

# A STUDY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING INFORMATION SEEKING PRACTICES AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

## Abstract

The study examines factors influencing the information seeking practices among young adults. The data is collected from 301 students from academic institutions in south India. These include the government run colleges, universities, deemed to be universities, and colleges with aided and self-financing. The responses are collected by administering a structured questionnaire among young students. The collected responses are analyzed using SPSS statistics. Results report that there exists a positive correlation between all the variables, while the highest seem to be between preferred source and search method in retrieving the information. Further, diagnostic tests also indicate that the variables are free from autocorrelation and the overall model seems to be statistically valid. Finally regression analysis reports that out of nine variables, visit to library and resource identification are the two variables that are highly influencing the information seeking practices among young adults. Accordingly, it's important that organizations must invest heavily on library infrastructure (both digital and print content), so that users can access the information in the best possible manner.

**Keywords:** Information seeking, information seeking practices, young adults, regression analysis, coefficient correlation.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Human beings need information in their day to-day life. And information is being explored every single minute. Information is all pervasive and found in vernacular languages and in various sources. The sources of knowledge are acquired in print form or in non-print form. The print form of information are found in diaries, letter, oral histories, photograph, newspaper, articles, government reports, novel, drama, music etc..Which are found in raw form, are original and close to the original information? Non-print materials are found in the digital mode or electronic mode, such as CD-ROM, Kindle, Some others are the information found in email, blogs, Social Medias namely twitter, face book, whatsapp, video chatting, webinars, websites, live-chats, blogs etc.. There were times when one had to acquire information from different places and also transfer the information to another places by means of interlibrary loans in library terms. Therefore, information has become very important in the life of human beings. Different people have different kinds of information needs. With the passage of time, this needs of the people have increased, as newer information is exploring abundantly in every field. With the advent of ICT, things made it easier to retrieve, that kind of information what a person wants.

The library staff and the librarian are to provide information services to the users. The faculties, students, researchers and other user need various types of information. The information needs of the students, researchers and the faculties are different from each other. It's the duty of the librarian to fulfill the requirements of their information needs. The librarian must know the information seeking practice of the faculty, and then the librarian understands the information seeking behavior of his users. Thereby he will be able to solve the queries and serve them better. Here the researcher scholar wants to find out the various aspects of information seeking practices of his young adult users.

Prior to the age of information communication and technology, libraries were considered as the store house of knowledge, where information was archived for use by the people. The libraries build their resources keeping in mind the information needs and the information seeking practices of their users. So as to meet the information needs in a satisfactory way, the true principle of library science.

Information has always been an element of growth and improvement in the living standards of the human being and it's closely linked with rise and progress in many ways such as economically, socially, financially, and other occupational growth in the technical areas. The Science and Technology, and its Research and Development, Information technology and the demand for information from Scientist to laymen are all depended on information for their respective goals. Almost everyone needs information for some purpose or the other. Access to the available information on the spot is very crucial, as information would become stale or outdated if its' found late. The pressure of demand for information needs of the users is likely to grow with the growth of population, growth in education, growth in technology and overall growth in life expectancy of the people. Which will tremendously led to the demand and requirement of information.

## II. DEFINITION

- 1. Information Needs:** Information scientist Robert Taylor describes how information needs arise. Taylor also focuses on library's reference desks, where people come to ask for reference information needs. He describes a series of stages or levels that begin with a "conscious or even unconscious need for information ... a vague sort of dissatisfaction ... probably inexpressible in linguistic terms" (1968, p. 182). Taylor calls this unexpressed need for information as the visceral need (hunger). In the next level a person reaches to "a conscious mental description ... an ambiguous and rambling statement, while seeking information".

Khan, M.T.M.1998, has extensively used information the term in the documents of library and information science. It is used with a variety of meaning, some identify it with communication over transmission lines measured by the statistical properties of signals, some identify it facts about any subject and some with the experience stored in human mind.

