INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOR OF ENGINEERING STUDENTS: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the information seeking behavior of Undergraduate Engineering Students of Acharaya Nagarjuna College of Engineering & Technology , Acharya Nagarjuna University,   Guntur. The study adopted a descriptive survey design and data was collected from the respondents using questionnaire. The major findings of the study are majority of the respondents prefer to use both print & electronic information and 51.36 % of the respondents opined that the use internet for seeking information to their academic needs affect to visit the library. The paper provides some constructive suggestions for the benefit of providing effective services to their clientele.

Keywords: Information seeking behavior; Engineering students; User survey

INTRODUCTION:

Information seeking behavior refers to those activities a person engages in when identifying his or her own need for information, searching for such information in any way and using or transferring of information. Information behavior is the totality of human behavior in relation to the sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking and information use. Thus it includes face to face and online communication with others as well as the passive reception of information (Wilson, 2000). Kakai, et al., (2004) have defined information-seeking behavior as an individual's way and manner of gathering and sourcing for information for personal use, knowledge updating, and development. Information-seeking behavior differs among user groups. Academic libraries must understand the information needs of students, faculty, and scholars in order to address those needs. This study explores the information-seeking behavior of undergraduates engineering students of Acharaya Nagarjuna College of Engineering & Technology , Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur .

A.N.U ENGINEERING COLLEGE:

Acharaya Nagarjuna College of Engineering & Technology , Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur was established in 2009. It has come under the perusal of National Knowledge Network (NKN) and has been provided 1GBPS Connectivity. The Institution has interaction with top level IIT's, IISc's and research organizations like DRDO,ISRO etc .NPTEL video lectures by IIT Professors and virtual class room lectures are a part and parcel of NKN's Scheme which was initiated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi.

The Institution has state of art Laboratories and Library with more than 19,000 Books & Journals.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

To provide better services, quality information, and improve collection development practices it is necessary to found the information seeking activities of the library users. Many studies have investigated the nature of information seeking behavior of engineering students. However, it is interesting to note that, none of these studies has yet been exclusively devoted to the area of information seeking behavior of students of Acharya Nagarjuna College of Engineering & Technology, Guntur. Therefore, the   present study aimed to examine the information seeking behavior of undergraduate engineering students of Acharya Nagarjuna College of Engineering & Technology, Acharya Nagarjuna University,   Guntur, becomes imminent.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Review of literature happen to be an important segment to the concerned topic .Some of the significant studies that were conducted previously relevant to the U.G engineering student's information seeking behavior were .

 Fidzani (1998) conducted a study in University of Botswana, Gaborone, the major findings of the study are U.G students were heavy reliance on library books, text books and journals as sources of information used for course work. Hiller (2002) in a study in the University of Washington reported that under graduates preferred to visit the library to study rather to seek journals and books. Majid and Tan (2002) studied the use of information sources by computer science engineering students in Nan yang Technological University, Singapore and found that they relied heavily on printed sources of information and their use of e-journals and databases are low. Karin's, Madden and Fulton (2004) in their study of graduate engineering students and reported that the majority of the students indicated that the internet was the first source of information they used for preparing project works. Lakshmi , S et al. (2011) studied about the information seeking behavior of users of engineering college at Salem and found that document delivery services is in demand. The researchers need more indexing, abstracting and interlibrary loan services. They stretched about user orientation services, seminars and workshop to be conducted often. Swain & Panda (2013) investigate the information needs and seeking behavior of the students of KIIT School of Computer Engineering in general and e-information access in particular. The study revealed that 100% of the respondents using Google for searching the information followed by Yahoo (81.61). Talawar et al (2013) examine the information seeking behavior of computer science students at Karnatak University, Dharwad by using a questionnaire method. 89.39% of the respondents refer books for getting their information. Majority of the respondents (36.36%) visit the library once in a week. Basha et al (2013) conducted a study at Tirunelveli district, Tamilnadu, the study reveals that the primary purpose of seeking information by the engineering students was to keep abreast of current and latest information.

 OBJECTIVES:

The major objectives of the present study are:
- To know the students frequency of visiting the library
- To identify time spent in the library for seeking information

- To know the form of material prefer to use
- To obtain the views of the respondents about the preference of search engine to search information.
- To know the opinions of the respondents on using internet made affect in visit of library.

