

Diminishing Use of Library Services by the Students of an Engineering Institution in Odisha, India

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Abstract

This paper intends to evaluate the use of library services by the students of a premier engineering institution in Odisha, India. Moreover, the paper intends to explore the possible dimensions of declining trend of library use. The study adopts questionnaire method of data collection. The paper deduces that the decreasing trend of library use is attributed to the fact that students are complacent with their teachers' class notes and limited text books or some freely available web resources that they retrieve through simple Google search. The paper discusses different other parameters pertaining to diminishing trend of library access and use habit by the students' community. Additionally, the paper provides some constructive suggestions for the up gradation of library systems and services for promoting and encouraging students' information seeking skills and library use habit.

Keywords: User study, Blogs, Library 2.0, E-databases, Internet, OPAC

Introduction

Technology has transformed teaching and learning environments in tertiary education, introducing new collaborative library spaces and developing the roles and skills of library staff. Academic libraries need continually to re-examine their services to ensure they meet students' needs¹. The profession is finding ways to become equipped and incorporate new technologies into the existing framework of high-quality information service delivery so as to satisfy e-information needs of end users. Hence, librarians have sought to re-define what the library building and services mean to those who use the library² since the basic objective of an academic library remains to satisfy the myriad information needs of users' community. Therefore, it has been the duty and responsibility of library professionals to acquire, organize, and process the required information resources suiting to the academic needs of the students and to provide

effective library services for the greater interest and benefits of the users. To this effect, the services offered by a particular library need to be periodically assessed and evaluated. Therefore, it is imperative on the part of library professionals and LIS researchers to conduct user assessment on library services periodically to find out the ratings of the library services, problems associated with library services, rate of satisfaction among the user groups, and find out solutions for up grading existing library services. Hence, this study while examining the use of library services, attempts to explore the possible reasons of declining trend of use of library services by students at Bhadrak Institution of Engineering & Technology, Bhadrak, Odisha (India).

Aims and Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the present study are:

- To ascertain the students' perception and use of the library;
- To know students' basic purpose and frequency of visit to the library;
- To identify and evaluate the use of information sources available in the library;
- To identify the level of satisfaction of the students' community with the services provided in the library;
- To examine the problems faced by the students in using the library services; and
- To record the suggestions made by the users for further development of library service and facilities.

Methodology

The study adopts questionnaire method of data collection. Keeping the objectives of the study in mind, a well-structured questionnaire was prepared and the copies of which were distributed among the students' respondents in person. A total number of 250 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 190 filled in questionnaires (a response rate of 76%) were collected from the students of Bhadrak Institution of Engineering & Technology (BIET) which constitutes the major database for this investigation.

Literature Review

Jacobs (1996)³ revealed some interesting and useful information relating to the way Library users approach the Library service at University of Sussex. Juceviciene and Tautkeviciene (2003)⁴ in their concept mapping revealed that even a short educational event causes statistically significant changes in students' knowledge and understanding on the library educational environment and its learning environments. Song (2004)⁵ unfolded international business students' perceptions and expectations of electronic library services at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and found that although electronic resources are available without the constraint of location, providing reference services for those who do not use the Business and Economics Library becomes a challenge. Virtual reference is an excellent tool, but most international business students do not see it as an important library service. Adikata and Anwar

(2006)⁶ in their survey of faculty members in a Malaysian university found that faculty members are not fully satisfied with the students' library use skills, availability of information resources and the value to the library by university management. Dickinson (2006)⁷ in his study on Colorado Academic Library found that library computer access is utilized by students far more than by faculty while the use of interlibrary loan services is much more widespread among faculty members than students, Sveum (2007)⁸ revealed that students generally focus on web directories and internet sites where we expect to find quality answers and most of them are able to do a simple Google search. Omehia and Obi (2008)⁹ examined students' characteristics and their use of library services in the University of Uyo. Students' academic discipline, year of study, and socio-economic status were vividly depicted and revealed how students' socio-economic status affected their use of library services. Toner (2008)¹⁰ evaluated low or non-use of the library at St. Martin's College, UK and identified possible reasons to this effect. The study revealed that students in part-time and distance learning courses were the largest group of non-users. Moreover, he reported the key factors that influenced non-use of library that included the purchase of books, use of the Internet, and a lack of awareness of services available. Swain (2010)¹¹ examined the use of electronic resources by students of business schools of Orissa (India) and found that students express keen interest in the use of e-journals, followed by e-books, e-newspapers, e-reports, and e-articles. Least interest is shown towards the use of electronic theses and dissertations. Paterson and Low (2011)¹² in their online survey found that the dramatic growth of smart phone ownership among students in an eight-month period was surprising: a 17 per cent increase between March and November 2010. Moreover, 68% of students who plan to change their mobile handset would upgrade to a smart phone. Brock and Tabaei (2011)¹³ in their study which was limited to one undergraduate college in a major north-eastern city in the USA found that student learning interest and engagement significantly increases with the opportunity to solve a real world problem as they are strong advocates of the library as they become familiar with its resources, collections, and its overall value to them. Goodall and Pattern (2011)¹⁴ in their study on students' library use at Huddersfield University found that library usage varies between academic schools and there are often pedagogic reasons for low usage, but it would appear that, in some subjects, students who "read" more, measured in terms of borrowing books and accessing electronic resources, achieve better grades. However, this study intends to add some new findings to the corpus of existing literature.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Frequency of library visit

