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Information Literacy Skills of Research Scholars of Various Departments of the Faculty of Arts, The M S University of Baroda, Vadodara

Manali Desai[1], Dr. N. D. Oza[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Department of Library and Information Science, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand, Gujarat, India
Email: *manalidesai367[at]gmail.com*

[2]Assistant Professor, Researcher, Department of Library and Information Science, Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand, Gujarat, India
Email: *oza_nd[at]yahoo.co.in*

Abstract: ***Information literacy is an important skill for academics when they work in a digital and knowledge-driven world. The current study addresses the information literacy and digital literacy skills of research scholars from the Faculty of Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara. A structured questionnaire was prepared and administered to 25 research scholars, 22 of whom responded and were analysed using a survey method. The study evaluates scholars' familiarity, understanding, use, and attitudes toward the principles of information literacy, use of printed and electronic information sources, computer and internet literacy skills, search strategies, as well as perceptions of digital tools. The results show that the majority of the research scholars are moderately well-literate in terms of information, computer, and internet skills and regularly utilize reference books, e-journals, theses, and online search engines in their academic life. However, participation in formal information literacy training programmes was limited. Research, therefore, needs systematic information literacy training in the organization to increase efficiency and ethical information use.***

Keywords: Information Literacy; Digital Literacy; Research Scholars; Academic Libraries; Information Seeking Behaviour

1. Introduction

We all live in the 21st century, where various types of information are available; if we want to succeed in our lives, we all rely on information. As we can say that the 21st century is the time of information explosion, lots of information is available in various forms, but we have to decide which information is most suitable for our personal, academic and professional growth. The American Library Association (ALA) describes information literate people as:

"Those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information and how to use information so that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand."

One of the most important skills is information literacy. If you have information literacy, then you can recognize when and why you require information, where to find the correct information source and how to access, use and share that source ethically. This skill involves collecting, organizing, filtering, and evaluating information, as well as drawing sound conclusions from the results.

2. Information Literacy

Information Literacy may be defined very simply as "the ability to access, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources." Information literacy is a skill, ability, expertise, capability and competency of a person that makes him able to find the right information from the right source (Mahadeva and Prasad, 2016).

Information literacy includes a set of skills that help individuals identify what information they need and find, assess, use, and create information within appropriate cultural and social contexts. By this, people and big businesses, and especially smaller and medium-sized businesses, as well as countries and places benefit greatly and can significantly enhance their competitive edge. Information literacy allows access to, use of, and production of information resources. Human services, education, health care, economic development, and other fundamental components of contemporary life rely on such resources. As a result, information literacy provides an essential base for such international initiatives as the World Summit on the Information Society and the Millennium Declaration. It embodies not just technical expertise but also learning and thinking skills and interpretive capabilities, all of which transcend careers and empower individual people and communities. (Chanchinmawia & Verma, 2017). The foundation of lifelong learning, which is applicable to all academic fields, learning settings, and educational levels, is information literacy. It gives individuals the ability to locate pertinent information from reliable sources, expand their research, become more independent, and take charge of their own education. Making students lifelong learners has become the duty of higher education (Kevin, 2014).

2.1 Definition of Information Literacy

According to the American Library Association (1989) - "Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals' to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

CILIP (2013) defines IL as "Information Literacy knows when and why you need information, where to find it, and how to evaluate, use and communicate it in an ethical manner."

Information literacy is also defined by Jeremy Shapiro and Shelly Heghes (1996) in a different way "As new liberal art that extend from knowing how to use computers and access information to critical refection on the nature of information itself. Its technical infrastructure and its social, cultural and philosophical context and impact."

3. Review of Literature

Attahir (2018) was examined "Digital literacy as a crucial skill for librarians in the digital world". The study's main objectives were to define digital literacy, analyse data from the literature on Nigerian librarians' levels of digital literacy, and identify programs implemented in Nigeria to improve these abilities. It also evaluated the level of digital literacy among librarians and highlighted the necessity of organised training courses. The study suggested a framework for digital literacy training for Nigerian researchers in order to close this gap. The results showed that librarians' digital literacy skills are still lacking, which prompted suggestions for expanding ongoing professional development programs and incorporating digital literacy instruction into institutional curriculum.

