the library and information centres into the mainstream.
❖ To consider the relevance and importance of the online databases to the academic curriculum for UG and PG students
❖ To develop a full-fledged library website by the respective institution
❖ To conduct effective promotional programmes on library resources, services, and facilities to the end users. That is to publicize and market their information resources and services
❖ To maintain adequate state-of-the-art library infrastructure, resources, and services
❖ To conduct regular user education programmes so as to be familiar with the holdings of the library to be able to access the relevant information for their study and research
❖ To select and acquire books and other informational resources more relevant to the curriculum studies and research
❖ It is also suggested that there is need for more computers in the library with internet facility
❖ It is recommended to involve the users while making decisions about the library services

The findings of this study indicate that information seeking may be motivated by a wide variety of needs, including personal and professional needs. The successful operation of a library depends to a large extent on the choice of library collection. The collection should meet the needs and requirements of the users. Consequently, librarians must be aware of how students seek information. Knowledge of user information needs and information-seeking behavior is imperative for developing valuable collections, and improving the facilities and services.

The entire study is divided into 6 chapters as follows

Chapter I - **Introduction** - The introduction elaborates on the research theme and explains the concepts and significance

Chapter II - **Methodology** - Briefly discussed the methods adopted and materials used for the data collection, analysis, and for the reporting of the thesis

Chapter III - **Review of literature** - This chapter attempted to present a review of the literature relating to the study

Chapter IV - **Physiographical and demographical features** of the pharmaceutical science institutions of South Kanara and Udupi districts wherein a brief description of the institutional background, collection, and financial growth of the institutions under study is provided

Chapter V - **Data analysis** - In this chapter the data collected is structured, analyzed, and presented with interpretations in light of the objectives of the study

Chapter VI - **Findings, Suggestions and Conclusion** on the basis of data analysis, research findings, recommendation, suggestions, and conclusion are drawn and it further attempts to suggest research problems relating to this area for further research