- 2. Information Needs and Information Seeking: Brittain, J Michael 1971,** denoted the term 'requirement' instead of 'needs' 'wants' and 'demands' as it represents all the three concepts. The information requirements mention, a relevant piece of "information given to the user in the areas of his concern and interest. This relevance of information may vary in format, content, and the variety of use of information to the user himself" (Cott, 1970)

There are various studies being made on the information needs of the users. Many of the studies have observed that information needs of a user may vary from different users at different time and difficult to measure` the nature of information needs. Menzel has preferred to call 'Information needs of the user as a study of the behavior and experiences of scientists and technologist'. Hatt (1976, pp.42-43) called them "user's behavior studies". Wilson (1981) recommends that the term 'information needs' should be replaced by 'information-seeking' as a goal towards the satisfaction of 'individuals needs'.

Oldman, 1976, p.23 says 'information needs of the user are the perceived needs; but there must be given awareness about the need to create information needs among the users, if they don't exist' (Harris, 1985. P.2). the user of information seekers may be ignorant of the available information that would be useful to them.

Ocholla, Dennis. N, 1999, points out that 'information seeking behavior refers to the strategies and actions undertaken to located discrete knowledge elements. It is concerned with the integrative utilization the three basic resources: (i). people (ii) information and (iii) system. It can be said that the behavior, yields the highest information satisfaction...is at its best'.

- 3. Information Seeking Practices:** The two concepts -Information Seeking Practices and Information Seeking Behavior is viewed as 'umbrella discourses', with little consensus on exact definitions for each concept as termed by Savolainen, 2008; and by Wilson et al., 2009.

Cox 2012:182 gives the reason that *'there is no one theorist to whom one can turn for a definitive account of practice approach'*. Cox further regard, that *..'all social practices involve information use, creation and seeking, but this does not make them information practices, because only few practices are specifically information oriented'* (Cox 2012,p.185). Therefore, Cox (2013, p.61) proposes the use of the phrase information in social practice as an umbrella term in preference to 'information behavior or information practice'.

### III. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are as follow:

- To find out the extent of visit to the library by the students of Social Science, Sciences and Arts Faculty.
- To find out different sources of information requirement of the students.
- To know the purpose of their information seeking.
- To know the information seeking search strategy of the students.
- To know their preferred medium on information sources.
- To find about the problems faced by the students while searching the information from the library collection.

### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

A considerable amount of literature is being published in the area of information needs, information seeking, and information practices on an individual or a group of individuals. Information seeking is the broader term which involves a set of actions that an individual or a group that takes to express information needs, information seeking, its selection and judgment to satisfy the information needs.

**1. Frequency of the Visit to Library/ Information Centers (FQ):** Studies conducted on libraries in the frequency of visit in use of information made in the institutional library or any other library is the main objective of the study. Anie. N. C & Dr. A Vijayakumar and Raza, M. Masoom et...al, has made the study on frequency of visit to the library or any other information centers to seek information. The population on which the study conducted is students, researchers and PG Faculty members,

Patel and Chaudhari, B.K., Sarala. R. and Poonam Rani & Jeevan conducted the frequency of visit of their Library users on engineering students, Teachers and School students, visiting the library to collect information on needed topics for assignment.

**2. Information Location (IL):** Locating information is another main criterion for information seeking practice of students, researchers, teachers, engineering students, doctors.

This factor reveals that to locate information, students seek institutional library, other libraries or get help from teachers. (Ani. N.C. & A. Vijayakumar, 2016).

The results of Singh K P & Satija M P (2008) on information location, Agricultural Scientists meet their information requirements from their institutional library as well as from international research journals.

- 3. Purpose of Library Visit (VL):** Almost all the literature conducted on information Seeking have studied the purpose of visit to their institutional library or information centers to get information needed by the users. Among they are Anie M.C & A. Vijayakumar (2016), Sarala. G, (2017) Poonam Rani & Jeevan, (2009) Patel, U & Chaudhari. (2015).

