
Information Literacy Skills and Utilisation of E-Resources: A Study of Post Graduate Students and Research Scholars at Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura

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Abstract

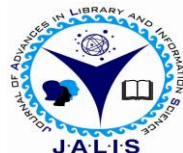
This study examines the information literacy skills and e-resource utilisation among postgraduate students and researchers at K.S.A.W. University, Vijayapura, through a standardised questionnaire based on the SCOUNAL model. A survey yielded 319 responses (91% response rate) from 350 distributed questionnaires. Data were analyzed using SPSS methods, revealing that students primarily use information for academic purposes. E-books emerged as the most favoured e-resource, with many respondents familiar with Boolean search strategies and plagiarism tools like Grammarly. However, eye strain and internet speed were common challenges. The findings indicate a strong correlation between information literacy and effective e-resource usage, suggesting that students with higher literacy skills utilize these resources more often.

Keywords

E-resources, Digital Literacy, Boolean Operators, SCOUNAL model,

Electronic access

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Introduction

The exponential growth of information and technology in the 21st century provides a challenge for educators. Information literacy skills and e-resources are essential for P.G. students and Researchers to access and use information efficiently in the digital era. In the contemporary digital environment, students must develop the skill to effectively access and utilise information. Information literacy plays an important role in helping students recognise the knowledge-making process while enhancing their ability to use and create different forms of information and knowledge. Information literacy is more than a superior knowledge-seeking behaviour. It consists of the proficiency to determine when information is required and then develop questions to extract the needed information. (Kinengyere, 2007) in the digital Generation, the ability to find, evaluate, and use knowledge efficiently is crucial, particularly in academic context of education. With huge amounts of information at our fingertips in the digital age, it is an essential skill set. Given the rapidity through which technology is developing and the improvements in the use of e-resources, information literacy is a pivotal ability. PG and research students are anticipated to get the required information literacy abilities that will improve the accessibility and usage of e-resources, as evidenced in the digital era the skill growth in the utilization of digital resources in academic learning contexts. Information literacy abilities are becoming the most important of surviving in the academic setting in this rapidly evolving technology age. (Imam, Abayomi, Okoro, Obinna Jeremiah, 2024)

Profile of KSAWU

KSAWU Initially known as Karnataka State Women's University is a public institution established in August 2003 in Vijayapura, Karnataka. It holds the Distinction of being the first University in the state exclusively dedicated to women's education. The KSAWU is approved in accordance with section 2(f) and 12(B) of the UGC (University Grants Commission) Act and has been approved with a 'B' grade by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. Presently KSURF has conferred a four-star ranking on the university. 148 women's colleges in Karnataka are affiliated with this University. There is also one PG centre at Sindhanoor and one at Udutadi. Additionally, an extension centre at Mandya offers various programs. The University provides various Undergraduate programmes for Bachelor's degree in

Arts, Business Administration, Computer Applications, Commerce, Education, Fashion Technology, Home Science, Physical Education, Science and Social Work. It also provided 32 P G Courses, along with P G Diploma and Certificate Courses across the Faculties of Arts, Commerce and Management, Social Sciences, Science and Technology and Education. Strategically located in Vijayapura, the north Karnataka region has opened access to higher education to the socially and economically weaker sections of society in this region. It has dedicated and committed experienced 88 permanent teaching faculty, including 22 professors, 21 associate professors and 45 assistant professors. The faculty members are actively engaged in research activities with available resources and facilities, publishing quality research papers/articles, editing chapters in national and international journals, and conference volumes. To promote advanced research in science, social sciences, arts and humanities, especially on topics of regional importance (Annual report of KSAWUV, 2023).