METHODOLOGY:

Students registered B. Tech of various degree programs at ANUCET, Guntur are selected by the investigator for the present study. It is limited to the 3rd and final year students only. The total strength of the students is five hundred and forty.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Since the population is large to study in view of the time and cost a sample of 405 (75% of target population) students has been drawn from the target population by simple stratified random sampling method. Structured questionnaires are distributed to collect the related data from the respondents. However the investigators received responses from 366 (90.3% of the sample) respondents.

DESIGN OF QUESTIONNAIRE & COLLECTION OF DATA:

The data was collected with the help of a structured questionnaire prepared in a very simple English language. Through a pilot study suggestions and modifications were received from the respondents.

The questionnaires were distributed to the students personally and were collected from them by giving sufficient time to fill up the same. Every effort was made by the investigator to get reliable data from the respondents.

ANALYSIS:

Table- 1 . Department wise distribution of respondents.

S.No	Department	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
1	ECE	43	44	87	23.77
2	EEE	38	27	65	17.75
3	CIVIL	48	28	76	20.76
4	ME	30	13	43	11.74
5	CSE	45	50	95	25.95
	Total & Percentage	204 (55.73%)	162 (44.26%)	366 (100%)	100

The above table clearly shows that department wise distribution of respondents. The total respondents are 366, in which 55.73% are male and 44.26% are female. Majority of the respondents 25.95%are computer science and engineering followed by 23.77% are Electronic and communication engineering.

Table- 2 .Frequency of visit to the Library

S.No	Frequency of visit	Male	Female	Total
1	Daily	36(17.64)	14(8.64)	50(13.66)
2	3-4times in a week	81(39.70)	81(44.26)	162(44.26)
3	Once in a week	59(28.92)	56(34.56)	115(31.42)
4	Occasionally	28(13.72)	11(6.79)	39(10.65)
	Total	204(100)	162(100)	366(100)

It can be observed from the above table that majority of the respondents visit the library 3-4 times in a week (44.26%), followed by once in a week (31.42%), daily (13.66) and occasionally (10.65%). It can be concluded that majority of the respondents visit the library 3-4 times in a week.

Satisfaction of working Hours

The respondents were asked to state the opinion of the present working hours of the library. In response to this question, they provided the following responses that are presented in the following Table-3.

Table-3

S. No	Opinion	Total	Percentage
1	YES	307	83.87
2	NO	59	16.12
3	Total	366	100

The above table clearly shows that 83.87% of the respondents are satisfied with the present working hours of the library. Only 16.12% of the respondents responded negatively.

Table -4.Time spent in the library for seeking information

S.No	Time spent	Male	Female	Total
1	1-2 hours	165(80.88)	121(74.69)	286(78.14)
2	2-3hours	27(13.23)	25(15.43)	52(14.20)
3	3-4 hours	8(3.92)	8(4.93)	16(4.37)
4	4-5hours	4(1.96)	8(4.93)	12(3.27)
	Total	204(100)	162(100)	366(100)

The above table depicts that majority of the respondents (78.14%) spent 1-2 hours of   in the library. only 3.27% are spent 4-5 hours in the library.80.88% of the male and 74.69% 0f the female respondents are spent 1-2 hours of time for seeking information in the library when they visit.

Opinion on arrangement of books & periodicals

The respondents were asked to state the opinion on arrangement of books and periodicals. In response to this question, they provided the following responses that are presented in the following table-5.

Table-5

S.No	Opinion	Total	Percentage
1	Very Good	93	25.40
2	Good	230	62.84
3	Fair	43	11.74
4	Poor	_	_
	Total	366	100

The above table depicts that majority of the respondents (62.84%) are opined that the arrangement of books and periodicals in the library was good. 25.40 % of the respondents feel that it is Very good. Only 11.74% of the respondents opined it is fair. Interestingly no single respondent feel that the arrangement was poor.

