INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS AMONG DEGREE STUDENTS OF MAHAJANA'S FIRST GRADE COLLEGE, MYSORE: A STUDY

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Abstract

The researchers have made an attempt to identify the information literacy skills of degree students of Mahajana's First Grade College, Mysore. To fulfil the objectives of the study, the researchers have used structured questionnaire to collect required data from the users. All together, 120 questionnaires were distributed to the users of the library and 80 filled up questionnaires were received back with 66.66 percent response rate. The findings of the study show that, more than 77 percent of the respondents visit the library to browse internet, books and news papers are the most frequently used sources of the library and still more than 51 percent of the students consult librarian to find required information in the library. Further, 60 percent of the users of the library search table of contents of a book to find related sources on same topics in the book and 70 percent of the students stated that they consult books to find information already familiar with a subject. Nearly 42 percent to 47 percent of the respondents answered that they are comfortable with the information literacy skills such as, 'formulate questions based on information needs' and 'identifies potential sources of information'. The study also finds that more than 61 percent of the users replied that they have awareness about copyright laws. It also suggests that the librarians and faculty must take initiatives to improve the information literacy skills of the students in the present era.

KEYWORDS :

Information literacy skills, Degree students, Mahajana's College, & Libraries

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

The importance of information as a critical ingredient for purposeful living and self-actualization has been with us for decades. The sources from which information can be derived has increased and improved over time so that everybody, regardless of age, affiliation, or status can find relevant information to use. Effective information use by undergraduates in an academic environment could be a result of the student's acquisition of the requisite social, emotional, cognitive skills and behaviour for successful social adaptation.

Information literacy skills open the gateway of information to students and all information seekers and users across disciplines. It is a way of exposing users to the world of knowledge. It helps students know when information is required, how to locate, evaluate, organise, and effectively create, use, and communicate it. The American Library Association's definition of the term is, 'to be information literate an individual must recognise when information is needed and have an ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the information needed. Ultimately information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how information is organised, how to find information The current study investigates the information literacy skills of degree students of Mahajana's college, Mysore.

1.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Wu and Yeh (2012) conducted a survey to investigate whether students possess the capabilities to use the sources. Questionnaire survey was conducted. Participants were solicited from undergraduate students in the fields of Chinese Literature, Sociology, and Computer Science. A total of 443 students completed the questionnaires. Results indicated that most students agreed that library electronic resources were important to their studies, but they did not use the resources frequently. Not all students possessed equivalent computer competences to use library electronic resources. Gender, subject field, internet use are factors that correlate with competence variations. This study also found that students were not confident about their capabilities in using library electronic resources. Low correlation was found between students' levels of computer competences and their frequency, familiarity, and perceived importance of electronic resources. The study conducted by Syamalamba (2011) found that under graduate students often lack the skills necessary to succeed in this rapidly changing environment, and faculty need training and support to make use of new technologies for effective teaching and learning also discusses the concept of information literacy and the role of college librarians in developing information literacy skills in libraries. Dabbour and Ballard (2011) present a cross-cultural analysis of information literacy and library use among Latino and white undergraduates in an American university. A large-scale, random sample survey of information literacy skills, and library instruction experiences and attitudes was undertaken at a large public university in the USA. More white students accessed the internet from home than Latino students; however, both spent an equal amount of time searching the internet and library databases. Latino students used the physical library more than white students. More Latino than white students had formal library instruction. Over two thirds of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their research skills Contributed to their academic success. Latino students did not perform as well as white students on the test questions on information literacy knowledge. While an argument over the relative merits of an objective test of information literacy versus direct assessment of student work is beyond the scope of this study, it would be worthwhile to undertake to see if the results would be different. Given the differences in test scores despite more Latinos attending library instruction, improvements in outreach, pedagogy, and assessment methodologies may be needed. As there are over 220 Hispanic-Serving Institutions of higher education in the USA, these findings could be applicable to other libraries. Hadimani and Rajgoli (2010) made an attempt to know the information literacy competency among the undergraduate students of College of Agriculture, Raichur (Karnataka, India). Questionnaire method was used for data collection and results are tabulated and analysed. Outcome of the study has been discussed and necessary suggestions have been made on the basis of the results for implementing proper information literacy competency programmes in the College. Porter (2005) ascertained that the information literacy skills are critically important for the undergraduate biology students. The ability to find, understands, evaluates, and uses information is essential for a good understanding of a topic and to conduct research. Projects in which students receive information literacy instruction and then proceed to select, update, and write about a current research topic in an upper-level cell biology course is described. Students research the chosen topic using paper and electronic resources, generate a list of relevant articles, prepare abstracts based on papers read, and, finally, prepare a ''state-of-heart'' paper on the topic. This approach has resulted in a number of well researched and well written papers that incorporate some of the latest research in cell biology. The steps in this project have also led to students who are prepared to address future projects on new and complex topics.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.To identify the frequency of use of information sources available in the library and to analyse sources consult by the users to find required information in the library.
2.To understand the ability of students in searching information resources available in the library and to assess the users knowledge about the different sections/parts of the book.
3.To identify the students attitudes towards information literacy skills and the knowledge about the copyright laws.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