Information literacy and E-resources

Information literacy is a crucial skill in today's digital age, enabling individuals to identify their information needs, locate credible sources, and use information efficiently across multiple contexts. Users information literacy labels are influenced by education, visitor access, and training. According to The Association of College and Research Libraries (2016), an information-literate Person can efficiently find, evaluate and apply information to achieve specific goals. In academic environments, strong information literacy helps students conduct independent research, avoid plagiarism, and participate minimally in scholarly activities. Libraries play a major role in fostering these skills through targeted user education programs. Electronic Resources serve an essential function in academic activities, such as e-journals, online databases, e-books, institutional repositories, and scholarly search engines offer researchers immediate access to a broad range of current, peer-reviewed, and discipline-specific information. These resources are needed for conducting comprehensive literature reviews, collecting relevant data and keeping up with the latest developments in various fields. Their ease of Access, advanced search capabilities, and vast coverage contribute significantly to improving both the quality and

productivity of scholarly writing. As noted by Thanuskodi (2012), E- resources enhance the depth and efficiency of research by expanding access to academic literature. Academic libraries most focus on providing reliable access to these online tools and equipping Users with the skills needed to make use of them effectively.

Objectives of the study

- To examine the awareness and usage of e-resources among postgraduate and research students.
- To assess the level of information literacy skills among PG and research students at Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura.
- To evaluate students' ability to find needed information effectively and efficiently.
- To explore the difficulties faced by students in accessing and using e-resources.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on the information literacy skills and utilisation of e-resources by the first cultural students and scholars of Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura. The primary aim is to explore how these students access, evaluate, and utilise information literacy skills and e-resources for academic purposes. The study also examines their level of awareness and familiarity with various information literacy concepts and electronic resources.

Hypotheses

There is no significant relationship between information literacy skills and the utilization of e-resources among PG and Research Students at Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapura.

Literature Review

The present research examines relevant literature and provides background on the theoretical work conducted in the area of Information literacy skills and e-resources. over the last few decades, studies have investigated the commitment to exploring information literacy abilities.

According to Gross and Latham (2012), a study funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services revealed that many college students enter without adequate information literacy (IL) skills and often overestimate their abilities. Adeniran and Onuoha (2018) found a strong positive correlation between information literacy skills and the use of electronic resources among postgraduate students in Nigeria. Momanyi (2018) examined the IL program at Maseno University, highlighting the underutilization of digital resources due to insufficient skills among students despite training. Akpovire et al. (2019) investigated the impact of information literacy on resource adoption among medical students in Lagos, noting a preference for print and e-resources. Adarkwa (2024) focused on information literacy at Ghana's higher education institutions, emphasizing the need for enhanced skills and addressing challenges faced in information access.

Research Methodology

A structured questionnaire was employed as a data collection tool, which covered a combination of closed-ended, open-ended, and multiple-choice questions related to information literacy skills and awareness & use of e-resources. Some relevant questions were asked on a five-point scale, structured as a Likert scale, on ICT knowledge and E-resources among the research scholars. The study examines how postgraduate and research students at KSAWU, Vijayapur, utilize e-resources for research for research development and their information literacy abilities. The survey method was using for this investigation. A questionnaire was designed based on the SCONAL Model of information literacy and the objective of the study. the research was conducted at Karnataka state Akkamahadevi Women University, Vijayapur. Data was collected using a questionnaire through the survey method of research. Taro Yamane's (1967). The sample size was determined using a simple formula. We used MS Excel SPSS for data analysis. A response rate of 91% was reached. Of the 350 questionnaires given to postgraduate students and research scholars, 319 were returned. The sample size was determined using this formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where, n the sample size
N = the size f population

E = the error of 5 percentage points.

Total Population

$$\text{Sample size} = 1 + \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{1593}{1 + 1593 \times 0.05^2} = 319$$

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

Table 1: Demographic Information

Age	No. Respondents	Percentage
20-25	200	62.60%
25-30	89	27.80%
30-35	22	6.80%
35-40	8	2.50%
Educational qualification wise		
PhD	106	33.2%
PG	213	66.8%
Total	319	100%

Table 1 presents the demographic information of the respondents. The results show that a majority (62.60%,(N=200) of the respondents fall within the age group of 20-25 years, followed by 27.80%,(N=89) in the 25-30 age group, 6.80%(N=22) in the 30-35 age group, and relatively less percentage (2.50%(N=8) in the 35-40 age group. The table also shows that a large proportion of respondents are Postgraduate students 66.8%(N=213) remaining 33.2%(N=106) are Ph.D. scholars.