Bakbak, D. (2019) conducted study on "Investigation into Information Literacy and the Use of Web 2.0 Technologies in a Faculty of Architecture". This study specifically looked into how Web 2.0 tools are used and how self-sufficient architectural students are in information literacy. Data gathered via a questionnaire survey were subjected to an ANOVA and a t-test. The information literacy self-efficacy of the participants varied depending on their proficiency with Web 2.0 tools and foreign languages, but it did not change based on their gender or amount of internet use. Furthermore, among Web 2.0 tools, instant messaging platforms were the most favoured for use in teaching. Other Web 2.0 tools included blogs, wikis, podcasts, Facebook and Twitter, video sharing sites, and blogs ranked from most to least preferred.

Mackey, T. P. (2020) investigated on "Embedding Metaliteracy in the Design of a Post-Truth MOOC: Building Communities of Trust". This study focused on the Empowering Yourself in a Post-Truth World MOOC's descriptive analysis demonstrates how metaliteracy was integrated into teaching students how to be ethical information producers and consumers. In order to build a digital artefact, participants reflect on their beliefs and research to acquire insight into their affective responses to information. The metaliteracy goals and learning objectives, as well as related elements such learner role, learning domain, and characteristics, were used to determine the curriculum-specific learning outcomes for each module. This approach was constrained since it did not incorporate a quantitative analysis of user data and only described these associations after the curriculum was developed. Additionally, it offers a way for subsequent studies to assess the value of these findings.

Mackey, Thomas P. and Jacobson, Trudi E. (2021) conducted study on "Embedding Metaliteracy in Learning Design to Advance Metacognitive Thinking: From OER to MOOCs". This study concentrated on meta literacy, which is a crucial skill for today's intricate and often perplexing information landscape. The necessity to rethink information knowledge in order to lessen its influence on literacy and the revolutionary developments in a linked society gave rise to the meta-knowledge model. The intersection of key elements, such as learner disciplines, active learner locations, traits or rates, and associated pretensions and learning objects, is implicated in the notion of meta knowledge. When individuals interact with and consider their active obligations as players in the component social context, this paradigm is applicable. This letter provides several examples of how tutoring practice incorporates metaliteracy through. A fully functional Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) with interactive literacy objects and digital badging content is one example of how metaliteracy is integrated into tutoring practice through Open Educational Resources (OERs). In particular, the authors have used these metaliteracy OERs into an online course on digital trades at SUNY Empire State College and the University at Albany. Despite its limitations, this descriptive technique shows the potential for further research on the benefits of meta-knowledge proposition and practice on the student's perceived literacy.

Rapchak, M. (2021) investigated on "Introducing Critical Librarianship to Information Professionals: Using Critical Pedagogy and Critical Information Literacy in an LIS Graduate Course". This study emphasis on the field of critical librarianship, which questions how libraries and information specialists contribute to the upkeep of oppressive systems, has gained popularity in recent years, and LIS instructors have started incorporating critical librarianship into their curricula. While methods to LIS education have been impacted by critical pedagogy and critical librarianship, the intersection of these two has not received as much attention. Additionally, library instruction is a major emphasis of the literature on critical information literacy. In order to prepare students for critical information literacy training, this case study examines a critical pedagogy technique used in a critical librarianship curriculum. Self-grading, cooperatively determining course expectations, and student-led presentations and discussions were all implemented by the instructor. The overwhelming majority of student comments were favourable, and student achievement in the course demonstrated the methodology.

Shire, W., & McKinney, P. (2021) was studied the topic "Web 2.0 Tools and Information Literacy Instruction in UK University Libraries: Hype or Reality?". The usage and views of Web 2.0 technologies for information literacy education in UK university libraries were the main subject of their study. The results showed that while a minority of librarians had negative opinions, a sizable portion of them welcomed these innovations. This study is significant because it advances our knowledge of how Web 2.0 tools are used and viewed in relation to information literacy education in UK university libraries. Researchers interested in examining the role of technology in library services and educational practices may find it useful to gain insight into these dynamics.

