Source of Availability and Accessibility of Information and The Use of Library Services in the Affiliated Colleges of Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

By taking the survey from the 68 affiliated colleges of MKU, we have gained insight into the various facilities provided by the colleges and the university. We can also be aware of the books, journals, magazines, and internet sources available in various colleges, which can be helpful to other colleges in developing their library infrastructures. 43.83% respondents visited the library daily. The audiovisual aids were used by 26.8% of the respondents. The book bank facility has been used by 76% of respondents, among whom 53.43% were fully satisfied with its performance. According to the survey conducted among respondents, UGC-INFLIBNET ranked first among the e-resources. 83% of the respondents benefited from the textbook, magazines, and journals for their research. Twenty-four per cent of respondents have used serial materials on a daily basis. Respondents are highly satisfied with the overall library resources

Keywords

Madurai Kamaraj University; Availability and Accessibility; Library Services; e-Resources.

Introduction

The study examines the sources of information availability and accessibility, as well as the utilisation of library services, in the affiliated colleges of Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu. The term 'availability' must be distinguished from 'accessibility'. The availability of information resources means ensuring their presence in libraries for immediate use. Learning materials may be available, i.e., the library has acquired them, but they are inaccessible for use to those who need them for whatever reason (Uncataloged, miscataloged, mis-shelved, etc.). Accessibility means that users can reach and use the resources.

The library holds different meanings for different people and institutions. To some, it is a place where books and other materials are preserved for the purpose of disseminating information and knowledge to the benefit of the society it serves. To others, the library is an institution where books and other information resources are collected, processed, stored, retrieved and disseminated.

Availability of information resources

The availability of information establishes a new standard for systems and networks that are always on for various applications. In this system and network, data are always available to users. The availability of information resources entails acquiring and providing means by which users can access the necessary information. It aims to ensure that every user receives a document that meets their information needs. Indeed, the availability of information resources could justify the existence of the library or information centre. It is in line with this that the study is conducted to assess the level to which information resources are made available and accessible to users of affiliated colleges of MKU. Perhaps a study like this could provide insight into how the library is utilised and the services it offers to users.

Accessibility of information resources

The term accessibility is used in general to describe the extent to which a system is usable by a wide range of users. In other words, it is the degree of ease with which it is possible to reach a certain location from other locations. Accessibility can also be viewed as the ability to access the functionality and potential benefits of a system or entity. Accessibility is very important, particularly as it focuses on people

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with disabilities and their access to various entities, often through the use of assistive devices such as screen readers, web browsers, and catalogues in technological formats. It is one thing for the resources to be available and it is another thing to be accessible. Whatsoever is available but not accessible is equally useless.

Statement of problem

For a library to be functional, it has to meet its users' needs and to ensure the functional use of the information resources and services available at their disposal. In the modern world, the progress and development of a country is determined by its educational and information development. All the activities, resources, and services of a library are geared towards helping the general public meet its information needs. There is no discrimination on the basis of education, sex, age, religion and social status. College library provides resources and services, making them readily available for access at all times such that the users would have maximum satisfaction whenever they utilise the library resources and services

Description of Area of Study

The study area is restricted to the affiliated colleges of Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai in Tamil Nadu. It covers the availability and use of information resources. It primarily focuses on direct services to users, providing convenience and supporting the functions of the library, which are geared towards achieving the library's aims and objectives.

Purpose and Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between the availability and accessibility of information sources with the use of library services in the affiliated colleges of MKU, Madurai.

From the problems enumerated in the research work, the following objectives are provided for the study:

➢ to find out the type of information services provided in the college library

➢ to investigate how information resources are accessed by the user
➢ to find out the availability of information services provided in the library
➢ to find out the awareness and uses of E- E-Resources
➢ to assess how adequate these resources are for the clientele
➢ to find out how information resources are used and to identify the types of information resources available in the library.

