

Information Literacy Skills among Undergraduate Students of Women Colleges in Trichy, Tamil Nadu: A Case Study

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Abstract - With the development of a wide variety of technologies, the amount of information available to people at large is growing rapidly. Colleges as a place and education as a mean to disseminate and transmit information have to keep up with this development. The diverse forms of technology make access to information easier and colleges have to seize this opportunity in order to produce students who are socially, intellectually and academically adopt. The application of the rapidly growing technology development in college can create an attractive, interactive and creative learning environment. To achieve this goal however, action must be taken systematically so that students can benefit from the information for learning purposes. This study focused on the information literacy skills possessed by women undergraduate college students. Next, it explores the specific important skills of information literacy skills that is locating and selecting skills. The data on sources of information preferred by the undergraduate women students would reflect the skills possessed upon using those sources. Hence the problem of the study is Information Literacy skills of undergraduate students of women colleges in Trichy city.

Keywords: Information Explosion, Information Literacy, Information Skills, Printed Sources, Electronic Resources

I. INTRODUCTION

The information explosion has created a need to acquire a skill to access, organize and use information to a certain purpose in an accurate way. Information literacy is the ability to access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources (O'Sullivan, 2002). This skill is synonymous with learning purposes because it enables students to find information in addition to the textbook which is a basic guide for teachers and students. The textbook is written material that contains fact, knowledge and other information needed by a subject with the purpose of self development and mind-shaping for every student. The textbook not only focuses on exam-oriented aspects; the objectives are more than that (Maughan, 2001). Besides, by adding the supplementary resources, there will be a balance between the teachers' role and the student's role by way of pedagogical approach. In the researcher's opinion, even though there are slight differences between approaches in the implementation of this skill, the main purpose is to train students in information access and retrieval, especially critical thinking strategies and to provide for the research the needs of a college education programme which is an apolitical and neutral one (Marcum, 2002).

II. INFORMATION LITERACY

Educational institutions, professional organizations and individuals have put forward various definitions for information literacy. However, the most referred to is the definition that can be found in the Final Report of the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy in 1989 which states that, "to be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information" (Rader, 2002).

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The amount of information increases at a tremendous rate every day. Individuals should be taught how to seek the right information and put it into maximum use. With the advances in technology, various forms of information are easily accessed. The skill to retrieve this information will greatly enhance student learning process, such as understanding the content of the subject and completing the task assigned to them in a speedy manner (Amudhavalli, 2008). In this study has chosen selected women's colleges in Trichy where the undergraduate students are selected the information resources they used for their excellent academic achievement. This study intends to identify the information literacy skills possessed by women undergraduate college students. Next, it explores the specific important skills of information literacy skills that is locating and selecting skills. The data on sources of information preferred by the undergraduate women students would reflect the skills possessed upon using those sources. Hence the problem of the study is Information Literacy skills of undergraduate students of women colleges in Trichy city.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of this study was to investigate the skills and awareness of information literacy among undergraduate students at women colleges in Trichy. The specific objectives were:

1. To assess the level of information literacy skills amongst undergraduate students in selected women colleges in Trichy.

2. To identify problems encountered by the undergraduate students in the women's College when seeking and using information needed for their assignments.
3. To investigate the information sources primarily used by the undergraduate students.
4. To explore the role of college resource centers and teacher librarians in assisting undergraduate students with information literacy skills.
5. To identify the information literacy skills required for undergraduate students and teachers' perspective.

A. Population and Sample

Three women colleges have been selected for the students, such as Shrimathi Indira Gandhi College, Trichy-02. Seethalakshmi Ramasamy College, Trichy-02, and Holy cross College, Trichy-02. The total population comprises of 375 students in undergraduate with different subjects taken for the study. Each College have 125 well structured questionnaire were distributed for collecting the data out of which each college.

B. Method of Data Collection

The questionnaires were distributed to the users personally and were collected from them by giving sufficient time to fill up the questionnaire. If any of the respondent was willing to fill up the questionnaire immediately, the investigator, waited until it was filled up. Some of the questionnaires were filled up by the investigator when the respondents were providing answers to the questions. The doubts raised by the respondents were clarified by the investigator; some of them were interviewed in depth. They were assured that the data provided by them would be kept strictly confidential and used for research purpose only. The investigator did not stress the respondents to give their names on the questionnaire if they were unwilling to do so. Every effort was made by the investigator to get reliable and accurate data from respondents. The total data needed for the study was collected during the period from December 2018 to March 2019.