To fulfil the above objectives of the study a simple survey was conducted by using well structured questionnaire and distributed to the students of Mahajana's First Grade College Library. Totally, 120 questionnaires were distributed to the students of the college and 80 filled questionnaires were received back in the response rate of 66.66 percent.

1.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1.4.1 Gender-wise distribution of respondents

Table 1 shows the gender-wise distribution of the respondents. Majority of respondents are Male 60 (75%) followed by female 20 (25%) respondents.

Table 1: Gender-wise distribution of respondents

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	60	75
2	Female	20	25
	total	**80**	**100**

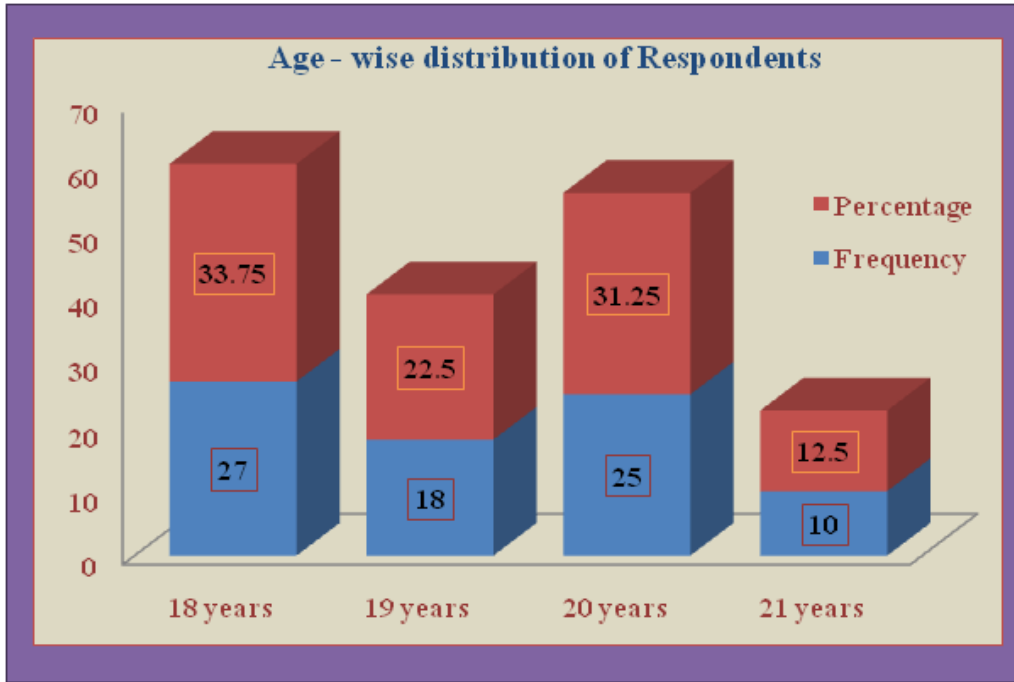### 1.4.2 Age-wise distributions of respondents