Table-1: Frequency of visit to the library

<i>Frequency of visiti</i>	<i>No. of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Daily	62	32.63
Once in a week	62	32.63
More than once in a week	32	16.84
Once in a month	17	8.95
Occasionally	22	11.58

It is evident from Table-1(Fig-1) that nearly one third of respondents prefers to visit library *daily* or *once in a week* (32.63% each) followed by more than *once in a week* (16.85%). While students who visit library *once in a month* (8.95%) and *occasionally* (11.58%) were found fairly less. Therefore, it is deduced that there is a decreasing trend of library use by the students' community which may be attributed to the fact that students of BIET are complacent with their teachers' class notes and limited text books or some free web resources they catch hold of through general Google search which they might be availing well beyond the library via wi/fi.

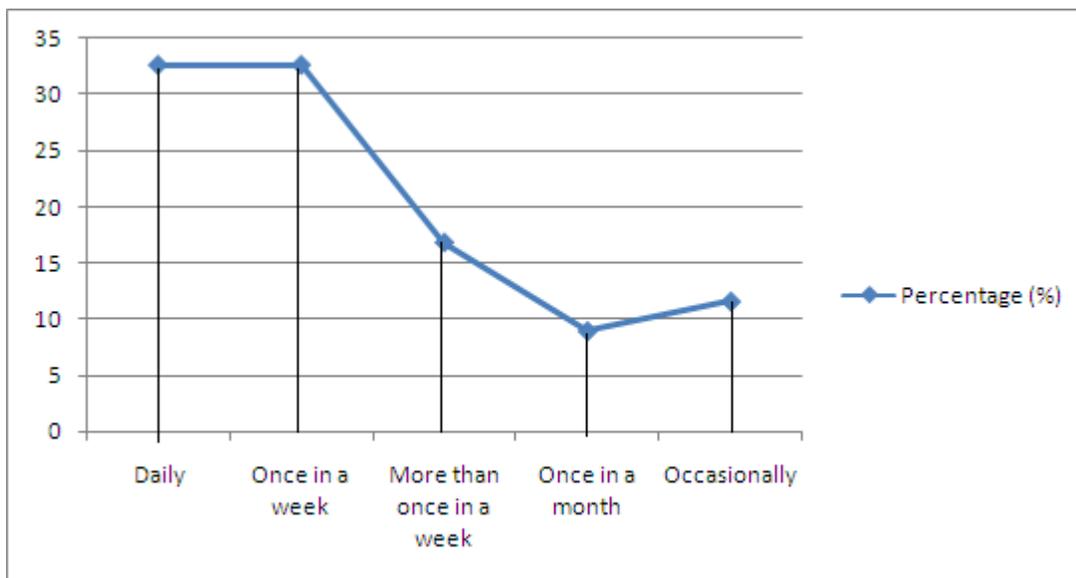


Fig-1: Frequency of visit to the library

Purpose of library visit

Table-2 Purpose of library visit

<i>Purpose</i>	<i>No. of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
To borrow books and other materials	59	31.05
For studying course materials	39	20.53
For consulting research materials	31	16.32
To use reference materials	24	12.63
To use journals	19	10
To use internet	23	12.11
To read newspapers magazines	68	35.79
To photocopy	81	42.63