V. ANALYSIS OF DATA

TABLE I COLLEGE WISE RESPONDENTS

S. No.	Name of the Institution	Number	Percentage
1	Shrimathi Indira Gandhi College	100	33.33
2	Holy Cross College	100	33.33
3	Seethalakshmi Ramasamy College	100	33.33
Total		300	99.99

After collecting the data from the respondents the data was checked and analyzed according to the objectives are stated. The primary data collections have to be processed and analyzed in accordance with the various steps such as editing, coding and tabulating. In this chapter, the data will be reported and the overall analysis, information obtained

from personal communication is noted and integrated. The present research examines information literacy skills among undergraduate students of women colleges in Trichy City.

A. Information Literacy Skills

In this section, the first questions posed were on the U.G student's reaction when given assignments. From the 300 respondents who answered this question, it was found that 81.7% respondents (245 students) stated that they would try to understand the assignment topics given first before attempting to look for information. This shows that U.G students were motivated to be independent when fulfilling their information needs. For those who chose others, among the other reactions used were looking into the text-book (Table II).

TABLE II U.G STUDENTS REACTION WHEN GIVEN ASSIGNMENTS

Students Reaction	Frequency	Percentage
Trying to understand the topic	245	81.7
Asking Faculties for help	12	4.0
Asking friends for help	19	6.3
Going to College Resource Centre	13	4.3
Others	11	3.7
Total	300	100

1. Most Effective Way in Gathering Information for Assignments

Research was also carried out to know which method the respondent felt was most effective to gather information for their assignments or project work. Table III indicates that 74.7% of the respondent (224 students) felt that Internet was the most effective way to gather information for their learning purpose.

TABLE III MOST EFFECTIVE WAY IN GATHERING INFORMATION FOR ASSIGNMENTS

The Most Effective Way	Frequency	Percentage
Using college Resource Centre	22	7.3
Using Other Libraries	9	3.0
Referring To Home Collection	13	4.3
Watching Educational TV Programme	0	0
Accessing The Internet	224	74.7
Asking People	24	8.0
Others	8	2.7
Total	300	100

2. Method to Get Information in College Resource Centre

Pertaining to the questions on the methods they would use to get the information from college resource centers or the library, Table IV indicates that the Internet was still the main choice with 36.7% respondents (110 students)

choosing access to the Internet as their option. This can be related with the question before whereby majority of the students felt that the Internet was the best method in getting information for their assignment.

TABLE IV METHOD TO GET INFORMATION IN COLLEGE RESOURCE CENTRE

Methods To Get Information	Frequency	Percentage
Using library catalogue	101	33.7
Accessing the Internet	110	36.7
Using magazine index	24	8.0
Using newspaper index	3	1.0
Asking teacher/ librarian	46	15.3
Others	16	5.3
Total	300	100

3. Important Factors in Choosing Information

While attempting to get answers to their information needs, students were then asked what was the most important factor that will influence them greatly. A total of 134 undergraduate women students (44.6%) stated that the understandability of the information was the most important factor to them (Table V). This was followed by the next question on the least important factors when choosing or seeking information.

TABLE V MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN CHOOSING INFORMATION

Most Important Factor	Frequency	Percentage
The cost in money	5	1.7
The time it took	93	31.0
It is up-to-date	56	18.7
Understandability of the information	134	44.6
Others	12	4.0
Total	300	100

4. Methods in Using Information

TABLE VI METHODS IN USING INFORMATION

Methods In Using Information	Frequency	Percentage
Summarize the information and arrange it accordingly	47	15.7
Identifying important point and arrange it	152	50.7
Arranging answers based on the questions related to the topics	97	32.3
Others	4	1.3
Total	300	100

With regards to the method utilized by the undergraduate women students when using the information, table VI shows that a total of 152 respondents (50.7%) used the information by identifying the important points from the gathered information and arranging it.

B. Locating and Selecting Information

In locating and selecting information in the library, the reference section seems to be a favorite section of the respondents to obtain source of information. This has been proven with 169 respondents (56.3%) giving a positive response (Table VII). Fourteen Percentages of the respondents gave inaccurate answer whereby they did not mention the section in the library but the sample for sources of information such as books and magazines.

