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## Awareness on OPAC by the Undergraduate Students: A Study

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#### Abstract

*OPAC is a vital tool in the Libraries to offer a good service to the users. Electronic Information access and retrieval in multiple ways could be done using the OPAC services. The present study explores the UG students' awareness of OPAC towards their Branch and Age. UG students of St. Joseph's College of Arts & Science (Autonomous), Cuddalore-dt., was considered to conduct the research. Study helps to find out the UG students library visit attitudes and awareness levels of OPAC by which the Librarian may take further decisions to improve the services associated with the OPAC.*

#### Keywords

Higher Education; Library; OPAC; Users study

#### Electronic access

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## INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, electronic resources are valuable tools for higher education students for their study, learning and research. Electronic resources can provide many advantages over traditional print-based resources: they contain current information because they updated frequently, they offer advanced search capabilities, they offer flexibility in the storage of the results, and they enable access to information without the restrictions of time and location. The access to electronic resources in Higher Education Institutions is rapidly increasing (Aspasia Togia, 2009). The growth of information in electronic format forces students to learn how to find, select and use a wide variety of resources. Higher education must develop these skills, in order to produce qualified individuals, engaged in the lifelong pursuit of knowledge for personal and professional growth. For education students in particular, the ability to effectively utilize electronic information resources is a key issue, since it may help them to enhance the quality of their teaching when they become professionals. In addition, it is expected that an educator comfortable in using electronic resources may encourage his/her students to do the same, and thus contribute to their computer and information literacy. Access to e-resources has decreased the time spent searching for information. Access is only as good as the resources that can be afforded (e.g., the number of computers and existence of network systems), the ability to work with the tools, and the network infrastructure that supports rapid and convenient connections. The ability to use e-resources efficiently depends on basic computer skills, knowledge of what is available and how to use it, and ability to define a research problem.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Ali, Naushad (2005) conducted a study on use of Electronic Information Services (EIS) among the users of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Library in Delhi, India. 300 samples were collected by the author. The data covers awareness of EIS services, use of e-journals, advanced search facilities, acquaintance with electronic information sources, the purpose of using e-information, problems faced by the users while using EIS, infrastructure facility available and satisfaction level of users. Lack of printing facilities, terminals and trained staff are the major reasons that would discourage users from accessing the electronic information service. The survey also reveals that some 60 per cent of users

face difficulties while browsing e-information. Asemi, Asefeh and Nosrat Riyahiniya (2007) had a study to trace the relationships between awareness and use of digital resources among students in Isfahan University of Medical Sciences using a questionnaire method. 250 users of the Medical libraries and information centers affiliated to Isfahan university of Medical Sciences were considered for the study. The results revealed that 70 percent of students were aware of e-resources. He traced a few findings that the frequency of use of electronic resources was low due to lack of time because of the time needed to focus on teaching; lack of awareness to electronic resources provided by library; ineffective communication channels and language barrier. Kelly and Orr had a survey among the students to trace the level of awareness of e-resources and perceived needs for physical libraries, delivery materials, instructional and promotional services, resources and technologies. Tyagi, S. (2011) used a mailing questionnaire procedure to collect the data from the part-time distant learning graduate and undergraduate students located within continental United States. The findings show that national trends demonstrate that nontraditional, predominantly part-time student usage patterns have changed and now they favor the use of electronic resources, particularly internet. Physical library use is significantly higher among those who take the majority of their courses face-to-face. According to Tyagi, 62 percent were aware of offline databases. About 70 percent were aware of online databases. 87 percent of students felt that the available data met their information needs. Users faced problems like low speed connectivity and shortage of hardware facilities.

**OBJECTIVES**

The present study includes the following objectives.

1. To find out the respondent's library visit behaviors towards branch.
2. To find out the respondent's awareness of OPAC towards branch.
3. To find out the respondent's awareness of OPAC towards age.

**HYPOTHESES**

The present study includes some of the given hypotheses.

1. There is no significant difference exist between the branch wise respondent's Library visits.

2. There is no significant difference exist between the branch wise respondent's awareness of OPAC.

**METHODOLOGY**

A study was conducted among the UG students of St. Joseph's College of Arts & Science (Autonomous), Cuddalore-dt., to trace the awareness of OPAC. Questionnaire method was opted to collect the required data from the respondents. The data was cross tabulated towards their branch as explained in the objectives. Simple per cent was applied for the obtained frequencies. Chi-square test was opted to analyze the data as well as to prove the hypotheses.

**DATA COLLECTION**

200 questionnaires were distributed among the selected branches' UG students of St. Joseph's College of Arts & Science (Autonomous), Cuddalore-Dt., and the same were received back. In final 150 samples were considered for the present study. The present study covers the undergraduate students' library visits and awareness of OPAC only.