Figure 1: Age-wise distributions of respondents

Figure 1 shows that the age - wise distribution of respondents. Majority of the respondents are belongs to 18 years age i.e. 27 (33.75%), followed by 25 (31.25%) of them are fit to the 20 years age, 18 (22.5%) of the respondents are in the 19 year age and remaining 10(12.5%) of them are 21 years old.

1.4.3 Subjects - wise distribution of respondents

The figure 2 shows that the subject-wise distribution of the respondents, out of 80 respondents, 25 (31.25%) of the respondents are replied from B. Com, following by BA, BBM, BSc and BCA. Represents, 27.5 percent, 21.25 percent, 12.5 percent and 7.5 percent respectively.
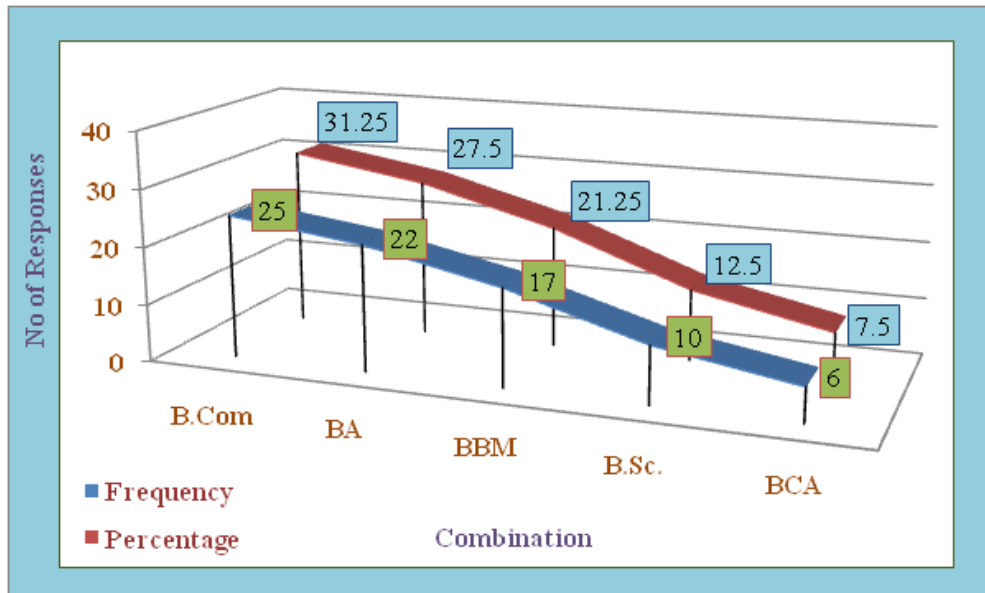

Figure 2: Subjects - wise distribution of respondents

1.4.4 Frequency of visit by the respondents

Table 2 shows the frequency of visit to the library.

Table 2: Frequency of visit by the respondents

S/N	Frequency of Visit	Frequency	Percentage
1	Daily	24	30
2	Twice in a week	27	33.75
3	Once in a week	13	16.25
4	As and when required	16	20
	Total	**80**	**100**

Out of 80 respondents, 27(33.75%) of them visit the library twice in a week, followed by, 24 (30%) of the respondents reply that they visit daily, while, 16 of them responded that they visit as and when they required and finally, 13 (16.25%) stated that they visit once in a week.

