

Non-use of Library Facilities and Services by the Undergraduate Students of Arts and Science Colleges

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ABSTRACT

The present study made an attempt to analyse the non-use of library facilities and services by the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges in Kanyakumari District. The study was conducted among the undergraduate students of Lekshmipuram College of Arts and Science using case study method. The study reveals that 32.8 per cent of the undergraduate spend their leisure time for reading; and the majority of the respondents have no comments on their reading areas of interest. It also reveals that, 48.9 per cent of the undergraduate students are non-users of college libraries and non-use of college libraries is more among the science discipline (50 per cent) than arts (47.8 per cent). The major reasons for non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students are lack of innovative assignments, use of internet, lack of co-operation from the library staff and inconvenient library hours. The study serves as an eye-opener for the college management, librarians and the faculty.

Keywords: Non-use, Non-User, College Libraries, Library Services, Undergraduate Students, Arts and Science Colleges.

Introduction

In the higher education system, college libraries are the nerve center or the hub around which scholarship revolves. A well-stocked academic library plays a dominant role for the intellectual development of the academic community consists of both students and members of the faculty. Jubb and Green (2007) observes that academic libraries have for centuries played a critically important roles in supporting research in all subjects and disciplines with their host universities or colleges. College libraries are expected to supplement the class room instruction through systematic planning of information products and services. To fulfill information requirements of the students, the college libraries are to be well equipped with emerging technologies and information sources. Every year funding agencies or appropriate forums are investing huge amount of money for the development of infrastructures in college libraries. But, the extent of usage is to be properly assessed to adopt remedial measures to enhance the usage of college libraries. Hence, user studies and non-user studies are to be conducted to assess the strength and weakness.

College Libraries

Usually the college libraries in the higher education system are used by the user community consisting of undergraduate students, post graduate students and research scholars, if any and members of the faculty depending upon the courses offered by the institution. In most of the developing countries like India, the system of education both at secondary and higher education system does not promote the use of library. The majority of the schools have limited collections, which do not meet their educational needs. Students who pass-out from such schools and entering the college system, with minimum or no skill in using libraries lead to no-use or underutilization library resources and its services. Undergraduate students are facing barriers in accessing library resources due to their transition from school environment to college environment, library anxiety, lack of familiarity and above all lack of information literacy. These barriers faced by them while accessing resources keep away from using library resources, its facilities and services. Hence, efforts must be taken by the library professional to frame strategies to make use of the college libraries at optimum level.

Mason (2010), who opines that “librarians must be sympathetic and helpful to all students on the one hand and that on the other hand, students must be aware that librarians and faculty members are there to instruct and encourage their intellectual and should be seen as facilitators”. Popoola (2001) observes that information availability does not mean accessibility and use and that academic libraries should stimulate primary demand for their products and services.

User Study and Non-use

The user research has totally ignored the study on non-users leading to unbalanced ratio of user to non-user research due to extremely difficult nature of non-user studies (Slater, 1984). Use of library is believed to be minority event, i.e., a small segment of rightful users of a library really use their library. The numbers of users who have need for information far exceed those who actually use information (Atherton,

1977). Even among the user, the use of a library follows inverse law and success-breeds-success phenomenon resulting into the fact that a very small cross section of users account for a large chunk of the use and the rest of large number of users account for a small part of the non-use.

Use of library by its users and its utility to its users are often quite different. “An information system may be used, then, but not be useful; it may also be useful, but not used. It may even be neither useful nor used. It is ideal, if it is both used and useful” (Kochen, 1976).

Non-user

A non-user of a library is one who has a right to use the library but he does not do so over a specific period and/or for a specific sample of collection on transactions (Sridhar, 1994). A library can have some non-users who do not use library or its collections or services at all and such non-users are absolute non-users.

Need and Significance of the Study

Academic libraries at the undergraduate level play a key role in promoting reading habits and to acquire life-long shelf-learning skills among the undergraduate students. The transition from school environment to college environment poses some kind of constraints in accessing library resources. User studies were conducted at various levels and it is mainly centered on the extent of usage of college libraries and its services by the undergraduate students. In academic library set-up, all those who are enrolled for undergraduate courses become eligible to borrow books, access library resources and use facilities of college libraries. But unfortunately, only very few undergraduate students are using the libraries for their academic pursuits and a marginal section of the users are keeping themselves away from using library due to various reasons. Since user studies are mainly concentrated on users and their access behavior, the non-usage of college libraries, their characteristics and non-use of library and its services are not systematically studied. Only very few studies have been conducted in the academic library set-up on non-use of college libraries. Hence, a study was conducted to analyse the non-use of college libraries and its services by the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges.