Vidal, E., & Castro, E. (2021) conducted a study on "An Information Literacy Framework Through the Conference Paper Format in the Undergraduate Engineering Curriculum". Through a framework based on preparing papers for conferences in the IEEE format, this study exchanged experiences in the development of information literacy abilities. In order to create a technical paper, students were given a set of tasks by the framework that involved them in an active learning style. These tasks included identifying the need for information, obtaining it, evaluating it, and then revising the approach for obtaining it. All of this was done ethically. They developed an assessment instrument, course materials, and activities in accordance with the ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. According to preliminary findings, the suggested framework advanced information literacy abilities,

Vizváry, P., and Zadražilová, I. (2021) examined "university students' information literacy abilities and assessed the efficacy of a campus-wide information literacy course by contrasting public and private higher education institutions" in the Czech Republic. The study contrasted survey data from Masaryk institution with outcomes from a comparable course at the private institution Ambis. Although Ambis students reported just a minor gain in their self-rated information literacy skills, which was related to their prior practical experience, objective testing showed considerable disparities between the two institutions. Even while Ambis students had greater information literacy at the beginning of the course, post-course evaluations showed significant gains among Masaryk University students. The study also identified structural issues that have an impact on these outcomes, such as an increase in college enrolment and a teacher shortage.

4. Objectives of the Study

1) To determine the kinds of information literacy abilities that research scholars possess.
2) To assess how research scholars learn information literacy skills and how much they utilise them.
3) To examine how research scholars' information literacy abilities assist and improve their academic achievement and research endeavours.
4) To evaluate research scholars' information literacy ability and pinpoint any barriers or restrictions preventing them from using these abilities effectively.

5. Methodology

The current study aims to determine the information literacy abilities of research researchers from different departments within the Faculty of Arts at M S University of Baroda, Vadodara. The survey technique of research was employed to gather data for the study. A structured questionnaire was created and given at random to 25 research scholars from different departments within the faculty of arts at The M S University of Baroda in order to gather the necessary data regarding their information literacy skills. A total of 22 (88%) completed questionnaires were received from respondents in order to analyse the data and determine the study's outcome.

6. Analysis of Data

Section (A): Demographic Information:

1) General Information:

Table 1: Age-wise analysis of respondents

Age Group	*Frequency (%)*
below 25 yrs	3 (13.63%)
between 26-35yrs	16 (72.72%)
between 36-45	2 (9.09%)
46 year above	1 (4.54%)

Table 1 makes clear that the bulk of research scholars (72.72%) are between the ages of 26 and 35, followed by those under 25 (13.65%) and those between 36 and 45 (9.09%). However, just 4.54% of those surveyed are older than 46. The bulk of research academics are found to be between the ages of 26 and 35.

Table 2: Gender wise analysis of respondents

Gender	*Frequency (%)*
Female	12(54.54%)
Male	10(45.45%)

The gender-wise analysis of the respondents is displayed in Table 2. Following the study, it was determined that 10 respondents (45.45%) were male and 12 respondents (54.54%) were female.

Table 3: Skills required for using Internet

Skills of using Internet	*Frequency (%)*
Very	7 (31.81)
Somewhat	15 (68.18)
A little	0
Never done	0

In table 3, the responses from users revealed that searching skill on Internet, 7(31.81%) and 15(68.18%) research scholar mentioned that they are very and somewhat familiar of using or having skill of searching information on Internet.

Section (B). Information Literacy Skills Aspects:

1) Familiarity with Information Literacy:

Table 4: Information Literacy training progammes

Information Literacy Training Programme	*Research scholar*
Yes	8(36.36%)
No	14(63.63%)

Table 4 showed that 8(36.36%) of the respondents have participated in information literacy training programme while 14(63.63%) have not participated in any information literacy training programme.

2) Finding Current Information:

Table-5: Type of information sources have been used for

your research

Types of information Sources	*Research Scholar*
Text books	20 (90.90%)
Print Journal	17 (77.27%)
E- journal	19 (86.36%)
Thesis/ Dissertation	19 (86.36%)
Reference Book	21 (95.45%)
Internet	20 (90.90%)

The purpose of Table 5 is to determine the respondents' level of familiarity with the kind of information sources they have utilised for their study. According to the research, the majority of respondents (95.45%) chose reference books, while 20 (90.90%) research scholars chose books and the Internet. Additionally, 17 respondents (77.27%) chose print journals, while 19 research scholars (86.36%) chose electronic journals and theses/dissertations. We may conclude that the respondents are knowledgeable about selecting the information source.