Table -6   Form of material prefer to consult

S.No	Form of material	Male	Female	Total
1	Print	64(31.37)	45(27.77)	109(29.78)
2	Electronic	18(8.82)	06(3.7)	24(6.55)
3	Both print & Electronic	122(59.80)	111(68.51)	233(63.66)
4	Total	204(100)	162(100)	366(100)

The above table indicates the form of material preferred by the students. The table reveals that majority of the respondents (63.66%) prefer to use information in both print and electronic form.29.78% of the respondents prefer to use print form only. Majority of the female respondents 68.51% prefer both print and electronic form, as compared to male 59.80% only. 6.55% of the respondents prefer to use electronic information alone.

Table- 7. Preference of search engine used for seeking information

S. No	Search engine	Male	Female	Total
1	Google	179(87.74)	328(89.61)	328(89.61)
2	Yahoo	20(9.80)	31(8.46)	31(8.46)
3	AltaVista	5(2.45)	07(1.91)	07(1.91)
	Total	204(100)	162(100)	366(100)

The above table shows that majority of the respondents (89.61%) using Google search engine to search information for their academic work followed by 8.46% of the respondents are using Yahoo to search for information and 1.91% of the respondents using AltaVista for searching. From the data we can observe that there is almost same preference of search engine Google for seeking information by the male and female respondents (87.74% &89.61%).

Table- 8. Using internet made affect to visit the library

Opinion	Male	Female	Total
Yes	106(51.96)	82(50.61)	188(51.36)
No	98(48.03)	80(49.38)	178(48.63)
Total	204(100)	162(100)	366(100)

(Percentages are indicated in parentheses.)

The above table reveals that majority of the respondents (51.36%) opined that use of internet for seeking academic information made affect to visit the college library. Both male and female respondents are almost similar opinion on this aspect. But a significant percentage of respondents (48.63) opined that they had no effect of using internet in visit the library.

Table- 9. Opinion regarding time taken to search particular piece of information

S.No	Time taken	Male	Female	Total
1	Within a day	123(60.2)	90(55.55)	213(58.19)
2	Within a week	68(33.3)	61(37.65)	129(35.24)
3	Within a month	12(5.88)	09(5.55)	21(5.73)
4	Over a month	01(0.49)	02(1.23)	03(0.81)
	Total	204(1000	162(100)	366(100)

The above table depicts that majority of the respondents (58.19%) are opined that they search information (without taking assistance, guidance etc from anyone) and locate it within a day.35.24 % of the respondents opined that they have search within a week followed by (5.73%) within a month and (0.81%) over a month. The findings indicate that the majority of the respondents have confidence in themselves in searching, locating, and identifying their required information.

FINDINGS:

The major findings of the present study are
- Majority of the respondents (44.26%) visit the library 3-4 times in a week.
- Majority of the respondents (78.14%) spent 1-2 hours of time in seeking information when they visit the library.
- Majority of the respondents (83.87%) satisfied with the present working hours of the library.
- Majority of the respondents (63.66%) prefer to use both print and electronic form of information.
- Majority of the respondents (62.84%) are opined that the arrangement of books and periodicals was good.
- Majority of the respondents (89.61%) prefer to use Google search engine to seek information for their academic work.
- Majority of the respondents (58.36%) opined that the use of internet for seeking information made affect to visit the library.
- Majority of the respondents (58.19%) are opined that they search information.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Basing upon the findings of the study, the following recommendations for the betterment of ANU college library services given by the investigators:
- Majority of the respondents prefer to use both print and electronic information, so in this way the library should acquire and add good number of latest text books, reference books and periodicals in the respective subjects.
- Digital library is to establish with sufficient infrastructure and make available or increase e-books, e-journals, and abstracts, provide data base services in online and offline.

- Majority of the respondents opined that the use of internet made affect in using the library, so that the library should conduct information literacy program to educate the users in searching, locating, using and evaluation of electronic information.
- The library staff should educate the users about the various print reference sources, periodicals, and magazines also useful for their information needs.
- The library staff should always be proactive to access the exact information needs and seeking behavior of the students.

CONCLUSION:

The study concludes that users satisfied with the present working hours of the library, arrangement of books and periodicals. To meet their information needs, engineering students prefer to use both print and electronic form of information. Internet plays a significant role on engineering student's information seeking behavior and visit to the library.

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