Statement of the Problem

The present study intends to analyse the non-use of college libraries and its services by the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges in Kanyakumari District. Therefore, the problem for the present study is entitled as “Non-use of Library Facilities and Services by the Undergraduate Students of Arts and Science Colleges”.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are framed for the present study:

1. To identify the reading interest of undergraduate students in Arts and Science Colleges.
2. To identify and determine the non-users of college libraries among the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges
3. To analyse the reasons for non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges

Hypotheses

1. Non-user of college libraries is very low among the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges.
2. User awareness of library resources and its services are very low among the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges.

Limitations

The present study is based on the responses of 180 respondents and the findings are confined only to Arts and Science Colleges of Kanyakumari district.

Methodology

The present study intends to identify the non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students of Lekshmipuram College of Arts and Science, Kanyakumari district and hence case study method is followed. The sample respondents of the study are final year undergraduate students of Lekshmipuram College of Arts and Science. A well-structured questionnaire prepared by the investigator is administered among 200 final year undergraduate students using stratified random sampling techniques by giving due representation to all categories of variables under study. Among, 200 respondents, 181 questionnaires are

returned and complete in every aspect and so the response rate of the questionnaire is 90.5 per cent. Out of the 181 responses, 180 are analysed and interpreted accordingly.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The data collected from the respondents are analysed using appropriate statistical techniques and interpreted accordingly.

1. Demographic Variables of the Respondents

The respondents for the present study consist of 180 final year undergraduate students of different subject groups. Among 180 respondents, 119 respondents (66.1 per cent) belong to female and the remaining 61 belong to male category. Similarly, 108 respondents (60 per cent) hails from rural and the remaining 72 respondents from urban background. Subject wise distribution shows that equal number of respondents (30 each) from the following specializations: Tamil, English, History, Mathematics, Physics, and Zoology. Thus, equal number respondents from both Arts and Science discipline.

2. Leisure Time of the Respondents

Leisure time available to the respondents of the study is carried out in order to assess the utilization of leisure time by the undergraduate students. The details are given in table 1.

Table 1
Leisure Time of the Respondents

S.No	Leisure Time	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1	One Hour	92	51.1
2	1-2 hour	43	23.9
3	3-4 hours	26	14.4
4	More than 4 hours	19	10.6
Total		180	100

Table 1 discloses that the majority of the respondents (51.1 per cent) have maximum of one hour as leisure time, 23.9 per cent of the respondents have leisure time between 1-2 hours and 14.4 per cent have leisure time between 3-4 hours. Only 19 respondents (10.6) have more than four hour as leisure time. Majority of the respondents have less than one hour as leisure time clearly shows that undergraduate students are engaged in some other activities during their leisure time.

3. Use of Leisure Time by the Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate students spend their leisure time according to their one's own interests. Modern electronic gadgets are frequently used by them to use their leisure time. The reading interest and reading habits of undergraduate students are decreasing day-by-day. Types of activity used by the undergraduate students to spend their leisure time are given in table 2.

Table 2
Use of Leisure time by the Respondents

S.No	Types of Activity	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1	Reading	59	32.8
2	Television/Radio	36	20.0
3	Smart Phone/Whatsapp/Facebook	71	39.4
4	Sports	9	5.0
5	Cultural Activities	5	2.8
Total		180	100

It is clear from table 39.4 per cent of the respondents' uses smart phone, 32.8 per cent prefer reading, 20 per cent watch television and 5 per cent are engaged in sports activities. Only 5 respondents out of 180 are engaged in cultural activities. Table depicts the modern trends among the younger generation to spend their leisure times. This shows that the priority of the undergraduate students in using their leisure time is not for reading. Smart phone and social media are dominating their leisure time.

4. Reading Areas of Interest

The reading areas of interest of the 32.8 per cent respondents who spend their leisure time for reading are further analysed in order to determine the areas of interest of undergraduate students. The details are summarized in table 3.

Table 3
 Reading Areas of Interest

S.No	Reading Areas of Interest	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1	Technology related	8	4.4
2	Literature	13	7.2
3	Fiction	24	13.3
4	Stories	41	22.8
5	No comments	94	52.2
Total		180	100

Table 3 discloses that majority of the respondents have no comments on their reading areas of interest. Out of the 47.8% respondents who are able to state their reading priorities clearly, 22.8 per cent of the respondents identify reading stories as their areas interest, 13.3 per cent expressed their choice as fiction, 7.2 per cent expressed their areas of interest as literature and only 4.4 per cent have mentioned that technology as their areas of interest. The reading interest of the undergraduate students is more general in nature and it is used for spending their leisure time.

5. Frequency of Library Visit by the Undergraduate Students

Undergraduate students are expected to use the college libraries for their information requirements. The frequency of the undergraduate students' visit to the college library either for borrowing books or for accessing libraries resources/information is further carried out. The details are given in table 4.