TABLE VII SECTIONS IN THE LIBRARY CHOSEN BY THE STUDENTS TO GET SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Sections In The Library	Frequency	Percentage
Reference Book Section	169	56.3
Computer	16	5.3
Counter	40	13.3
Call Number	17	5.7
Catalogue	15	5.0
Book Index	1	0.4
Inaccurate answer	42	14.0
Total	300	100

1. Reasons for Choosing Printed Sources

TABLE VIII REASONS FOR CHOOSING PRINTED SOURCES

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Easy (to find, to understand, to obtain)	61	20.4
Cost and money saving	8	2.7
More information, more accurate and more complete	19	6.4
Easier to look up for important point	5	1.7
Easier to keep, referred to again	7	2.3
Interesting, many illustration	2	0.7
Current information	2	0.6
No answer	2	0.6
Total	300	100

Reasons for the choice of every source of information were the next question. The reason for those resources is shown in the 3 tables below. Reasons for choosing printed and electronic sources were almost the same (Table VIII and Table IX); but there was one interesting reason for choosing printed sources.

It was said to easier to keep and referred to again. Assumptions can be made that students have not actually mastered using the computer effectively because if they did, they would know that using the computer would be easier in keeping information and to refer to it again whenever needed. Reasons for choosing Audio Video sources have similarity with the earlier sources that is easier and interesting (Table X).

TABLE IX REASONS FOR CHOOSING ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Easier, faster	116	38.7
Clear and accurate information	3	1.0
Interesting	9	3.0
More information, complete	30	10.0
Saving time and cost	17	5.7
Current	11	3.6
Others	3	1.0
Total	189	63.0

TABLE X REASONS FOR CHOOSING AUDIO VIDEO

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Easier	3	1.0
Modern	1	0.3
Interesting	1	0.4
Total	5	1.7

C. Information Literacy Skills

The last question posed concerned information literacy skills, which was still needed by students in their learning process. The respondents' reaction for this question varied; beginning from those who chose only one answer to those who choose all the skills listed. Table XI displays the student's choice:

TABLE XI INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS

Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Defining the need for information	132	15.7
Locating sources of information	165	19.6
Selecting accurate information	196	23.3
Organizing information	118	14.0
Presenting information	88	10.5
Evaluating the whole process of information seeking	141	16.8
Total	840	100

Based on the results displayed in the table XI selecting accurate information, locating the source of information and evaluating the process of information seeking were three skills considered most important respectively.

VI. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Basically, women students have a positive attitude when a task is given to them. Research findings revealed that they were motivated of being independent without too much dependence on other people, especially their teachers.

1. The most important factor for respondents while attempting to get information is the understandability of the information (44.6%). On the other hand, the cost it took to get information was the least important factor (68.7%). It can be concluded that the women students were able to identify their needs for information and

gave priority to factors that helped them to achieve their goal.

- Basic library skills are not fully possessed by the students. 72% of students cannot give accurate elements when writing references for books, 67.3% of students do not know how to use call numbers when searching for books and 93.7% of students do not know the meaning of bibliography.
- An important finding is that Holy Cross College students are the most frequent respondents (20.6%) who have the knowledge on the elements required when writing references and the meaning of bibliography.
- Findings show that more than 50% of students get assignments that require them to search for information out of text-book boundaries, with Geography and History as the most frequent subjects being given tasks of this sort. This is a good effort towards exposing the students towards project work in future examination years. However, the lack of information literacy skills, added by various constraints such as time and unavailable sources cause problems to still exist for students in completing their tasks.

VII. CONCLUSION

It is shown from this study that in the process of information literacy, these respondents basically possessed the skills to recognize the need for information, to organize information and to present the information. However, the skill for locating and selecting information is quite limited since they do not have the knowledge on basic library skills. The study also revealed that students preferred to locate information by accessing the Internet followed by going to the college's resource centre. While selecting for information, students chose to look at the contents, reading the topic for every chapter, looking at the pictures or illustrations and using the full reading method. The problems that they faced concerning these two skills were time constraints, unavailable resources and not know how to choose accurate information from the resources found. An electronic source that is Internet has been proven to be the preferred source of information by the students.

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