3) Rating Computer Literacy Skills:

Table 6: Types of computer literacy skill tools

Types of computer literacy skill tools	*Respondent (%)*
Open and save	17(77.27%)
Print document/ file	14(63.63%)
Copy/ paste and file transfer	5(22.72%)
Search in OPAC	14(63.63%)

Following analysis, it was determined that the majority of respondents—17, or 77.27%—rated their proficiency with opening and saving files on a computer as high, while 14, or 63.63%, rated their proficiency with searching OPAC and printing documents and files as average, and 5, or 22.72%, rated their proficiency with copying and transferring files as low. As a result, respondents generally possess enough computer literacy.

4) Rating Internet Literacy Skills:

Table 7: Types of Internet Literacy skill tools are preferred for your research

Types of internet literacy skill tools	*Respondent*
Web browsing	17 (77.27%)
Copy/download files from internet	11 (50%)
Write and send e-mail	12 (54.54%)
Download scholarly article from internet	1 5(68.18%)
Search in the web OPAC	16 (72.72%)

Table 7 shows that most respondents possess strong skills when it comes to using the Internet, such as browsing websites, searching the online OPAC, and downloading academic articles. Conversely, they exhibit moderate skills in creating and sending emails as well as copying and downloading information from the Internet. Overall, a significant number of respondents are adept at utilizing the Internet.

5) Relevant Search tools used for collecting of information:

Table 8: Kind of searching strategies required for information literacy skills

Kind of searching strategies required for information literacy skills	*Yes*
To find a book on a topic in a library, you use	19(86.36%)
To write a university level research paper for your subject class, you consult	12(54.54%)
The most efficient way to find reliable article for your research paper	15(68.18%)
Information Centre/ library, which provide you literature search	17(77.27%)

Table 8 shows that majority of respondents 19(86.36%) find a book on a topic in a library, 17(77.27%) respondents rely on Information centre/ library, which provide them literature search, 15(68.18%) respondents find reliable article for their research paper and 12(54.54%) respondents write a university level research paper for their subject class.

6) Purpose of library visit:

Table 9: Purpose of depend on library

Nature of dependency	*Research scholar*
Preparing note	16(72.72%)
Writing research paper	18(81.81%)
Preparing a bibliography	17(77.27%)
Thesis writing	18(81.81%)

Table 9 illustrates the respondents' reliance on libraries for academic purposes. It reveals that a significant portion of respondents- 18 (81.81%)- visited libraries to write research papers and theses, while 17 (77.27%) and 16 (72.72%) did so to prepare bibliographies and notes, respectively.

7) Respondents Perceptions of Information Literacy:

Table 10: Perception towards ability to search and retrieve information

Perception towards ability to search and retrieve information	*Respondent (%)*
…For use in the library using the manual catalogue	13(59.09%)
…. Information for use in the library using the electronic catalogue	18(81.81%)
…. Information for use in the library physically on the shelves	15(68.18%)
…Need library staff support to search and retrieve information for use in the house	9(40.90%)

Table 10 shows that more than half 13(59.09%) and 9(40.90%) of the respondents said that they required manual catalogue and library staff support to search and retrieve information. Majority respondents said that for information search and retrieval they were using electronic catalogue 18(81.81%) and 15(68.18%) physically using library by their self.

Section (C): Digital Literacy Skills Aspects:

1) Familiarity with Digital Literacy:

Table-11: Web search skills

Web search skill	*Frequency (%)*
Poor	1(4.54)
Acceptable	3(13.63)
Good	16(72.72)
Very good	2(9.09)

Based on user feedback in Table-11, 16 research scholars (72.72%) indicated that they possess satisfactory web search skills, while only 2 research scholars (9.09%) stated that they have excellent web search skills. A minimal number of research scholars- 1 (4.54%) and 3 (13.63%)- report having sufficient and below-average online search capabilities.

Table-12: Ability to use digital technology

Digital Literacy	*Frequency (%)*
Poor	1 (4.54%)
Acceptable	3 (13.63%)
Good	16 (72.72%)
Very good	2 (9.09%)

In Table 12, the feedback from users indicated that 16 (72.72%) research scholars reported having good digital literacy skills, while only 2 (9.09%) research scholars stated they possess very good digital literacy skills. A small number of research scholars, specifically 1 (4.54%) and 3 (13.63%), indicated having poor and acceptable digital literacy skills, respectively.