1.4.5 Purpose of visit to the library

Table 3 depicts purposes of visit to the library by the respondents. Majority of the respondents visit library to browse internet i.e. 62 (77.5%), followed by, to refer reference books 52 (65%), another, 50 (62.5%) of the respondents state they come to library to borrow books and to refer old question papers, 42 (52.5%) of them opine that they come to obtain photocopy, while, 38 (47.5%) of them state that they come to browse newspaper. Further it is found from the table that, 34 (42.5%) of them replied that they come to library to read magazines, 32 (40%) to write assignments, 22 (27.5%) of the respondents come to library to prepare for competitive examinations, 18 (22.5%) of them replied they come to prepare seminars, 12 (15%) of them come to use electronic resources, and 11 (13.75%) of them come to use current journals.

Table 3: Purpose of visit to the library

S/N	Purpose	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
1	To browse Internet	62	77.5
2	To refer reference books	52	65
3	To borrow books	50	62.5
4	To refer old question papers	50	62.5
5	To obtain Xerox	42	52.5
6	To browse newspapers	38	47.5
7	To read magazines	34	42.5
8	To write assignments	32	40
9	To prepare for competitive examinations	22	27.5
10	To prepare seminars	18	22.5
11	To use electronic resources	12	15
12	To use current journals	11	13.75

1.4.6 Frequency of use of different sources

Table 4: Frequency of use of different sources

S/N	Type of Documents	Most Frequently	Frequently	Less Frequently	Not At All
1	Books	38 (47.5)	30 (37.5)	12(15)	-
2	Reference books	23(28.75)	42(52.5)	15(18.75)	-
3	News papers	35(43.75)	23(28.75)	22(27.5)	-
4	Journals	-	19(23.75)	33(41.25)	28(35)
5	Library OPAC	9(11.25)	-	37(46.25)	34(42.5)
6	Online databases	-	-	30(37.5)	50(62.5)
7	E-books & E-Journals	9(11.25)	4(5)	32(40)	35(43.75)
8	Internet	26(32.5)	21(26.25)	30(37.5)	3(3.75)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicates percentage

Table 4 demonstrates the frequency of use of library sources. Nearly, 48 percent of the respondents replied that they consult books most frequently, reference books are concerned 52.5 percent of them stated that they refer frequently, while 43.75 percent of the respondents read newspapers 'most frequently', 41. 25 percent of them replied that they read journals less frequently and 46.25 percent of them use OPAC service less frequently. Another, 40 percent of the respondents use e-books & e-journals less frequently and 37.5 percent each of them consult online database and Internet less frequently.

1.4.7 Sources consult to find required information in the library

Table 5 shows, the sources consulting by the users to find required information in the library.

Table 5: Sources consult to find required information in library

S/N	Response	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
1	Through consulting Librarian	41	51.25
2	Through friends	40	50
3	Through Library catalogue	38	47.5
4	Through racks	36	45
5	Through Guidance from faculty members	30	37.5
6	Through OPAC Search	7	8.75

Majority of the respondents find resources through consulting librarian i.e. 41 (51.25%), followed by, through friends 40 (50%), through library catalogue 38 (47.5%) through searching racks 36 (45%), through taking guidance from the faculty 30 (37.5%) and only, 7 (8.75%) of the users search through library OPAC.

1.4.8 The part of the book the users consult to find related resources on the same topic

Table 6 depicts that the parts of book the users consult to find related resources on the same topic. Majority of the respondents i.e. 48 (60%) replied that they search in the table of contents section, followed by, 41 (51.25%) of them opt that they see the index section, 32 (40%) of the respondents agree that they search reference/bibliography section and 21 (26.25%) of them answered they see glossary section to fine further documents on the same topic. Overall, this shows the lack of awareness among the students about the basic structure of the book and the part of the books that they use regularly.

Table 6: Finding related sources on same topics in the book

S/N	Section of a book	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
1	Table of contents	48	60
2	The index section	41	51.25
3	The reference section(bibliography)	32	40
4	The Glossary section	21	26.25

1.4.9 Sources consult to find information familiar with a subject

Table 7 shows that the sources which are used by the users to find information familiar with a subject.