Table 2: Purpose of use of information

Purpose of Information	No. of Respondents N=319	Percentage
Study purpose	231	72.4%
Gaining knowledge	220	69%
Project purpose	135	42.3%
Upgradation of knowledge	157	49.2%

Table 2 reveals that the highest proportion of respondents (72.4%(N=231) use information primarily for study purposes. Further, 69%(N=220) utilise information for gaining knowledge, while 49.2%(N=157) access it for the upgradation of

subject-specific knowledge. A comparatively lower percentage (42.3%(N=135) reported using

information for project-related activities.

Table 3: Preferred Level of Information Sources

	Much Preferred	More Preferred	Neither	less Preferred	Not Preferred	Total	Mean	Rank
Free Resources of availability	221 (69.2%)	67 (21%)	29 (9%)	0	0	1460	4.57	1
Paid Resources	92 (28.8%)	104 (32.6%)	15 (4.7%)	108 (33.8%)	2 (0.62%)	1185	3.71	5
Print resources	109 (34.1%)	184 (57.6%)	11 (3.4%)	13 (4.6%)	0	1340	4.20	4
Online Resources	128 (40.1%)	168 (52.6%)	23 (7.2%)	0	0	1381	4.32	3
both print and online	222 (69.5%)	53 (16.6%)	44 (13.7%)	0	0	1454	4.55	2

Table 3 presents the preference levels for various information sources among postgraduate and research students at Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura. A majority of respondents, 221(69.2%), showed a much preference for freely available sources (mean =4.5). Similarly, 221(69.2%) respondents prefer access to both print and online

(mean =4.5). Online resources were more preferred 168 (52.6%) by respondents mean =4.3). while 184(57.6%) respondents are more preferred for print resources. In contrast, 108(33.8%) respondents expressed a lower preference for paid resources. These findings suggest that most students favour freely accessible information, especially in both print and online formats, while paid resources are less preferred.

Table 4: Level of knowledge of search Engines among the respondents

Search engines	Excellent	Very good	Not bad	Good	Poor	Total	Mean	Rank
Google	267 (83.6%)	48 (15.0%)	4 (1.2%)	0	0	1539	4.82	1
Bing	4 (1.2%)	116 (36.3%)	34 (10.6%)	158 (49.8%)	6 (1.8%)	908	2.84	3
Yahoo	65 (20.3%)	203 (63.6%)	30 9.4%)	10 (3.1%)	0	1247	3.90	2
Ask	0	74 (23.1%)	66 (20.6%)	78 (24.4%)	0	884	2.77	4
Dogpile	0	90 (28.2%)	41(12.8%)	126(80.2%)	64 (20.0)	799	2.50	5

Table 4 presents data on the respondents' level of knowledge regarding various search engines. A majority of respondents (267, 83.6%) demonstrated excellent knowledge of the Google search engine, with a mean score of 4.8 (mean =4.8). This was followed by Yahoo, where 203 (63.6%) respondents having strong knowledge (mean =3.9). for Bing,158(49.8%)respondents indicated very good knowledge, (mean =2.8). In the case of Ask,

78(24.4%) respondents reported having good knowledge (mean =2.7). similarly, 126(80.2%) respondents demonstrated good knowledge of Dogpile. The results indicate that respondents possess a high level of knowledge regarding Google, Yahoo, and Bing as they are more popular and widely used search engines, while other search engines, such as Ask and Dogpile, are relatively less aware among the students.

Table 5: Frequency of use of databases by the respondents

Databases	Most Frequently	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total	Mean	Rank
Scopus	167 (52.3)	44 (13.7)	102 (31.9%)	0	0	1317	4.12	1
Google Scholar	153 (47.9)	54 (16.9)	99 (31.0)	6 (1.8)	1 (0.31)	1278	4.00	2
Science Direct	112 (35.1%)	55(17.2%)	40 (12.5)	93 (29.1)	15 (4.7%)	805	2.52	6
Web of science	120(37.6%)	53 (16.6%)	117 (36.6)	9 (2.8%)	18 (5.6%)	1163	3.64	3
BASE	0	114 (35.7%)	47 (14.7%)	5 (1.5%)	149 (46.7%)	597	1.87	8
IEEE	0	88 (27.5)	104 (32.6%)	5 (1.5%)	111 (34.7%)	685	2.14	7
EBSCO	1 (0.3%)	199 (62.3%)	57 (17.8%)	13 (4.0%)	44(13.7%)	972	3.04	4
EMERALD	2 (0.6%)	95 (29.7%)	155 (48.5%)	30(9.4%)	28 (8.7%)	855	2.68	5
PubMed	0	94 (29.4%)	0	32 (10.0%)	197 (61.7%)	376	1.17	9