Study Population

The Study population includes libraries of affiliated colleges of Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu. Totally there are 98 colleges affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University, out of that 68 colleges are taken for the study. The sample includes students of undergraduate, postgraduate and teaching faculty of affiliated colleges of Madurai Kamaraj University

Methodology

In usage surveys, data are often collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire method was employed to collect usage data in the present study. The respondents for the questionnaire were drawn from MKU-affiliated colleges in Tamil Nadu. The data thus collected were analysed, and on the basis of this data, the interview technique was employed to seek further information from selected users to clarify the doubts faced during the analysis of questionnaires. The stratified sampling technique was employed to select the population for data collection, with the objective of obtaining representative samples from all user categories and from all arts and sciences under study. Proper care was taken to select samples that represent each user category proportionally. A total of 1,421 questionnaires were distributed among users of various college libraries affiliated with MKU in Tamil Nadu. The total number of responses received is 1,209, respectively.

DATA ANANYSIS

Availability of resources in the library

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Table 1: Types of Information Resources Available in the Library

S. No	Documentary sources	Most frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Not to all
1	Books	484 (40.03)	492(40.69)	221(18.27)	12(0.99)
2	Periodicals	382(31.59)	416(34.40)	362(29.94)	49(4.05)
3	Dictionary	226(8.69)	296(24.48)	545(45.07)	142(11.74)
4	Encyclopedia	155(12.82)	176(14.55)	653(54.01)	225(18.61)
5	Year book	156(12.90)	204(16.87)	614(50.78)	235(19.43)
6	Gazetteers	92(7.60)	98(8.10)	796(65.83)	223(18.44)
7	Theses	198(16.37)	219(18.11)	567(46.89)	225(18.61)
8	Patents	89(7.36)	107(8.85)	789(65.26)	224(18.52)
9	Reports	54(4.46)	73(6.03)	865(71.54)	217(17.94)
10	Hand books	89(7.36)	107(8.85)	789(65.26)	224(18.52)
11	Directories	95(7.85)	116(9.59)	765(63.27)	233(19.27)
12	Seminar / Conference	51(4.21)	63(5.21)	871(72.04)	224(18.52)

Note: Figures in parentheses show the percentage.

Apart from knowledge, the usage of information sources is equally important to know the frequency of use of different types of information sources. Therefore, respondents were asked to mention the frequency of use of information sources available in the library. Analysis of the responses indicates a marked preference for books (40%), followed by periodicals (31.59%). It is also observed that almost all reference sources viz. Seminar/Conference (72.04%), Reports (71.54%), Gazetteers (65.83%), Handbooks (65.26%), Directories (63.27%), and Encyclopedias (54.01%) are being consulted occasionally by users (Table 1).

Table 2: Frequency of use of non –non-documentary sources

Non – documentary sources	Most frequently	Frequently	Occasionally	Not at all
Atlas – Maps	231 (19.1)	324 (26.79)	504 (41.69)	150 (12.40)
Globes	32 (2.64)	63 (5.21)	230 (19.02)	884 (73.12)
Plates	23 (1.9)	41 (3.39)	196 (16.21)	949 (78.49)
CD / DVD	185 (15.3)	268 (22.16)	469 (38.79)	287 (23.74)
Audio / Visual Material	212 (17.53)	292 (24.15)	346 (28.62)	359 (29.69)
Microforms	21 (1.74)	36 (2.98)	186 (15.38)	966 (79.90)
Microfilms	63 (5.21)	89 (7.36)	192 (15.88)	865 (71.54)
Audio / Video Cassettes	39 (3.23)	52 (4.30)	168 (13.89)	950 (78.57)

Note: Figures in parentheses show the percentage.

Table 2 shows that a fairly good number of respondents use atlas/maps (26.8%), followed by audio-visual materials (24.15%) and CDs/DVDs (22.16%). It is interesting to note that, except for atlases/maps, CDs/DVDs, and audio-visual materials, 60% of respondents have not used non-documentary sources, despite their availability in the library. The reasons for the less use of these resources would be the lack of awareness and the inconvenience in using these resources.

