



Information Seeking Behaviour of Teachers of Higher Educational Institutions : A Case Study

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Abstract: This study examined the information seeking behaviour of teachers of higher educational institutions. It focused on the information needs and search methods of faculty members from diverse disciplines. A total of 134 teachers from various subjects were selected as the sample for the study. The study employed a research methodology in which 150 Google surveys were distributed to respondents via WhatsApp; 134 responses were received and utilized as the sample size for the analysis. The paper aimed to identify the objectives behind seeking information, the types of information used, the utilization of formal and electronic sources, methods for staying updated on current developments, and the techniques employed to discover new information.

Key Words: Information Needs, Information Seeking Behaviour, Use pattern, Information Resources, User Study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The benefits of the information communication technology revolution are primarily focused on user convenience. Teachers are responsible for teaching, and are expected to conduct research and publish their results throughout their careers. 'Information seeking' is a term describing how people search for, evaluate, select, and use information. When seeking new information, an individual may interact with various people, analog tools, and computer-based information systems. Information seeking is a process humans use to expand their knowledge and, in some instances, transform their state of knowledge. It is also a crucial cognitive process linked to learning and problem-solving, and is sometimes regarded as a high-level cognitive process. It represents one of the most significant areas of 'behavioral' research within library user studies and is influenced by numerous factors. Information-seeking behavior is distinct from the information need itself. An information need is "a subjective and relative concept within the mind of the individual experiencing it, defined by the recognition of uncertainty." Information-seeking behavior stemming from the recognition of such a need is defined as any human activity undertaken to acquire a message that satisfies the perceived need. While research into information seeking has revealed both similarities and differences, the key takeaway is that understanding information-seeking behavior is vital for effectively meeting information needs. This knowledge can be utilized to refine existing information models or to develop new ones.

Modern technology has transformed the information landscape in which the social sciences operate. The quest for knowledge has been revolutionized by the vast expansion of available data, particularly through electronic resources accessible via the Internet. Today, information is essential for the functioning of communities; we are living in the dawn of the information age. Fundamentally, information is the documentation of past experiences that can be utilized in future situations. Due to the rapidly escalating cost of purchasing and archiving printed scholarly journals and electronic media, the library has the responsibility to provide and maintain efficient services.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have been conducted on the information seeking behaviour of teachers in higher education institutions. This study has also been conducted keeping in mind the previous studies. Some of the major studies are given below:



- Sharma and Rautela (2026) found in their study that the adoption of AIED (AI in Education) by teachers was linked to 21st-century learner skills, integrative intelligence, and personalized learning experiences. Crucially, the study results indicate that students' 21st-century skills do not significantly impact their academic performance. Conversely, integrative intelligence and personalized learning experiences have a substantial effect on student performance. Apart from this, digital literacy of teachers also plays an important role. Teachers will ensure that AI supports the learning process, not replaces the human interaction and nuanced conversations that are so essential.
- Patil, et al. (2020) found that most faculty members engage in information seeking to keep their knowledge up to date; they search for information daily, especially to prepare for student lectures, and they usually rely on conversations with peers as sources of information. 'Books and monographs' are the primary sources used for research work, while both 'print and electronic' formats were found useful when exploring new technologies. The main challenge encountered in information seeking is 'information overload.'
- Loksha and Krishnamurthy (2018) uncovered useful insights regarding information-seeking behavior at Mangalore University. Based on the survey results, it was recommended that internet speeds be increased to enable faster access to information, facilitating its use for key activities such as research, academics, writing and presentations, office work, entertainment, and downloading essential documents. Therefore, to better serve the library, it is important to organize training programs for information professionals so that they can learn about the new developments in different search interfaces and journal sites and develop advanced skills and techniques for searching and retrieving information. Most people suggested that Mangalore University should take necessary steps to increase library usage and make students aware of e-journals and resources.
- Adeola (2014) revealed that social scientists from the selected universities use the internet to meet their information needs (42.5%). Most social scientists frequently use newspapers and magazines (79.2%). The results also showed that social scientists search for information in libraries (47.6%). Thus, the study concluded that it is important for the university academic library to have the necessary information materials to provide information quickly. This can be achieved by providing information materials that can be used by the library to improve teaching and research.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this paper is to study the information seeking behaviour of teachers of higher educational institutions of Meerut district related to teachers' purpose of searching for information, types of information used, use of formal sources of information, use of electronic sources, ways of keeping abreast of current developments, and ways of searching for old information.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The suggested factor can be explored and associated with the Meerut district, which information-seeking behaviour of teachers in higher education. The sampling method used here is judgmental sampling. A total of 150 google questionnaires were distributed to respondents via WhatsApp. Due to time and resource constraints, a narrower sample was selected to include 134 (89.33%) respondents for the specific purpose of summarizing the results. The Google questionnaire were distributed in various educational institutes, and degree colleges of Meerut district via WhatsApp. The researcher chose a survey research approach to explore information seeking behaviour by the teachers of the various educational institutes, and degree colleges of Meerut district. The data thus collected were tabulated and analysed by using statistical technique i.e. percentage.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 5.1: Purpose for Seeking Information

Purpose	Percentage of Respondents
To write paper for publications	71.64
For update subject knowledge	61.19
For Research purpose	41.54
For participating in the seminar/conference/workshop etc.	40.29
To preparing for class room lecture	17.91

(Multiple responses allowed)



Table-5.1 revealed that 71.64% seeking information for write paper for publications, 61.19% seek information due to update subject knowledge, 41.54% teachers seeking information for their research purposes, 40.29% seeking information for participating in the seminar/conference/ workshop etc., and 17.91% seeking information for preparing class room lecture.