Table 5 shows the frequency of database usage among respondents. The findings indicate that a majority of respondents 167 (52.3%), frequently use the Scopus database (mean =4.1), followed by Google Scholar, 153(47.9%) respondents, who most frequently use (mean =4.0). The Web of Science database was frequently used by 120(37.6%) respondents (mean =3.6), A significant portion of respondents, 199(62.3%) reported frequent use of the EBSCO database (mean =2.6), while 155(48.5%) respondents indicated they sometimes use the

EMERALD database (mean =2.6). Science Direct was frequently used by 112(35.1%) respondents (mean=2.5). Conversely, 111(34.7%) respondents are never using IEEE Database (mean=2.1), 149(46.7%) respondents are never used BASE database (mean =1.8) and 197(61.7%) respondents are never used PubMed database (mean =1.1) Overall, study reveals that Scopus, Google Scholar, Web of Science and EBSCO are the most frequently used database, whereas IEEE, BASE and PubMed are the least utilized among respondents.

Table 6: Preferred level of E- E-resources

	Most preferred	More preferred	Somewhat preferred	Less preferred	Not All preferred	Total	Mean	Rank
E-books	260 (81.5%)	46 (14.4%)	13 (4.0)	0	0	1523	4.77	1
E-Journals	102 (31.9%)	51 (15.9%)	108 (33.8%)	2 (0.6%)	38 (11.9%)	1080	3.38	3
E-Proceedings	98 (30.7%)	44 (13.7%)	28 (8.7%)	142 (44.5%)	6 (1.8%)	1040	3.26	4
ETD	68 (21.3%)	20 (6.2%)	1 (0.3%)	7 (2.19%)	1 (0.3%)	438	1.37	5
E-Reference books	139 (43.5%)	38 (11.9%)	94 (29.4%)	43 (13.4%)	1 (0.3%)	1216	3.81	2

Table 6 presents the preferred level of e-resources usage among respondents. A significant Number of (260, 81.5%) respondents reported the most preferred for e-books, (mean =4.7). followed by e-reference books, which were highly preferred by 139(43.5%) respondents most preferred (mean =3.8). while 142(44.5%) respondents showed a lower preference for e-proceedings (mean =3.2). only 68(21.3%) respondents expressed most preference for Electronic Theses and Dissertations (ETD), with a relatively low mean score of (mean=1.3). The result shows that e-books,

reference books are the most preferred e-resources among the students.

Table 7: Knowledge about Boolean operators among the respondents

Boolean operators for searching		
	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	240	75.2%
No	79	24.7%
Knowledge of Boolean operators		

AND	120	37.6%
OR	105	32.9%
NOT	94	29.4%
Total	319	100%

while searching for information. Among these, 37.6% of respondents use the AND operator, followed by 32.9% who use the OR operator and 29.4% who use the NOT operator. The Findings of the study reveals that most commonly used Boolean operator among the respondents is AND operator.

Table 7 highlights the respondents ' knowledge regarding the use of Boolean operators. A significant majority (75.2%) reported using Boolean operators

Table 8: Users' Awareness of Plagiarism Software

	Very aware	Aware	Neither	Unaware	Very Unaware	Total	Mean	Rank
Turnitin	123(38.5%)	116(36.3%)	3 (0.95%)	15(4.7%)	15(4.7%)	395	3.950	5
Urkund	118(36.95%)	131(41.0%)	9(2.8%)	7(2.1%)	8(2.5%)	402	4.020	2
Grammarly	126(39.4%)	123(38.5%)	3(0.9%)	12(3.7%)	7(2.1%)	407	4.070	3
Quetext	96(30.0%)	40(12.5%)	6 (1.8%)	107(33.5%)	23(7.2%)	373	3.730	4
Drilbit	131(41.0%)	127(39.8%)	0	8(2.5%)	8(2.5%)	415	4.150	1