The library users come to library for updating knowledge, exam preparation, preparing assignment/Seminar preparation, or for sake of reading. In college libraries, students visit libraries for preparing exam, seminars or for writing assignment.

Sarala. G. (2017). Examines the study of engineering students depend upon the department library for their needs. Most students need information for updating knowledge and for writing assignment. Students borrow subject books for updating knowledge & preparing notes.

- 4. Identify the Resources (RI):** The resources available in the library are identified by the user, students, engineering students and faculty alike. The most common resources are textbooks followed by databases and print journals. The study by Gurikar & Gurikar conducted in Karnataka University observed that commonly used materials in library are textbooks, monographs, reference materials, thesis and dissertation. Mahapatra, R.K. conducted a study on Hi Tech Medical college in Bhubaneswar, identified the information needs of physician are borrowing books and journals, photocopying services also got the top priority.
- 5. Search for Information (SI):** Kakai, et...al, observed that the information search behavior of students involved active and searched purposeful information needs as a result to complete course assignment, prepare for class discussions, seminars, workshops, conferences and for writing final year research paper.

Jaspal Kaur Bhatia and Venkata, Rao reported the majority of the students sought information for preparing assignment and career development. Fatima, Nishat and Ahmad, investigates the information seeking behavior of college students to find out the awareness and usage of library resources.

- 6. Information Search Strategy (SM):** Searching for information in the library, may be done by browsing on the shelf, with or without the help of the library staff. Looking in catalogue for the books available in the library, Or the (OPAC) online public access catalogue to search for books using title search, subject search, author search or the indexes, these are the various search strategies to locate information. Many literature reviewers, has made study on this search strategy adopted by the users on searching for information. Search strategy monitored by Poonam Rani & Jeevan, Anie N.C and Vijayakumar, Sreenivasulu and Nagabhushanam in their study viewed Search Engines, keyword search in OPAC and 'personalized' searching on the shelf are few of them.

Shoukeen & Kushik (2002) the social scientists in the Universities of Harayana, preferred search tool was indexing and abstracting periodicals

- 7. Preferred Medium (PM):** Friedlander, A. (2002). The study focused on the use of the internet and library's online resources have huge demand in information seeking. Preferred medium of study is digital searching by the engineering students.

The study by Nicholas, et...al showed that the undergraduates and post-graduates' students were the most users of library links to access to scholarly databases, suggesting an important "hot link" role for the libraries.

- 8. Preferred Sources of Information (PS):** The young adults most preferred source of information are books, and digital materials as they are readily available in the library and on the mobile or computers. Harmanpreet Singh, in the survey, studies general books are considered to be most used by the NIT students. Babariys, Patel and Gohel, in their study concluded that internet and electronics resources are the most vital sources of academic information. Satish Kumar et..al, have summarized their paper, that life scientists' information seeking depend more on internet, found that they are more comfortable in seeking information in using digital resources.

Preferred sources of information for Shokeen and Kushik are current journals and books. According to Sankha Subhra, Das & Balasubramanian, most preferred sources are E-resources, followed by subject books.

- 9. Problems Faced by the Users while Searching Information (PF):** The young adults are less concerned or lack the knowledge about the use of library resources and don't find time to use library. Some of them reacted to short duration of loan period of the books issued, as a problem faced.

Sarala. G. (2017) has examined the lack of time followed by availability of too vast information are the results of students of engineering students. Patel, U and Chaudhari. B. K (2015). also reports that the respondents face problems, while searching for information. The sought information is extensively vast or information resources are very expensive.

Anie and Vijayakumar (2016) have reported that lack of time and difficulty in locate the right information as there is vast number of books in the library.

Bahtia, Jaspal Kaur and Venkata Rao. P (2011) in their paper report, the students of Dev Samaj College, Chandigarh faces problems in using e-resources while preparing for academic assignment and for up-dating themselves in their subject of preference.

