

Use of Library and Information Sources by University Students of North India: An Analysis

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Abstract: A library is the memory of mankind and a critical link between the present and the future generation of users. The present study is based on a student's survey of seven leading universities of north India. The 500 student's data is collected with the help of a questionnaire. The results show that students consult library catalogue, search engines, and library catalogue, respectively to find information. In searching for the needed information, students follow title, subject and author approach, respectively. Library, the Internet, reference books and text books are used by both categories of students in order of preference to get the required information.

Keywords: University Libraries, Information Sources, Search Tools, Search Strategies, North India

1. Introduction

Dr. Ranganathan has stated very clearly in his first law of library science that "Books are for use". In the present day context, it means knowledge and information are for use. A library is the memory of mankind and a critical link between the present and the future generation of users. Its historical mandate is to preserve knowledge and information and provide access to quality information resources and services in a timely manner. But in the Internet era, massive amounts of information are being made available in the public domain. There is information deluge and the end-user of information is completely bewildered many a time. It becomes very difficult for him to retrieve pertinent information for obtaining his personal, educational, professional and social goals. Therefore, there is an immediate need to equip information seekers with information literacy skills.

2. Review of Literature

Brar's (2012) study deals with information seeking behavior of Ph.D researchers. The author conducted a survey to reveal the use of library, various techniques of consulting library

services and their purpose. E-resources and e-journals acceptance and awareness is also analyzed. The study also exposes the problems faced by researcher and their satisfaction level.

Kumah (2015) conducted a survey to compare Internet use and library use among graduate students. A detailed literature was reviewed on library use and internet use. For the primary data, a survey was conducted using the sampling techniques. The results show that the library is the first choice for satisfying their information need. But the respondents use both the library and the Internet. The users also suggested that the libraries should be upgraded with latest sources, services and technologies.

Ramakrishna et al (2016) studied collection development, library membership, staff position, working hours, library automation, usage of library and information resources and services of selected deemed university libraries (GITAM Institute of Technology and Management, KoneruLakshmaih University, Vignan University, RashtriyaSankritVidyaPeetha) in Andhra Pradesh. A survey was conducted in selected four deemed universities and collected 914 questionnaires. The study reveals that all the libraries maintained good library information resources and services. The author compared the sources, services of the all four libraries.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the use of library and information sources by the library and information science and other students of north India
- To explore the tools and strategies used to search Information
- To recognize the widely used source to get needed information
- To identify the different parameters used to evaluate the information
- To ascertain the awareness of legal aspect related to ethical use of information

4. Research Methodology

Both primary as well as secondary sources of literature related and relevant to study have been taken into consideration. Primary sources include research papers, reports, white papers and websites while the secondary sources include various indexing and abstracting services and databases. A structured questionnaire is prepared and distributed among the university students. A sample of 500 students was chosen from all the universities under study. Out of the 500 students, 250 were LIS students and 250 were students from other courses. In fact, 40

questionnaires were distributed to LIS students and the other category students in each university under study. On careful scrutiny, it was found that questionnaires of 30 LIS students and 35 other category students were lacking in vital data. Hence these were not included in data analysis and discussion. But in order to maintain uniformity of the sample, 05 questionnaires were got filled again from the other category students.

5. Scope of the Study

The present study is based on the sample of 500 students from 07 universities (University of Kashmir, Sri Nagar; Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshla; Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; Punjabi University, Patiala; Panjab University, Chandigarh; Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra; and University of Delhi, Delhi) of north India.

6. Data Analysis

6.1 Demographic Analysis

The gender wise distribution of the students and their participation in library promotion strategies are presented below:

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of the students

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Male	79	31.6	114	45.6	193	38.6
Female	171	68.4	236	54.4	307	61.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The above table shows demographic characteristics of the students. It can be seen from the table that 31.6% of LIS students are male and 68.4% are female. Amongst the students of other courses, 45.6% are male and 54.4% are female. The female population is more in the sample.