Table 8 presents the respondents' awareness of various plagiarism detection tools based on total scores and mean values. A significant portion of the respondents 131(41.0%) reported being very aware of Drilbit, (mean =4.1). followed by 131(41.0%) respondents who were aware of Urkund (mean =4.0). while , 126 (39.4%) respondents indicated that very aware of Grammarly(mean =4.0). on the other hand 107(33.5%) respondents reported being unaware of Quetext (mean =3.7). Further, 123(38.5%) respondents expressed being very aware of Turnitin. The results suggest that a majority of users are well aware of plagiarism detection tools such as Drilbit, Urkund, Grammarly and Turnitin, whereas comparatively fewer users are familiar with Quetext.

Table 9: Problems faced by Users while accessing E-resources

Difficulties of E-resources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Expensive	106	33.2%
Eye strain while reading	277	86.8%
Limited information availability	66	20.7%
Poor computer expertise	115	36.1%
The information is unreliable	20	6.3%
Network issue	240	75.2%
Slow bandwidth of internet	104	32.6%

Table 9 highlights the various difficulties encountered by students of Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura, in accessing e-resources. A majority of respondents 86.8%(N=277), reported experiencing eye strain while reading e-resources. Additionally, network issues were cited by 75.2%(N=240) of the participants as a significant challenge during usage. Other difficulties included lack of computer expertise reported by 36.1%(N=115) the high cost of e-resources noted by 33.2%. (N=106) and Slow Internet bandwidth, experienced by. 32.6%. (N=104). Furthermore limited availability of relevant information was cited by 20.7%(N=66). While a smaller proportion 6.3%(N=20) mentioned concerns regarding the unreliability of available information. These findings indicate that eye strain and network issues are the most common barriers faced by students and research scholars when accessing e-resources.

Major Findings

The findings reveal that postgraduate and research students at Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura. Possess basic information literacy skills and utilise e-resources in their research activities. the majority of respondents are aged 20-25 years, with postgraduate students representing the highest proportion of participants.

- ★ The Majority of respondents are using the study for Information purposes.

- ✦ The highest number of respondents prefer free resource availability on the internet.
- ✦ Almost all the respondents are using the Google search engine.
- ✦ The large majority of respondents frequently use the Scopus database.
- ✦ The Highest number of respondents are using E-Books.
- ✦ The majority of respondents are using AND Boolean operators to search for information.
- ✦ The largest number of respondents are aware of Drilbit, Urkund, Grammarly and Turnitin.
- ✦ A large majority of respondents are facing eye strain while reading e-books.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are proposed to enhance information literacy skills and improve the effective utilisation of e-resources among PG and Research scholars:

- Conduct regular information literacy workshops.
- Integrate information literacy into the academic curriculum.
- Regular orientation and training programs.
- Improve Internet Connectivity on Campus.
- Promote Awareness of available E-resources.
- Enhance Access to User-Friendly Digital Platforms.
- Provide individual Support and Help Desks.
- Increase Availability of Reliable and Subject-Specific Resources.
- Integrate use of open access resources.
- Introduce personalized research assistance.
- Encourage use of reference management tools.
- Establish a digital literacy lab in language lab

Conclusion:

The study was conducted among postgraduate and research students at Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura. The study highlights

the importance of information literacy skills and the effective utilisation of e-resources in enhancing the research capabilities of PG students and research students at Karnataka State Akkamahadevi Women's University, Vijayapura. The students possess a basic level of information literacy; however, ongoing training and institutional support are essential to enhance their skills in identifying, evaluating, and utilising digital resources for academic and research purposes. Strengthening these competencies is crucial not only for individual academic success but also for contributing meaningfully to the broader field of knowledge production in higher education. Many studies have indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between information literacy skills and use of e-resources. Findings indicated that students with higher information literacy skills tend to use e-resources more frequently, leading to improve academic performance. Therefore, it is essential to provide more scope and priority for the implementation of the information literacy program at the university level in order to enhance the usage of e-resources.

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