Types of Information Services provided in the library

Table 3: Library services

Services	Yes	No	Fully satisfied	Satisfied	Partially satisfied	Not satisfied
Lending service	989	220	321	686	181	19
Book band facilities	920	289	325	646	193	45

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Reference service	1010	199	285	715	170	39
Current Awareness Service	826	383	214	609	343	43
Selective dissemination	469	740	146	293	691	79
DDS	512	697	192	325	571	121
User orientation programme	612	597	201	379	544	73
Interlibrary loan	421	788	112	214	262	621
Audio-video facility	627	582	103	240	227	639
Record player/cassette facilities	509	700	39	107	351	712
Xerox services	711	498	213	486	458	52
Online service	621	588	197	509	374	129
Internet service	839	370	254	611	225	119
CD-ROM search	563	646	112	369	347	381

The primary objectives of library services are to provide users with the necessary information and to save the time of library users. The services provided by the library are given in Table 3. The results show that 81.8% of respondents use the lending service, among whom 56.74% are satisfied, and 14.97% are partially satisfied with the service. Regarding the book bank facility, 76.1% of respondents utilise the service, with 53.43% being satisfied and 15.96% partially satisfied. 83.54% of respondents utilise the reference service, of which 59.14% are satisfied, and 14.1% are partially satisfied. 69.39% respondents make use of internet services, and among them, 50.53% are satisfied, and 18.61% are partially satisfied. 68.32% of respondents utilise the current awareness service, and among them, 50.37% are satisfied, while 28.37% are partially satisfied with the service. It is observed that other services such as SDI, DDS, ILL, CD-ROM search, etc., are fairly used.

Table 4 Based on Types of E-Resources

S.No	E-Resources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	E. Books	249	20.06
2	E-Journals	378	31.27
3	E-Magazines	218	18.03
4	E-Thesis / Dissertations	121	9.92
5	E-Database	132	10.91
6	All	110	9.09
Total		1209	100

The data analysis in Table 4 reveals that E-journals and E-books were the most frequently used e-resources by the respondents, as indicated by their responses, which accounted for 378 (31.27%) and 249 (20.06%), respectively. It is followed by the use of E-magazines (18.3 %); e-theses & dissertations (9.92%); e-databases (10.91%); and only 9.09% of responses indicate the use of all e-resources by the respondents.

Table 5: Sources of e-resources used

S.No	Sources	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	UGC-INFLIBNET	364	30.10
2	DELNET	244	20.18
3	INTERNET RESOURCES	226	18.70
4	OPEN ACCESS RESOURCES	163	13.48
5	CD / DVD	212	17.54
		1209	100

The e-resources available in the library primarily include subscribed online resources through the UGC-INFLIBNET consortium, freely available online resources, open-access journals and books, and offline e-resources in the form of CDs/DVDs. A study of the data in Table 5 reveals the category-wise sources of e-resources used by respondents. UGC-INFLIBNET occupied the first position in their overall sources of e-resources used as they secured and followed by DELNET

Table 6 Based on the Level of Satisfaction of E-Resources

S. No	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Highly Satisfied	243	20.10
2	Satisfied	625	51.70
3	Moderately satisfied	223	18.44
4	Dissatisfied	118	9.76
Total		1209	100

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Table 6 shows that most students, 625 respondents (51.70%), are satisfied with all the e-resources they receive from the identified sources. Furthermore, 243 (20.10%) indicated that they were fully satisfied, while 223 (18.44%) and 118 (9.76%) indicated that they were moderately satisfied and dissatisfied, respectively.

It can be inferred from Table 7 that using the Internet is not free from problems. The most common problem faced by users is that a large number of respondents, 384 (31.75%), have slow Internet access speeds, which significantly reduces their time to retrieve relevant information.

