

Perception and Utilization of Electronic Resources among Faculty Members and Research Scholars: A Comparative Study of Universities in Tamil Nadu**Dr. S. Mahalakshmi**

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Abstract

Electronic resources have become an important component of teaching, learning and research in higher education. The present article examines the perception and utilization of electronic resources among faculty members and research scholars in three different university environments in Tamil Nadu. The study is based on the doctoral survey conducted among academic users of Anna University, University of madras and Agricultural University. A descriptive research design was adopted. Questionnaires were distributed to 894 potential respondents and 736 completed responses were obtained, representing an 82.32% response rate. Simple random sampling was used. Data were analyzed using percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, one-way ANOVA, chi-square, weighted average and rank correlation. The findings show that 55.3% of respondents used e-resources daily and 58.8% had more than four years of experience in using them. Full-text information was preferred by 63.3% of respondents, while 44.4% preferred electronic media overall. E-resources were used for teaching, research, conferences and seminars, with e-journals receiving prominent attention. The findings also indicate that users considered electronic resources useful because of their accessibility, convenience and time-saving characteristics. Differences were observed across the three university environments in several aspects of computer literacy, e-resource facilities and satisfaction. The study concludes that systematic user education, improved digital infrastructure and responsive library services are important for strengthening effective utilization of electronic resources in higher education.

Keywords: Electronic resources; User perception; E-resource utilization; Faculty members; Research scholars; University libraries.

Introduction

The transition from print-oriented collections to digitally accessible information has changed the information-seeking practices of university communities. Electronic journals, e-books, online databases, digital libraries and web-based services provide rapid access to scholarly information. The source thesis explains that e-resources support teaching and research by allowing users to access information from different locations and at different times. It also emphasizes the changing role of academic libraries from repositories of printed materials to providers of electronic information and services. The growth of digital scholarship has made the effective use of electronic information an important component of university teaching, learning and research. Academic libraries increasingly

provide access to electronic journals, books, databases, reference sources and web-based services. Understanding how users interact with these resources is therefore necessary for effective library planning.

Background of the Study

The doctoral study on which this article is based examined the perception and usage of electronic resources in three different university environments in Tamil Nadu. It considered computer literacy, research productivity, experience of e-resource use, library facilities, purpose and barriers, search strategy and user satisfaction. The original thesis used a questionnaire survey of faculty members and research scholars and organized the investigation around these dimensions.

Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this article is the need to understand how faculty members and research scholars perceive, access and use electronic resources across different types of university environments in Tamil Nadu, and whether their experiences differ according to institutional context.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the frequency and experience of e-resource use among faculty members and research scholars.
- To identify users' preferences for electronic information formats and media.
- To examine major purposes for using electronic resources.
- To compare selected aspects of e-resource use across Anna University, University of Madras and Agricultural University.
- To identify implications for improving academic library e-resource services.

Methodology

Research design

A descriptive research design was adopted in the original study.

Population

The population comprised faculty members and research scholars of Anna University, University of Madras and Agricultural University in Tamil Nadu.

Sample

A total of 894 questionnaires were distributed and 736 usable questionnaires were returned, giving an 82.32% response rate. The final respondents comprised faculty members and research scholars from the three surveyed universities.

Sampling technique

Simple random sampling was adopted. The researcher obtained lists of faculty members and research scholars from the concerned departments and selected respondents using the sampling procedure described in the thesis.

Data collection

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire covering demographic characteristics, computer literacy, research productivity, experience and frequency of e-resource use, library facilities, purpose and barriers, search strategies and user satisfaction. The questionnaire was reviewed by experienced researchers and experts, and a pilot survey involving 20 faculty members and 10 research scholars was conducted before final data collection.

Statistical techniques

The original study used percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, one-way ANOVA, chi-square, weighted-average methods and rank correlation. The specific techniques reported in each article are used descriptively in accordance with the original thesis.

Results and Discussion

The survey comprised 736 valid respondents from the three universities. The overall respondent group consisted of 52.5% faculty members and 47.4% research scholars. The original study reported that 55.3% used e-resources daily and 58.8% had more than four years of experience.

Indicator	Result
Frequency of use	55.3% reported daily use of e-resources.
Experience	58.8% reported more than four years of experience.
Information preference	63.3% preferred full-text information.
Medium preference	44.4% preferred electronic media overall.
Library use	35.3% reported visiting the library daily.

The results should be interpreted within the scope of the original survey. They describe the perceptions and practices of the 736 respondents and should not be generalized beyond comparable populations without further research. The pattern across the three universities indicates that electronic resources had become an important component of academic information use, while access, digital skills, service support and institutional differences continued to influence the user experience.

Major Findings

1. Electronic resources were integrated into routine academic information use.
2. Longer experience with e-resources was common among respondents.
3. Full-text information was the dominant information preference.
4. Electronic media was preferred overall, although institutional variation existed.

5. The study identified meaningful differences across the surveyed university environments in several user-related variables.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates substantial adoption of electronic resources among the surveyed academic community. However, utilization should be understood together with access conditions, digital competence, institutional facilities and user support. University libraries can strengthen the value of their electronic collections through continuous user education, reliable connectivity, accessible interfaces and services aligned with academic and research needs.

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