**ANALYSIS**

**Table 1:** Frequency of Library Visit

Branch	Count	Daily	2 Days Once	Once in a Week	Bi-Week	Total
Chemistry	Count	5	4	8	13	30
	Expected Count	3.0	2.8	17.6	6.6	30.0
	% within Branch	16.7	13.3	26.7	43.3	100
Commerce	Count	2	6	19	3	30
	Expected Count	3.0	2.8	17.6	6.6	30.0
	% within Branch	6.7	20.0	63.3	10.0	100.0
Computer Science	Count	1	2	24	3	30
	Expected Count	3.0	2.8	17.6	6.6	30.0
	% within Branch	3.3	6.7	80.0	10.0	100
Englis	Count	1	0	27	2	30

h	Expected Count	3.0	2.8	17.6	6.6	30.0
	% within Branch	3.3	.0	90.0	6.7	100
Mathematics	Count	6	2	10	12	30
	Expected Count	3.0	2.8	17.6	6.6	30.0
	% within Branch	20.0	6.7	33.3	40.0	100
Total	Count	15	14	88	33	150
	Expected Count	15.0	14.0	88.0	33.0	150.0
	% within Branch	10	9.3	58.7	22.0	100

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	48.497 <sup>a</sup>	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	51.436	12	.000
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.80.

**Table 1.1:** Basic Measures Distribution

Measures	Chemistry	Commerce	Computer Science	English	Mathematics
N	4	4	4	4	4
Min	4	2	1	-	2
Max	13	19	24	27	12
Mean	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5
Std. error	2.020726	3.926406	5.515131	6.512808	2.217356
Variance	16.33333	61.66667	121.6667	169.6667	19.66667
Stand. Dev	4.041452	7.852813	11.03026	13.02562	4.434712
Median	6.5	4.5	2.5	1.5	8
25 prcntil	4.25	2.25	1.25	0.25	3
75 prcntil	11.75	15.75	18.75	20.75	11.5
Skewness	1.090738	1.734617	1.967191	1.976459	-0.48156
Kurtosis	0.297376	2.996932	3.890936	3.921685	-1.69951
Geom. mean	6.753297	5.114039	3.464102	0	6.160141
Coeff. var	53.88603	104.7042	147.0702	173.6749	59.12949

Tables 1 & 1.1 show the respondents' frequency of library visits and basic statistic measures distribution. 43% of the Chemistry branch users visited the library bi-weekly, followed by once in a week (26.67%), daily (16.67%), 2 days once (13.33%). 63% of the Commerce branch users visited the library once in a week, followed by 2 days once (20%), bi-weekly (10%), daily (6.67%). 80% of the Computer Science branch users visited the library once in a week, followed by bi-weekly (10%), 2 days once (6.67%), daily (3%). 90% of the English branch users visited the library once in a week, followed by bi-weekly (6.67%), daily (3%). 40% of the Mathematics branch users visited the library bi-weekly, followed by once in a week (33%), daily (20%), 2 days once (6.67%).

The statistical test results at 5% significance did not support to accept the hypothesis one.

Table 2 shows the respondents awareness of OPAC. Majority of the users were not aware of OPAC system. Mathematics (43%), Chemistry (40%) and Computer Science (33%) branches users were found with reasonable scores. The branches Commerce (20%) and English (23%), were found with below 25% of awareness. The statistical test results at 5% significance did support to accept the hypothesis two.

**Table 2:** Branch Vs Awareness of OPAC

Branch		Yes	No	Total
Chemistry	Count	12	18	30
	Expected Count	9.6	20.4	30.0
	% within Branch	40.0	60	100
Commerce	Count	6	24	30
	Expected Count	9.6	20.4	30.0
	% within Branch	20	80	100
Computer Science	Count	10	20	30
	Expected Count	9.6	20.4	30.0
	% within Branch	33.3	66.7	100
English	Count	7	23	30
	Expected Count	9.6	20.4	30.0
	% within Branch	23.3	76.7	100
Mathematics	Count	13	17	30
	Expected Count	9.6	20.4	30.0
	% within Branch	43.3	56.7	100
Total	Count	48	102	150
	Expected Count	48.0	102.0	150.0
	% within Branch	32	68	100

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.699 <sup>a</sup>	4	.223
Likelihood Ratio	5.815	4	.213
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.60.

**Table 3:** Age Vs Awareness of OPAC

**Age \* OPAC Cross tabulation**

			OPAC		Total
			Yes	No	
Age 19-21	Count		39	84	123
	% within Age		31.7	68.3	100
Age 22-25	Count		9	18	27
	% within Age		33.3	66.7	100
Total	Count		48	102	150
	% within Age		32.0	68.0	100

Table 3 shows the users' awareness of OPAC according to their age group. Majority of the users from both the age groups (66-68%) were not aware of the OPAC system. In both the age groups just below 35% of the users were aware of OPAC.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The present study revealed the following findings;

- 43% of the Chemistry branch users visited the library bi-weekly.
- 63% of the Commerce, 80% of the Computer Science and 90% of the English branch users visited the library once in a week.
- 40% of the Mathematics branch users visited the library bi-weekly.
- It is concluded that no branch users were identified with the habit of visiting the library daily. There was a difference existing among the users' visit to the library and hence the first hypothesis was not accepted.
- Majority of the users were not aware of OPAC system.
- 43% of the Mathematics branch users were aware of OPAC.
- Commerce branch users were found with just 20%.
- Less than 35% of the users from both the age groups were only aware of OPAC.
- Users' OPAC awareness levels are not in satisfactory level. There was no difference among the users' awareness and hence the second hypothesis was accepted.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the test results of the present study a few suggestions are placed here.

1. Respondent's daily Library visit habits need to be encouraged.
2. Awareness programs need to be conducted by the librarian so as respondents may be aware of OPAC

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