Table 7: Based on Problems Faced by the Users

S.No	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Power failure	121	10.1
2	Slow Accessibility	384	31.75
3	Lack of IT knowledge	226	18.70
4	Limited access to computers	224	18.52
5	Lack of time	142	11.75
6	Poor personal assistance	111	9.18
		1209	100

Accessibility to Information Resources in the Library

Table 8: Level of Accessibility

Items	Easily Accessible	Not Easily Accessible	Mean	S.D
Textbooks	83 83%	17 17%	3.23	.98
Newspapers and Magazines	83 83%	17 17%	3.22	1.00
Reference Materials (dictionary, encyclopedia, handbook etc,)	82 82%	18 18%	3.12	1.00
Journals	71 71%	29 29%	2.95	1.05
Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	73 73%	27 27%	2.93	1.08
Online Databases (Ebscohost, Jstor, Science Direct, e.t.c.)	67 67%	33 33%	2.77	1.05
E-books	65 25.0%	35 17.0%	2.73	1.02

Table 8 shows that the most accessible information resources were: Textbooks 83 (83%), followed by Newspapers and Magazines 83 (83%), Reference materials 82 (82%), Journals 71(71%), and the e-resources Online Databases 67(67%), E-books 65 (65%).

Table 9: Frequency of using library resources

Items	Once in Several Months	Monthly	Twice a week	Once a week	Daily	Mean	S.D
Serials (Journals, newspapers, magazines, etc.)	35 35.0%	17 17.0%	9 9.0%	15 15.0%	24 24.0%	2.76	1.63
Textbooks	33 33.0%	16 16.0%	15 15.0%	20 20.0%	16 16.0%	2.70	1.50
Online Databases (Ebscohost, Jstor, Science	46	7	16	15	16	2.48	1.57

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Direct, e.t.c.)	46.0%	7.0%	16.0%	15.0%	16.0%		
E-books	41 41.0%	14 14.0%	18 18.0%	15 15.0%	12 12.0%	2.43	1.45
Reference Materials (dictionary, encyclopedia, handbook e.t.c.)	45 45.0%	16 16.0%	12 12.0%	13 13.00%	14 14.0%	2.35	1.50
Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	51 51.0%	14 14.0%	13 13.0%	11 11.0%	11 11.0%	2.17	1.44

Table 10: Challenges of accessing/using library resources

Items	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
It takes much time to search for materials needed in the library	30 30%	70 70%	2.03	.88
Office is far to the library	26 26%	74 74%	1.95	.90
Materials are not available	25 25%	75 75%	1.92	.95
Inadequate knowledge in the use of ICTs	25 25%	75 75%	1.92	.869
Library staff are not willing to render service/help	4 4%	96 96%	1.49	.58

As shown in Table 9, the frequency of using library resources revealed that 24 (24%) students used serial materials on a daily basis, while 16 (16%) used textbooks and Online Databases each. Others were Reference 14 (14%), E-books 12 (12%) and OPAC 11 (11%). However, OPAC 51 (51%), Online Databases 46 (46%), Reference materials 45 (45%), E-books 41 (41%), Serials 35 (35%), Textbooks 33 (33%) were used once in several months.

Table 10 showed that 30 (30%) of the respondents agreed that it takes a lot of time to search for materials needed in the library, which is the highest figure on the challenges of accessing/using the library, followed by the office being too far from the library, at 26 (26%). Findings further revealed that 96 (96%) of the respondents disagreed that library staff are not willing to render services/help.