- 10. Information Seeking (SE):** Young adults seek information for updating their knowledge, exam preparation/competitive exam, writing the assignments etc. Sarala G has reported that the young adults seek information for updating the knowledge, followed by the use of library for writing assignments by the college students of Vellor dist. Patel & Chaudhari reports that agricultural scientist, seek information through internet for updating

knowledge majority of the respondents, seek information available in the internet as it's easily available.

Hermanpreet Singh, (2013) reports that NIT engineering students seek information for professional purpose followed by preparation of competitive exams. Jaspal Kaur Bhatia & Venkata Rao has reported that students seek information on academic assignment & keep up to date information on subjects of interest.

## V. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to evaluate the information seeking practices among Young Adults of South India. Structured questionnaire was distributed among young adults of private colleges, government colleges and government aided colleges who are the members of their institutional library, constitute the population. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher directly to the selected samples, the data collected from the respondents were checked and analysis accordingly to the objectives using SPSS. The study mainly finds out the users' satisfaction levels towards existing library resources and services. The below are the variables taken into account for analysis.

**Table 1**

Sl. No	Variables	Abbreviations
1.	Frequency of visit	FQ
2.	Information Location	IL
3.	Purpose of Library Visit	VL
4.	Resource Identification	RI
5.	Seeking Information	SE
6.	Preferred Medium	PM
7	Preferred Source	PS
8	Search Methods	SM
9	Problems faced by the users	PF
10	Search Information	SI

## VI. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To investigate the study entitled "A study on factors influencing Information Seeking Practices among Young Adults".

## VII. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of the study confines to analyses the information requirements for students of Social Science, Sciences and Arts faculty. Information seeking practice is an umbrella term is defined to include the purpose of information of seeking, the type of information sought, mode and means to access the information, identify the search strategy for required information for use of their own institutional libraries as well as other libraries.

## VIII. ANALYSIS

The data analysis and interpretation are done using SPSS statistical method. This analyzing method gives exact in-depth outcomes of the statistical techniques.

- 1. Descriptive Analysis:** Descriptive analysis summarizes given data set, which either represents the entire population or the sample of it. The variables considered in the study are ten, from the sample size of  $N=301$ . The dependent variable is Seeking Information (SE), and the independent variable (FQ, LI, VL, RI, SI, PM, PS, SM, PF). The highest mean value is problems faced (MPF=3.07). The lowest Standard Deviation is Search for Information (MSI=.711) with N (301).
- 2. Coefficient Correlation:** Correlation is a statistical measure used to determine the relationship between two variables. The degree of association is measured by correlation coefficient denoted by  $r$  where  $r = (.819)$  and R Square (.670).

The results in coefficient correlation show that Library visit is highly influencing the information Seeking Practice. Further the five independent variables (VL, RI, SI, PM, PS,) are voluntary satisfying at  $p = .<001$  (99%), which indicates that the five factors under the study have a significant influence on the information Seeking Practice. This could be due to regular visit to the library to borrow or return the books. Similar studies have been registered earlier (Anie, NC & Vijayakumar, A. 2016).

Frequency of visit to the library must be the reason (FQ=95%), the model is significant at  $p$  level ( $p=<.005$ ). Where some other factors (0.5%) is effecting the relationship of Information seeking practices of young students. This similar study is seen in the Sarala, G (2017). Patel and Chaudari (2015).

The independent variable locating of information (LI=22.4%) from the library or other than library/place is found to be significant,  $p$  value ( $p=<.005$ ). here too some other factors (0.5%) are discharge in the relationship on the young adults in seeking information. Similar studies on information seeking behavior is seen in Anie NC & A. Vijayakumar (2016) and Singh K P & Satija M P (2008).

The Search Method (SM=22.5%) and Problems Faced (PF=33.3%) also to some extend influence the information seeking among Young Adults. It is observed that  $p$  value is found to be significant at 5% level of significant. That is why they play a significant role in information seeking practice of the young adults. A similar study is found in Bahtia, Jaspal Kaur and Venkata Rao. P(2011). The result report, that out of nine independent variables, five (MPF, MPM, MLI, MVL, MRI) seems to be far influencing the dependent variable (SE) further they are also significant at 99%. on the dependent value (SE) of information Seeking Practice of young adults.

