

Information Seeking Behaviour of Undergraduate Students in Digital Environment: A Case Study of Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies (SSCBS), University of Delhi

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Abstract

Information is required for the overall development of society and it is possible only if information is properly utilized. It can be achieved if library and informational professional understand their patron's information needs and information seeking behaviour and accordingly manage libraries. Hence an understanding of human information seeking behavior is fundamental to the provision of quality library and information services. Information is vital resource and needed by students at all levels to enhance their academic performance. Students at undergraduate level are not aware of information resources and services and they are overloaded with the information available in the digital environment as they need relevant as well as accurate information. Library users prefer flexibility and convenience and all these factors are contributing towards changes in their information seeking behavior. Keeping these considerations in mind, Survey Method was adopted to assess the information seeking behaviour of students at UG level in Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies, University of Delhi as case study to determine the use of major information resources for academic purposes and the general pattern of information seeking behaviour. This study is mainly an analytical and descriptive study based on the response of the students. The random sampling technique is used to collect the data with sample size of 100 questionnaires. Quantitative methods are used in analyzing the data.

Keywords: Information Resources and Services, Information Seeking Behaviour, Internet, Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies, Undergraduate Students

1. Introduction

It is a well-established that libraries and information resource centers play an important role in supporting research, education and learning activities of students. However to accomplish this task effectively, libraries need to have a thorough understanding of the information needs and information-seeking behavior of their users. Information seeking behavior is a broad term, which involves a set of activities an individual undertakes to express his information needs, seek information,

evaluate it, and finally uses this information to satisfy his information needs. Various factors are likely to shape the information seeking behavior of an individual or a group of individuals. It is, therefore, desirable to understand the purpose for which information is required, the environment in which the user operates, skills required for identifying the needed information, and channels and sources preferred for acquiring the needed information¹.

Information seeking behaviour is the purposive seeking for information to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual

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information systems, or with computer-based systems².

In recent years, many factors have contributed to make the information arena more dynamic and complex. Progress in information technology has offered today's information seekers different opportunities with regard to resources, services and tools. In some instances these are replacing the print-based information sources as the primary media for the storage and communication of recorded information.

Electronic environment provides 24x7 accesses to material³. The shift has led to:

- *New information formats*: Multimedia information can be created, stored and distributed in digital format as CD-ROM or on hard disks, removable hard disks (external hard disk, pen drives) flash cards and other digital storage media;
- *New ways of distributing and accessing information*: Tools to access information, full text and multimedia information can be accessed from remote sites via telecommunications facilities; and
- *New information services*: Tools to access information can be used even from remote sites via LANs and WANs⁴.

It is, therefore, imperative for libraries to stay in touch with these changes and re-orient their collections, services and facilities to synchronize them with the changing information seeking behavior of their patrons.

2. Concept of Information Seeking

The need for information is one of the cognitive needs of humankind. Information need causes information-seeking and information-seeking behaviour is affected by many factors. Information-seeking behaviour is expressed in various forms, from reading printed material to research and experimentation.

Information-seeking behavior depends on the reasons for seeking information and the starting knowledge of the individual. This can be described as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating and development⁴.

Marchionni (1995)⁵ says "Information-seeking is a special case of problem solving. It includes recognizing and interpreting the information problem, establishing a plan of search, conducting the search, evaluating the results, and if necessary, iterating through the process again".

Information Seeking Behaviour involves the following aspects⁶.

- Identifying and defining needs;
- Accessing information systems;
- Establishing sources of information;
- Information acquisition;
- Use of information; and
- Satisfaction/dissatisfaction analysis.

3. Profile - Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies

Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies (CBS), established in 1987, is one of the premier institutions of the University of Delhi, imparting education in the fields of management and information technology.

4. Library - Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies

Library was set up along with the establishment of the college as a Learning Resource Centre to support teaching, learning and research programmes in the fields of Management Studies and Information Technology. Library has a collection of 20,419 resources include Text books, Reference books, Bound periodicals etc. Library subscribes to 51 National/International Journals/Magazines and 13 National and Business Newspapers. Apart from the print resources, teaching and research is also supported by accessing thousands of Electronic Journals, Reports, and Case Studies through Delhi University Library Network. Library has also an Institutional membership of (DELNET) Developing Library Network and (NLIST) National Library and Information Services Infrastructure for Scholarly Content provide access to Electronic Journals and Electronic books. Moreover, SSCBS College Library is fully automated using the Open Source Integrated Library Management System – KOHA for all the library activities.

5. Objectives of the Study

This study examined the information seeking behaviour of undergraduate students of the College to get an understanding of the information needs and seeking behavior of undergraduate students with respect to print and electronic resources and satisfaction level of students with regard to library collection and services.

Specifically, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. To find out the information needs of UG students of SSCBS;
2. To identify the type of information sources searched by students at UG level;
3. To study the use of various categories of information resources consulted by UG students; and
4. To examine the information seeking behavior of UG students to find out the satisfaction level of UG students with regard to library collection and services.

6. Research Methodology

There are over 1000 undergraduate students from all the departments of SSCBS i.e. Bachelor of Management Studies, Bachelor of Financial and Investment Analysis, Bachelor of Science (H) Computer Science. The sample size of 150 students was randomly selected from the total population of the study. Out of the 150 questionnaires administered to the students, 110 questionnaires were received and 100 questionnaires were completed in all respects.

The questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section of the questionnaire collected demographic information about the students. The second section solicited information needs of students, information sources used by them to meet their study related information needs, preferred information formats.

To supplement the data from the questionnaire, interview method was also used in which the students' responses were recorded. In addition, observation method was also employed to know the undergraduate students information seeking patterns in searching for information in the college library. Data collected was analyzed using frequency counts and percentages.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

7.1 Demographic Information of the Students

A majority of the students were in the age group, 18-20 (Figure 1).