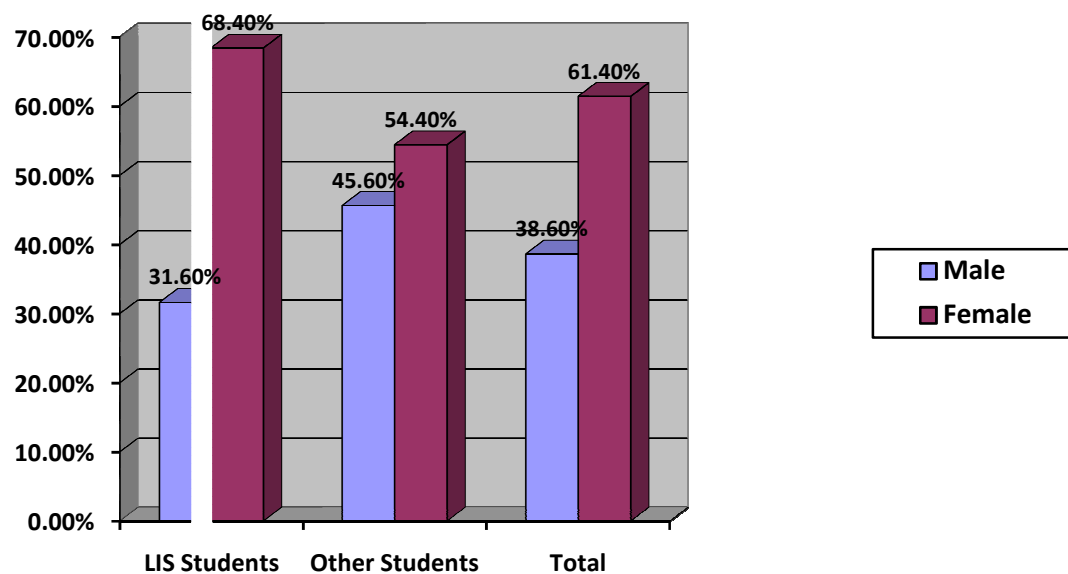


Fig. 1: Demographic Profile

Table 2: Participation in Library Promotion Strategies

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Library Orientation	219	87.6	203	81.2	422	84.4
Reference Work Session	31	12.4	0	0	31	6.2
No Response	0	0	47	18.8	47	9.4
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

When asked about participation in any library initiation activity, it was encouraging to find that majority of LIS students (87.6%) have attended library orientation programme and 12.4% have undergone reference work session. The data of students from other courses reflects that 81.2% have attended orientation but 18.8% provided no response.

6.2 Tools and Strategies used to Search Information

The students were asked about the tools used by them in searching information. An attempt was made to know about the various approaches used by them in searching the library catalogue. The results are tabulated below:

Table 3: Tools used to Search Library Information

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Library Catalogue	181	72.4	156	62.4	337	67.4
Search Engine (Google)	55	22	73	29.2	128	25.6
Ask from Librarian/Teacher	14	5.6	16	6.4	30	06
Others	00	0	05	2	5	01
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The above table shows the various tools used by students in searching information. It was found that the library catalogue is the most popular tool for searching the library collection and is preferred by 67.4 % students. Among LIS students, 72.4% prefer library catalogue, 22% use search engines and 5.6% seek assistance from librarian/teacher. Among students belonging to other courses, library catalogue is used by 62.4%, search engines by 29.2% and assistance from librarian/teacher is taken by 6.4%.