- 3. Regression Analysis:** Regression technique is used to assess the strength of a relationship between one dependent variable and independent variables. It helps in predicting value of a dependent variable from one or more independent variable. Regression analysis helps in predicting technique how much change is being accounted in a single dependent variable by a set of independent variables.



In the study, as there are more than three independent variables (FQ, LI, VL, IR, SI, PM, PS, SM PF) therefore, Multiple Regression analysis is applied here. The study is based on the prediction and explanation of simple R Value (.819) Correlation Regression between observed value and predicted value. (R square value =.670) means the independent variable in the model can predict 67% of the variance in Dependent variable(SE).The adjusted R Square value (.660) takes into account these things and gives more accurate information about the fitness of the model. R Square value tends to be inflated as there are number of independent variables present in this case.

#### 4. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
MFQ	301	1.00	5.00	2.9585	.84109
MLI	301	1.00	4.60	2.4213	.75935
MVL	301	1.00	5.00	2.6837	.76553
MRI	301	1.00	5.00	2.4844	.81400
MSE	301	1.00	5.00	2.3394	.79002
MSI	301	1.00	5.00	2.4100	.71108
MPM	301	1.00	5.00	2.1262	.84104
MPS	301	1.00	5.00	2.3441	.75713
MSM	301	1.00	5.00	2.3940	.75778
MPF	301	1.00	5.00	3.0731	.86955

Valid N (listwise) 301

##### • Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.819a	.670	.660	.46081	.901

- Predictors: (Constant), MPF, MPM, MFQ, MSM, MLI, MVL, MRI, MSI, MPS
- Dependent Variable: MSE

##### • ANOVA<sub>a</sub>

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Model	Regression	125.447	9	13.939	65.642	<.001b
1	Residual	61.792 291	.291			
	Total	187.239	300			

- Dependent Variable: MSE
- Predictors: (Constant), MPF, MPM, MFQ, MSM, MLI, MVL, MRI, MSI, MPS

- **Co-efficients<sub>a</sub>**

Model 1 Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	SE B	Standardized Coefficients	T Value	P Value
Constant)	-.292	.137	-----	-2.134	.34
MFQ	.015	.041	.137	.363	.717
MLI	.109	.049	.106	2.241	.026
MVL	.169	.055	.164	3.067	.002
MRI	.179	.051	.185	3.497	< .001
MSI	.157	.059	.142	2.671	.008
MPM	.129	.041	.137	3.152	.002
MPS	.219	.057	.210	3.843	< .001
MSM	.067	.055	.064	1.215	.225
MPF	.031	.032	.034	.969	.333

➤ Dependent Variable: MSE

## IX. FINDINGS

From the statistical inferences, independent variables (PS, PM, SI, RI, VL, LI) have high impact on the dependent variable (SE). Overall, the model is satisfactorily valid and is fit ( $f=65.64$ ) which is significant at ( $<.001$ ). Thus, information seeking practices among the young adults is significantly fit with this model.

## X. CONCLUSION

The young students need information, as they are loaded with assignments and learning on their own in the present day of competitive academic environment. Their preferred medium is print as well as digital; their preferred sources are books and digital materials which are available at the touch of a finger. Their search for information is online searching, followed by help from teachers and peers. They identify resources from general books, textbooks, reference books and from online resources, all these are due to the visit to their institutional library/any other libraries. To human, information is very useful be it any information on the news of 'Mandous' the huge cyclonic wind which hit the coast of Tamil Nadu in December 2022 or the month-long FIFA World Cup held in November to December, 2022. The touch of the button can bring in the needed news, weather report in the electronic format, or in the audio-video mode from the television. The various media used for mass communication are readily available for information seeking; and young adults are well versed in using the technology at its best.

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