Age of Undergraduate Students of SSCBS

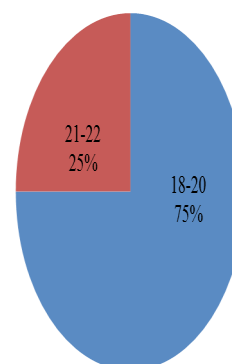


Figure 1. Age of undergraduate students of SSCBS participated in the survey.

7.2 Information Needs of Undergraduate Students

Table 1 presents an overview of the kinds of information sought by students.

7.3 Type of Information Sources Searched by Undergraduate Students of SSCBS

Table 2 shows the ten major sources of information searched by the students in the college library. The leading

Table 1. Major information required by the students

Required Information	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Business Information	22	22	2
Academic Information	31	31	1
Information for Personal Development	15	15	4
Employment Information	17	17	3
Global Information	10	10	5
Others	5	5	6
Total	100	100	

Table 2. Major Sources of Information Searched/Consulted by UG Students

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Lecture Notes	13	13	3
OPAC	9	9	5
Printed Journals	9	9	5
Newspapers	13	13	3
Text Books	19	19	1
Novels	2	2	8
Question Papers	7	7	6
Project/Seminar Report	10	10	4
Electronic Resources	3	3	7
Websites	15	15	2
Total	100	100	

Table 3. Major information required with respect to print resources *vis-à-vis* electronic resources

Required Information	More Print > Less Electronic (Frequency)	Rank	More Electronic > Less Print (Frequency)	Rank
Business Information	9	4	32	1
Academic Information	47	1	14	4
Information for Personal Development	11	3	12	5
Employment Information	7	5	21	2
Global Information	23	2	17	3
Other Information	3	6	4	6
Total	100		100	

source of information required by undergraduate student is Text books followed by Websites, Newspapers/Lecture Notes, and OPAC/Printed Journals so on.

7.4 Information Seeking Behaviour of Undergraduate Students with Respect to Printed Resources vis-a-vis Electronic Resources

Table 3 reveals that UG level students use print resources i.e. Books for academic purpose followed by Websites/ Internet for recreational/other purpose i.e. business information and employment information. In the recent past, there has been a proliferation of business information resources on the web and students become more inclined to use the web for meeting their business-related information needs.

7.5 Use of Internet by Students for Different Purposes

Internet is used for different purposes depending upon the requirement⁷. It is used for academic and research purposes, but besides these purposes, internet may be used for other purpose also. To check the purpose behind using the internet by the students, table 4 presents the following.

Table 4. Various purposes for using the Internet by undergraduate students of SSCBS

Purpose	Students Responses (Frequency)	Rank
Academic	33	2
Recreation	49	1
Others	18	3
Total	100	

It is seen from the table 4 that (49%) Undergraduate students use internet for recreation purpose and 33% students mostly use internet for academic purpose, remaining 25% use internet for other purposes.

7.6 Satisfaction Level with Regard to Library Collection and Services

Table 5. Level of satisfaction of UG students with regard to library collection and services

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	50	50
Satisfied	20	20
Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied	17	17
Dissatisfied	13	13
Total	100	100

As already mentioned students in addition to using different search engines and business websites use print resources from the library for meeting their academic information needs. Students were asked about their satisfaction level with regard to library collection and services. It was found that (50%) of the library users are “*highly satisfied*” with the library collection and services and 20% students have indicated that they are “*satisfied*” and 17% students are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 13% are *dissatisfied* with the collection and service.

7.7 Business Information Needs

Students were asked about their business-related information needs and the type of information they generally search through print and electronic resources available and accessible through the library. It has been found that student generally look for Business News followed by Economic News, Consumer Trends, Stock Market Trends, Company Information, Financial Information.

Table 6. Type of business information required by the students

Information Type	Frequency	Rank
Company Information	8	4
Statistical Information	5	6
Business News	27	1
Stock Market Trends	12	3
Market Research	6	5

Consumer Trends	12	3
Company Annual Reports	4	7
Financial Information	6	5
Economic News	16	2
Others	4	7

8. Summary of Findings

1. Major type of information required by Undergraduate Students is Academic Information followed by Business Information, Employment Information, Information for Personal Development, Global Information;
2. Various categories of information sources searched by Students are Books, Printed Journals, Newspapers, and Summer Internship/Project Reports etc. The leading source of information required/consulted by students is Text Books, followed by Websites, Newspapers/Lecture Notes, Project/Summer Internship Reports, OPAC/Printed Journals, Question Papers so on;
3. Students seem to depend more on print sources for academic information and information for personal development, while they relied more on electronic sources for business information and employment information;
4. 50% of the student responded that they use internet for recreation and 33% use internet for academic purpose;
5. It has been found that Business News followed by Economic News, Consumer Trends, Stock Market Trends, Company Information, Financial Information are the business information needs which students generally get from the Newspapers and Periodicals and Online databases available and accessible from the library; and
6. Only a small percentage of users expressed dissatisfaction with the collection and services of the library.

9. Recommendations

Libraries are spending a considerable amount of money for purchase of resources both in print and electronic format. In this regard, it is very important to understand the information needs/requirements of the library users to enable to meet with their needs and requirements.

1. There should be more Awareness programmes and seminars to educate the students about the Print and Electronic Resources available and accessible to max-

imize the utilization of the resources. A “May I help you” desk in the libraries to help students and faculty in the search and use of library resources and services will go a long way in enhancing the use of resources;

2. There should be exclusive section for accessing the electronic resources with proper hardware and software in the Libraries; and
3. Along with the Libraries, teachers should also make an effort to create awareness among students about available.

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