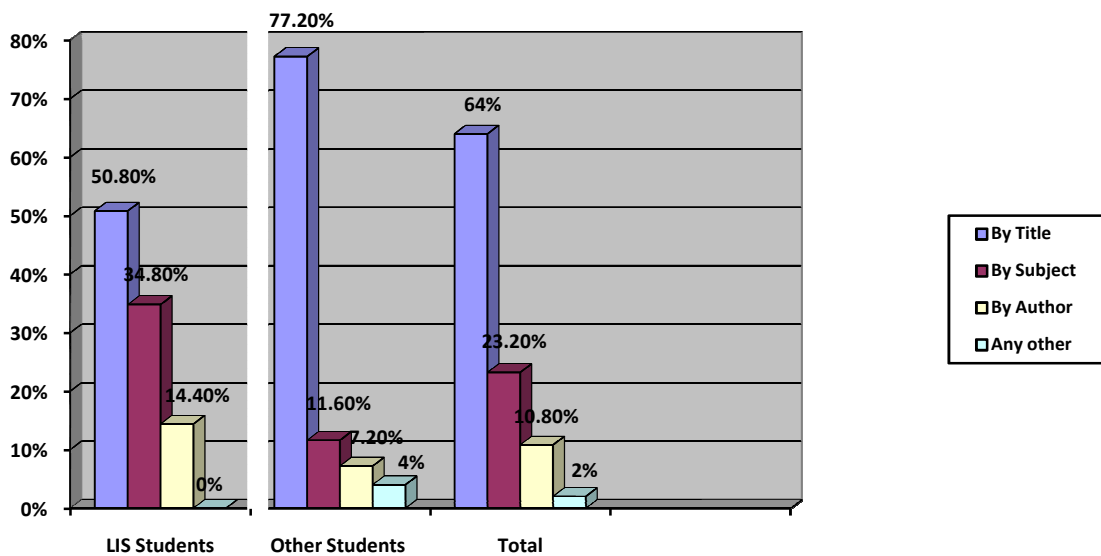


Fig 2: Tools and Strategies used to Search Information

The students employ various approaches to consult library catalogue. The above table and figure shows that the most popular strategy is searching by title, which is preferred by 64% students. Among LIS students, 50.8% search by title, 34.8% by subject and 14.4% by author. Among

students of other courses, title approach is used by 77.2%, subject by 11.6% and author approach is employed by 7.2%.

6.3 Best Platform/ Source to Get Needed Information

Students use a number of platforms to access needed information. The platforms preferred by them are shown in the table below:

Table 4: Best Platform/ Source to Get Needed Information

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Library	89	35.6	103	41.2	192	38.4
The Internet	86	34.4	109	43.6	195	39
Encyclopedia	47	18.8	00	0	47	9.4
Book	28	11.2	38	15.2	66	13.2
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The above table highlights that the Internet (39%) and library (38.4%) are the most popular platforms. The library is popular among 35.6% LIS students and the Internet among 34.4%. 18.8% LIS students use encyclopedia and 11.2% uses books. But the finding is reverse in case of students from other courses as 43.6% prefer the Internet and 41.2% use library.