Table 4
 Frequency of Library Visit by the Undergraduate Students

S.No	Frequency of Library Visit	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1	Daily	29	16.1
2	Once in a Week	36	20.0
3	Once in a Month	27	15.0
4	Rarely	20	11.1
5	Never	68	37.8
Total		180	100

Table 4 reveals that 16.1 per cent of the respondents visit the college libraries daily to access library resources and its facilities. Only 20 per cent of the respondents visit the college libraries at least once in a week, 15 per cent visits the college libraries at least once in a month and 11.1 per cent of the respondents visit the college rarely. Unfortunately, 37.8 per cent of the respondents never visit the college libraries to access library resources. Moreover, rare visits to the libraries means either very low or non-use of college libraries. Hence it is interpreted that 48.9 per cent i.e., almost half of the undergraduate students are the non-users of the college libraries, which is a very disturbing trend.

6. Discipline wise Non-users of College Libraries

The extent of usage of college libraries by the undergraduate students depend on their information requirements which may influenced by various factors like subject, age, interest, attitude towards information system and libraries. The level of non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges are further studied based on their discipline of study. The details are presented in table 5.

Table 5 Discipline-wise Non-Users of College Libraries

S.No	Frequency of Library Visit	Arts	Science	Total
1	Daily	17(18.9)	12(13.3)	29(16.1)
2	Once in Week	21(23.3)	15(16.7)	36(20.0)
3	Once in Month	9(10)	18(20)	27(15.0)
4	Rarely	8(8.9)	12(13.3)	20(11.1)
5	Never	35(38.9)	33(36.7)	68(37.8)
Total		90	90	180

Items inside the parentheses are in percent

Table 5 informs that among arts discipline, 38.9 per cent of the respondents never visit the college libraries and 8.9 per cent of them visits rarely. Thus, it is interpreted that 47.8 per cent of the respondents are non-users of college libraries among arts discipline.

Similarly, 36.7 per cent of the respondents of science discipline never visit the college libraries and 13.3 per cent of them visit rarely. It shows that 50 per cent of the respondents are non-user of college libraries among science discipline. Overall analysis shows that non-users and non-use of college libraries are more among the undergraduate students of science discipline than arts.

7.Reasons for Non-use of College Libraries

The specific reasons for non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students are further analysed. The details are summarized in table 6.

Table 6
Reasons for Non-use of College Libraries

S.No	Reasons for Non-use	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1	Inconvenient opening Hours	12	13.3
2	Lack of innovative Assignment	22	24.4
3	Lack of cooperation from Library Staff	13	14.4
4	Location of the library	10	11.1
5	Outdated collections	3	3.3
6	Prescribed text book enough for examinations	10	11.1
7	Use other libraries	-	-
8	Internet supplement the required information	20	22.2
Total		90	100

Among various reasons for non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges are lack of innovative assignments (24.4 per cent); internet as supplement (22.2 per cent); lack of co-operation from library staff (14.4 per cent); inconvenient library hours (13.3 per cent); availability of the needed information in the prescribed text book (11.1 per cent); location of the library (11.1 per cent) and outdated collections (3.3 per cent).

Thus, the major reasons for non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students are lack of innovative assignments, use of internet, lack of co-operation from the library staff and inconvenient library hours.

Findings of the Study

Findings of the study are:

1. The majority of the respondents (51.1 per cent) have maximum of one hour as leisure time, and 23.9 per cent of the respondents have leisure time between 1-2 hours.
2. Only 32.8 per cent of the undergraduate students Arts and Science College use their time for reading.
3. The majority of the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges are not able to identify their reading areas of interest.
4. Forty nine per cent of the undergraduate students of Arts and Science Colleges are the non-users of the college libraries.
5. Non-users and non-use of college libraries are more among the undergraduate students of science discipline than arts.
6. The major reasons for non-use of college libraries by the undergraduate students are lack of innovative assignments, use of internet, lack of co-operation from the library staff and inconvenient library hours.

Conclusion

Though the non-use of library is said to be a minor event the present study reveals that usage of college libraries by the undergraduate students of Arts and Science colleges has become a major and alarming event. Nearly fifty per cent of the users in Arts and Science Colleges are keeping away from using the facilities and services offered by the college libraries due to a variety of reasons. The major reasons for non-use are lack of innovative assignments, use of internet, lack of support from the library staff and inconvenient library hours.

These findings are an eye-opener for the college authorities, teachers as well as the librarians. The study puts the onus on the part of the librarians. They must not be passive but proactive and go an extra mile to satisfy the information need of the students. Ways and means to extend the library hours well beyond the college working time have to be found out by the authorities and the librarians. All the concerned including members of the faculty and library professionals must co-ordinate their activities in such a way that facilities and services of the academic libraries are to be used at the optimum level for their individual development. Teachers must give innovative and inventive assignments and projects, and teaching-learning processes are to be library-centered. The ambience of the college libraries are to be more attractive, welcoming and conducive for learning.

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