Table 5.2: Types of Information Used

Information used	Percentage of Respondents
Current information	79.10
Factual Information	49.25
R&D Information	40.30
Statistical Information	26.86
Socio-Economic Information	20.89
Conceptual Information	17.91
Retrospective Information	10.45

(Multiple responses allowed)

By observing the Table-5.2 it was found that the result of the present study revealed that a majority of the teachers 79.10% used current information, 49.25% used factual information, 40.30% uses R&D information, 26.86% uses statistical information, 20.89% uses socio-economical information, and only 10.45% uses retrospective information.

Table 5.3: Use Formal Information Resources

Formal Information sources	Percentage of Respondents
Subject journals	79.10
Thesis/dissertation	46.27
Text books	38.80
Research Reports	38.80
Reference books	32.83
Proceeding of conferences, seminars, etc.	23.89
Indexing/abstracting journals	22.39
Patents	13.43

(Multiple responses allowed)

Table-5.3 revealed that the 79.10% teachers were most frequently used subject journals, 38.80% uses text books, 38.80% uses research reports, 46.27% uses thesis/dissertations, 32.83% uses reference books, 23.89% proceeding of conferences/seminars, 22.39% uses indexing/abstracting journals, and only 13.43% uses patents as formal information sources.

Table 5.4: Used Electronic Information Resources

Electronic Information Resources	Percentage of Respondents
Online databases	22.39
e-book	19.40
e-journals	88.06
e-thesis/dissertations	32.84
Others resources	16.42

(Multiple responses allowed)

Table-5.4 revealed electronic information resources used by the teachers. It was found that 88.06% teachers uses e-journals, 19.40% e-books, 32.84% e-thesis/dissertations, 22.39%) used online databases, and 16.42% uses as electronic information resources.



Table 5.5: Methods used for abreast of current development

Used for abreast of current development	Percentage of Respondents
Scanning of current issues of journals	91.04
Attendance at conferences/symposia, etc.	67.16
Scanning of recent issues of abstracting and indexing tools	40.29
By personal correspondence/communications	25.37
By library personnel	13.43

(Multiple responses allowed)

Table-5.5 shows that the methods used for keeping abreast of current development. It was found that 91.04% teachers scanning current issue of journals, 67.16% through attending conferences/symposia etc., 40.29% scanning of abstracting and indexing tools, 25.37% personal correspondence/communications, and 13.43% uses for abreast of current development by library personnel.

Table 5.6: Methods used for finding less recent information

Methods	Percentage of Respondents
Citation at end of journals articles	34.33
Citation at end of books chapters	31.14
Retrospective searching of indexing abstracting tools	22.39
Personal communication	40.30
Browsing older literature	19.40
Other methods	8.95

(Multiple responses allowed)

Table-5.6 revealed that methods used for finding less recent information. It was found that 40.30 teachers used personal communication, 34.33 used citation at end of journals articles, 31.14 used at end of book chapters, 22.39 used retrospective searching of indexing/abstracting tools, 19.40% used for Browsing older literature, and only 8.95 used other methods.

6. MAJOR FINDINGS

The following key findings emerged from the above study:

- The majority of teachers (71.64%) gather information to write papers for publication, while 61.19% gather information to update their subject knowledge.
- A large proportion of teachers (79.10%) utilize various types of information to access the latest updates.
- The majority of teachers (79.10%) primarily rely on formal sources of information, such as subject-specific journals.
- The majority of teachers (88.06%) use e-journals as a source of electronic information.
- The majority (91.04%) read the latest issues of journals, and 67.16% attend conferences, seminars, etc., to stay updated on recent developments.
- A significant number of teachers (40.30%) rely on personal interactions to obtain information.

7. CONCLUSION

These conclusions are drawn from the study's findings. The data collected and analysed revealed that teachers use different sources to meet their information needs. These sources include electronic resources, journals, abstracts, indexed journals, reference materials, and more. The survey explores the information needs and information seeking behaviour of the teachers working at various levels in degree colleges and higher education institutions across Meerut district. It is suggested that library professionals should focus on helping users to create a better image of the library and should also focus on improving teachers' information searching ability and helping them find the information they need. Information is a crucial resource for the progress of modern society, which depends on providing "the right kind of



information, in the right format, at the right time.” Teachers play a very important role through their teaching process; they make people aware of scientific facts and motivate them towards education. These activities of the teacher to teach and communicate conceptual messages related to real life, fulfil their aim of creating awareness in the society.

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