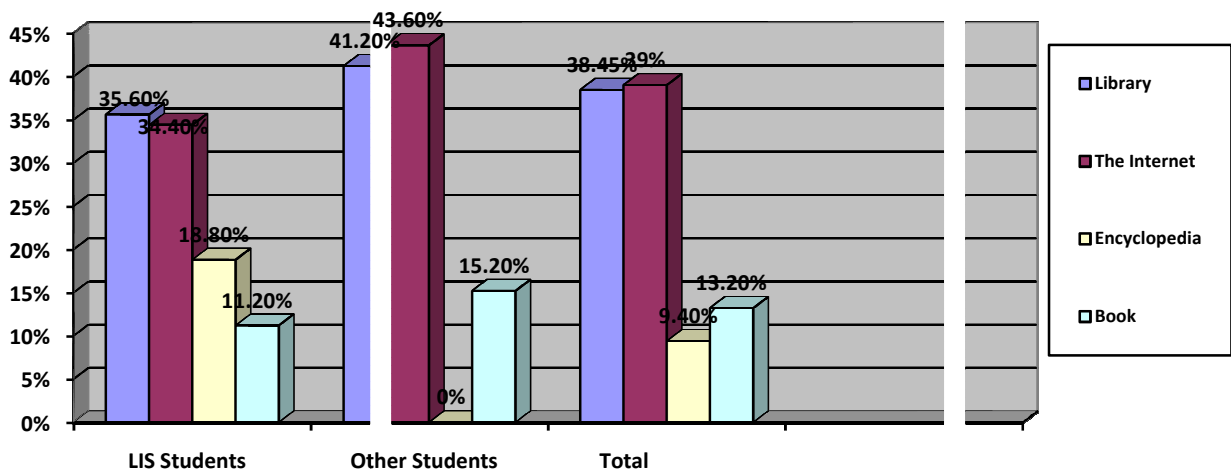


Fig 3: Best Platform/ Source to Get Needed Information

6.4 Part of the Book used to get Further Information

A question was asked to students to explore their knowledge of various parts of a book and functions they serve. The results are shown below:

Table 5: Part of the Book used to Get Further Information

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Glossary	00	0	02	0.8	02	0.4
Index	18	7.2	03	1.2	21	4.2
Bibliography of the book	137	54.8	86	34.4	223	44.6
Table of Contents	42	16.8	71	28.4	113	22.6
No Response	53	21.2	88	35.2	141	28.2
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The bibliography of the book is used by majority of LIS students (54.8%) for finding more documents related to the topic. This indicates that LIS students are aware of the various parts of a book and their importance. Among the students of other courses, majority (35.2%) did not provide response but among the provided responses 34.4% consult bibliography. Table of contents and index of the book are next preferences respectively.

6.5 Student Evaluation of Information and Ethical Awareness

The information retrieved from the Internet needs to be checked for quality. Also legal issues are involved with the usage of this information. The table below shows the awareness of the students in context of the above two points.

Table 6: Student's Evaluation of Information

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Authenticity	201	80.4	221	88.4	422	84.4
Reliability	210	84	198	79.2	408	81.6
Timeliness	225	90	208	83.2	433	86.6
Coverage	135	54	123	49.2	258	51.6
Accessibility	65	26	92	36.8	157	31.4

The students use various parameters for evaluation of the information gathered from Internet. The above table shows that majority of LIS students (90%) employ timeliness, 84% reliability, 80.4% authenticity, 54% coverage and 26% accessibility as evaluation criteria. The majority of students from other courses (88.4%) use authenticity followed by timeliness (83.2%), reliability (79.2%), coverage (49.2%) and accessibility (36.8%).

Table 7: Legal aspect regarding Use of Information

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Yes	92	36.8	52	20.8	144	28.8
No	158	63.2	198	79.2	356	71.2
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

The table also reveals that majority of students (63.2% of LIS students and 79.2% students of other courses) do not consider legal aspects like copyright, intellectual property rights regarding use of information.

Table 8: Use of other person's copy right information

Item	LIS Students		Other Students		Total	
	Number	%age	Number	%age	Number	%age
Seek Permission from the Copyright holder	21	8.4	15	6	36	7.2
Copy the whole text without Permission	59	23.6	84	33.6	143	28.6
Make Fair Use of Information	96	38.4	27	10.8	123	24.6
Don't Know	74	29.6	124	49.6	198	39.6
Total	250	100	250	100	500	100

It was also found that 38.4% of LIS students and only 10.8% students of other courses make fair use of information. 23.6% LIS students and 33.6% students of other courses copy the whole text without permission. Only 8.4% of LIS students and 6% students of other courses seek permission from the Copyright holder.

7. Findings and Conclusion

The female population is more in the sample constituting 38.6% male and 61.4 % female. Library orientation and reference service are the main strategies adopted by the students and library staff to promote the use of library resources and services. With regard to search preferences, students consult library catalogue, search engines, and library catalogue, respectively to find information. In searching for the needed information, students follow title, subject and author approach, respectively. Library, the Internet, reference books and text books are used by both categories of students in order of preference to get the required information. To retrieve information from a book, students prefer to use the book bibliography, table of contents, and index respectively.

8. Limitations of the Study

Sample for the study has been taken only from 07 universities of northern India. No effort has been made to present the data analysis course wise and subject wise at micro level. Students were divided into two broad categories of library and information science students as one group and other category students as the second group. Faculty and the university library staff has also been excluded to make this study more focused and informative.

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