Table 13: Use of search engines

Search Engines	*Responses*
Google	21(95.45%)
Alta Vista	1(4.54%)
Yahoo	4(18.18%)
Rediff	0
MSN	2(9.09%)
Khoj	2(9.09%)
WWW	13(59.09%)
Any other	0

In table 13, the responses from users revealed that majority of research scholars have used 21(95.45%) google search engine. Average number of research scholar using WWW search engine 13(59.09%). And very few research scholars have used 1(4.54%), 4(18.18%), 2(9.09%) Alta vista, Yahoo, MSN and Khoj search engines.

Table 14: Digital Literacy

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Enjoy using digital service	8(36.36%)	13(59.09%)	2(9.09%)	0	0
Aware of various types of digital devices	5(22.72%)	15(68.18%)	4(18.18%)	0	0
Understand what digital literacy is	7(31.81%)	12(54.54%)	3(13.63%)	0	0
Think that your learning can be enhanced by using digital tools and resources	9(40.90%)	12(54.54%)	1(4.54%)	1(4.54%)	0

Table-14 revealed that Most described their experiences with digital services as enjoyable. 59.09% of respondents agreed, 9.09% were uncertain, and 36.36% strongly agreed with that statement. They were not opposed to what was said, which also showed that digital services matter and are used in most instances; they seem to know the digital spaces. 68.18 percent of respondents stated that they knew about the types of digital devices they utilize, and 22.72 percent strongly agreed on those. There were no differences — although 18.18 percent were a little less sure. Overall, the most common knowledge with respect to the digital gadgets is clear, but perhaps few respondents are required to be exposed more, or be trained before they have a level of competence on these new technologies. The majority of participants (54.54%) agreed with the concept of digital literacy, and 31.81% strongly agreed with it. 13.63% were undecided. Hence, many of the respondents do still have some level of introductory knowledge on the concepts of digital literacy, which is only acceptable from the point of view of core competencies which are needed to function properly in an information-rich digital society. And the majority believed that digital tools and resources can enhance overall learning experiences. This had been agreed by 54.54% of the respondents and heavily voted by 40.90%. As a result, scant opposition could be noted: 4.54% neither knew for sure nor did they agree. This indicates a belief that digital technologies can provide instructional benefit through learning outcomes.

7. Conclusion

Information Literacy is a major prerequisite for professionals involved in academic work. In the contemporary situation information technology (IT), information communication technology (ICT), digital technology are playing a vast role for which not only the research scholars but also all academic fraternity should be well versed with ICT age because the primary feature that allows research scholars to obtain the appropriate material from the appropriate source without wasting their precious time is their skills and talents. Given the range of specialisations in the field, researchers must possess Information literacy skills that enable people to efficiently look for, discover, assess, and utilise the necessary information. The M S University researchers' adequate information literacy and information search skills are commendable. They are well informed of how to use library resources, and the results of a study indicate that research scholars are receiving good library orientation from The M S University's central library. Further, it is also found that research scholars of various departments of the faculty of Arts, The M S University of Baroda, Vadodara, have good computer and Internet literacy, which is essential in the present knowledge-based academic community.

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Author Profile

Dr. Nimesh D Oza is presently working as Assistant Professor at the Department of library and information science, Sardar Patel University, V.V. Nagar-388120, Anand, Gujarat. He has teaching experience More than 13 years and till today in the Dept. of Library & Information Science Sardar Patel University, Vallabh Vidyanagar - 388120. He has specialization in Digital Library, Vocabulary Control, Corporate Librarianship, Knowledge Management, Electronic Resource Management in LIS. Affiliation: Dep. Of Library and Information Science, Sardar Patel University, V.V. Nagar-388120, Anand, Gujarat, India. E-mail: oza_nd[at]yahoo.co.in

Manali Desai is PhD Research Scholar in Department of library and information science, Sardar Patel University, V.V. Nagar-388120, Anand, Gujarat. She has qualified GSET in Library and Information Science. Her area of interest is Bibliometrics, Artificial Intelligence, social media and Information Literacy. Affiliation: Dep. Of Library and Information Science, Sardar Patel University, V.V. Nagar-388120, Anand, Gujarat, India. E-mail- manalidesai367[at]gmail.com