Table 11: Level of satisfaction

Items	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Never satisfied	Mean	S.D
Textbooks	48 48.0%	41 41.0%	11 11%	2.30	.66
Newspapers and Magazines	50 50.0%	38 38.0%	12% 12	2.26	.66
Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)	55 55.0%	30 30.0%	15 15%	2.15	.66
Reference Materials (dictionary, encyclopedia, handbook e.t.c.)	60 60.0%	26 26.0%	14 14%	2.12	.62
Online Databases (Ebscohost, Jstor, Science Direct, e.t.c.)	54 54.0%	25 25.0%	21 21%	2.07	.70
E-books	56 56.0%	22 22.0%	22 22%	2.03	.69
Journals	52 52.0%	24 24.0%	24 24%	2.00	.70

Table 11 revealed respondents' levels of satisfaction with library resources. Findings revealed a high level of satisfaction among respondents with the library resources: Reference materials (60%), E-books (56%), OPAC (55%), and Online Databases (54%).

However, 24 (24%) of the respondents were never satisfied with Journals, followed by 22 (22%) with e-books, and 21 (21%) with online databases.

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Findings

➢ Frequency of visit to the Library: 43.84 respondents made daily visits to the library

➢ The majority of the students (30.77%) visited the library to borrow books

➢ A good number of respondents use atlas/maps (26.8%), followed by audio-visual materials (24.15%) and CDs/DVDs (22.16%).

➢ The book bank facility is used by 76.1% of respondents, among whom 53.43% are satisfied, and 15.96% are partially satisfied.

➢ E-journals and E-Books were the most frequently used e-resources by the respondents, as indicated by their responses, which accounted for 378 (31.27%) and 249 (20.06%), respectively.

➢ UGC-INFLIBNET occupied the first position in terms of their overall sources of e-resources used, followed by DELNET.

➢ where most of the students, 625 respondents (51.70%), are satisfied with all the e-resources they are getting from the identified sources.

➢ The most common problem faced by users is that a large number of respondents, 384 (31.75%), have slow Internet access speeds, which significantly reduces their time to retrieve relevant information.

➢ The most accessible information resources were: Textbooks 83 (83%), followed by Newspapers and Magazines

➢ it was found that 24 (24%) used serial materials on a daily basis, 16 (16%) used textbooks and Online Databases each.

➢ Thirty per cent (30%) of the respondents agreed that it takes a lot of time to search for materials needed in the library, which is the highest figure on the challenges of accessing/using the library.

➢ Findings revealed a high level of satisfaction among respondents with the library resources: Reference materials (60%), E-books (56%), OPAC (55%), and Online Databases (54%).

Conclusion

An analysis of the present study shows that almost all the users visit the library. Although the documentary and non-documentary sources are sufficient, the frequency of use of sources such as encyclopedias, patents, reports, and directories is very low. Non-documentary sources are less used, perhaps owing to a lack of awareness or the inconvenience of using these resources. Present-day libraries are placing greater emphasis on the e-library approach.

The study was undertaken to investigate the availability, accessibility, and utilisation of information resources by students and staff. The use of information resources by students would be enhanced if the resources adequately catered for the various needs of students. The findings reveal that more information resources are available than can be accessed efficiently by students. As a result, the library provided book resources that were not fully accessible to students for maximum utilisation.

The study revealed that the library has a collection of information resources, primarily in print materials. It also reflects a dearth of resources to offer students, albeit, provided resources are able to support students academically. Students often utilise information resources such as textbooks, serials, and the internet, which are mainly available and accessible in near adequate amounts.

Presently, the major information resources (print/books) show the library is yet to integrate technology as a primary information provider. Students' use of the internet demonstrates that the library needs to provide technology and digital information resources to improve the availability and accessibility of information resources for students to utilise beyond those provided in the current print format. There is a growing need to redirect focus towards expanding the library sources to take advantage of technology to enhance library stock and improve available, accessible, and utilisable information resources for students in this age of technological advancement and dependence is not out of place.

The use of electronic information sources for study and research purposes must be encouraged, and proper training should be organised from time to time. This is a comprehensive study of the use of e-resources by students. It is hoped that its findings will help colleges and their libraries frame policies and programmes related to e-resources, facilitating teaching and research.

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