Table 7: Sources consult to find information familiar with a subject

S/N	Source	Frequency (n=80)	Percentage
1	A book	56	70
2	Search through Internet	44	55
3	An encyclopaedia	27	33.75
4	A database	6	7.5
5	A journal	5	6.25

Out of 80 respondents, 56 (70%) of them answered that they search in a book, followed by, 44 (55%) of them stated that they search in the Internet, another 27(33.75%) said that they go through 'encyclopaedia', while, 6(7.5%) of the respondents replied that they go through the databases and 5 (6.25%) of them said that they consult journals to find information which they familiar already.

1.4.10 Attitudes towards Information Literacy Skills

Table 8 shows the attitudes of users towards information literacy skills. Majority 38 (47.5%) of the respondents are comfortable with formulation of questions based on information needs, followed by, 42 (52.5) of them replied that they are comfortable in identifying potential sources of information. It can also observed from the table that, out of 80 respondents, 34

(42.5) respondents are comfortable with develops successful search strategies, 28 (35%) each of them agree that they comfort in evaluation of information and integrates new information into an existing body of knowledge, 30 (37.5%) of the respondents are comfortable with use of information in critical thinking and problem solving. Nearly 32 to 35 percent of the respondents are un-comfortable in 'access sources of information, including computer-based and other technologies and integrates new information into an existing body of knowledge.

Table 8: Attitudes about Information Literacy Skills

S/N	Information literacy skills	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Un Comfortable	Very Un Comfortable
1	Formulates questions based on information needs	29(36.25)	38(47.5)	7(8.75)	6(7.5)
2	Identifies potential sources of information	15(18.75)	42(52.5)	18(22.5)	5(6.25)
3	Develops successful search strategies	18(22.5)	34(42.5)	21(26.25)	7(8.75)
4	Accesses sources of information, including computer-based and other technologies	19(23.75)	24(30)	26(32.5)	11(13.75)
5	Evaluates information	16(20)	28(35)	19(23.75)	17(21.25)
6	Organizes information for practical application	12(15)	23(28.75)	31(35)	14(17.5)
7	Integrates new information into an existing body of knowledge	14(17.5)	28(35)	30(37.5)	8(10)
8	Uses information in critical thinking and problem solving	19(23.75)	30(37.5)	27(33.75)	4(5)

1.4.11 Awareness about copyright laws

Table 9 discusses the awareness of the users about copyright laws. Majority of the respondents i.e. 49 (61.25%) stated that they know about copyright law and only 31 (38.75%) respondents agreed that they did not know about copyright laws.

Table 9: Awareness about copyright laws

S/N	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	49	61.25
2	No	31	38.75
Total		**80**	**100**

1.5 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1.Majority of the respondents visit library to browse the internet 62 (77.5%) regularly.
2.All most all the respondents use books in the library in one other frequency and 62 percent of the respondents stated that they not at all use online databases.
3.41 (51.25%) respondents find the information in the library consulting through librarian.
4.Another important findings of the study is that the 'lack of awareness among the students about the basic structure of the book'.
5.Majority of the respondents are comfortable with formulation of questions based on information needs i.e. 38 (47.5%) and 4 (5%) respondents are very uncomfortable with the use of information in critical thinking and problem solving.
6.Majority of the respondents stated that 49 (61.25%) they know about copyright law.

1.6 SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

The ultimate goal of any library service is to ensure that the students are able to access the information for purposes for which they require it (Syamalamba 2011). Most of the students are not much aware about resources of the library and basic concepts of the books. It is suggested that good orientation program can solve this problem. Further observed that majority of the students are comfortable with formulation of questions based on information needs and some of them are uncomfortable with the information literacy skills. In this regard librarians and faculty must take initiatives to improve the information literacy skills of the students in the present era.
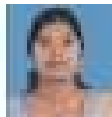
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