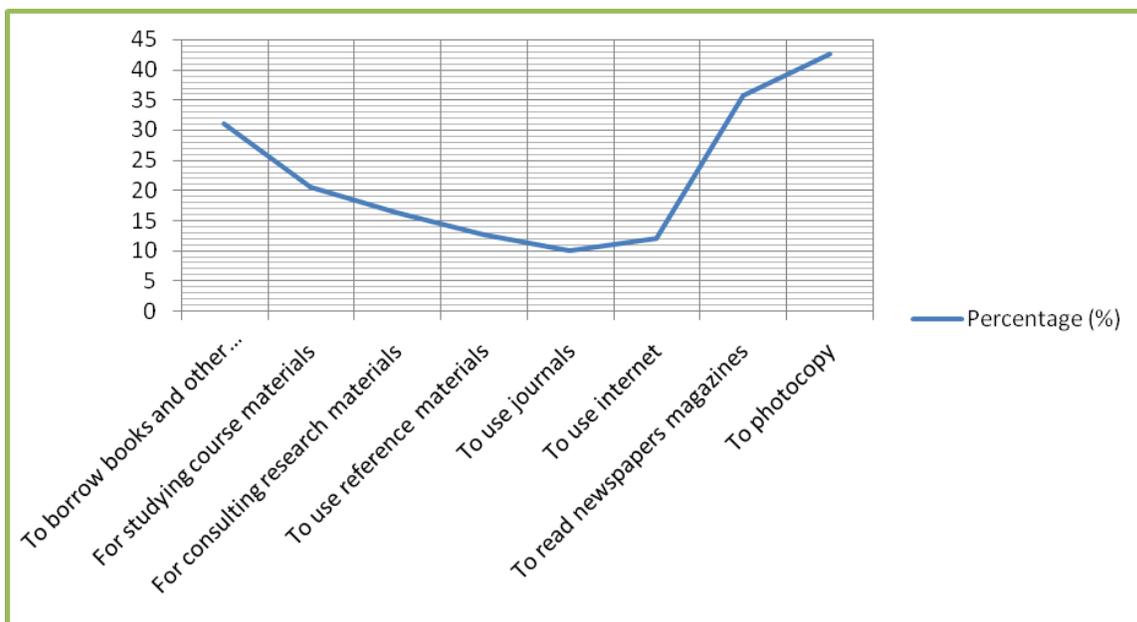


Fig.2: Purpose of Library Visit

Table-2 shows that majority of respondents (42.63%) avail photocopying services from library and a little over one-third of respondents visit library for the sake of reading newspapers (35.79%) and borrowing books (31.05%). However, the other key purposes of library use like use of Internet, consultation of journals, consultation of research materials, use of reference materials, and reading study materials are found very less and insignificant. It is deduced that Internet facility for students use has not yet been extended to the library due to the fact that

students have been provided Internet connectivity through wi/fi facility across the campus and computer labs, however, the matter of providing adequate Internet access facility to the patrons inside the library needs introspection by the college management.

Method of consulting information

Table-3 Method of consulting information

<i>Methods of consulting information</i>	<i>No. of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Ask a librarian/ library staff	120	63.16
Ask colleagues/ friend	40	21.05
Consult bibliographic tools	28	14.74
Use manual catalogues/ OPACs	71	37.37

It is evident from Table-3 that majority of students (63.16%) take the help of library staff in getting their information needs fulfilled. While, 37.37% of the students use manual catalogues/ OPACs, 21.05% take help of their friends, and 14.74% consult bibliographic tools that help them to retrieve the relevant documents/ information from the library.

Level of satisfaction with the library services

Table-4 Level of satisfaction with the library services

<i>Library Services</i>	<i>Satisfied n(%)</i>	<i>Not Satisfied n(%)</i>
Circulation service	76(40.00)	114(60.00)
Reference service	73(38.42)	117(61.58)
Bibliographic Service	47(24.74)	143(75.26)
Document delivery service	63(33.16)	127(66.84)
Online journal service	42(22.11)	148(77.89)
Inter library loan service	31(16.32)	159(83.68)
Photocopying service	153(80.53)	37(19.47)
OPAC service	21(11.05)	169(88.95)
Newspaper/ periodical service	112(58.95)	78(41.05)

It is evident from Table-4 that majority of respondents are satisfied with photocopying service (80.53%), and newspaper/periodical service (58.95%) offered by BIET central library. Concurrently, more than one third of respondents are also satisfied with circulation service (40.00%), reference service (38.42%), and document delivery service (33.16%). However, services like, online journal service, interlibrary loan service and OPAC service offered by the library are not up to the satisfaction. It is deduced that there is a declining trend of usage of core

library services by the students of this engineering institution. Therefore, BIET library should try to revamp and re-engineer these services so that students can fulfill their electronic information needs.

Adequacy of collections

Table-5 Adequacy of collections in the library

<i>Adequacy of library collection</i>	<i>Satisfied n(%)</i>	<i>Not satisfied n(%)</i>
Reference section	118(62.11)	72 (37.89)
Text book section	107(56.32)	83(43.68)
Periodical section	62(32.63)	128(67.37)

Table-5 shows that majority of respondents are satisfied with the collection of *Reference Section* (62.11%) and *Text Book Section* (56.32%). However, students have expressed their utter dissatisfaction over periodical section (67.37%). Therefore, it is crystal clear that BIET central library has failed to build its collection building policy that has considerably neglected its periodical section which could be one of the key reasons of diminishing use of periodicals by the students' community. Therefore, it is suggested that the library should opt for a balance subscription of print journals and e-journals to cater to the needs of the users.

Level of satisfaction with the arrangement of reading materials

Table-6 Level of satisfaction with the arrangement of reading materials in the library

<i>Level of satisfaction</i>	<i>Satisfied n(%)</i>	<i>Not Satisfied n(%)</i>
Text books	139(73.16)	51(26.84)
Reference books	144(75.79)	46(24.21)
Journals	66(34.74)	124(65.21)
Project reports	72(37.89)	118(62.11)

Table-6 reveals that majority of students are satisfied with the arrangements and organization of text books (73.16%) and reference books (75.79%). At the same time majority of respondents express their concern over the organization of journals, and project reports in the library. It may be due to the fact that there is a less use of these materials for which the library professionals pay little interest in organization and arrangement of these documents. Therefore, the authors suggest that library professionals should come out of the rut and try to provide some impressive and encouraging services for the better use of information resources both online and offline.

Reasons for less use of library

Table-7 Reasons for less use of library

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>No. of Responses</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Lack of time	112	58.95
Inconvenient location	37	19.47
Inconvenient library hour	23	12.11
Cannot find the relevant information	89	46.84
Poor collection	77	40.53
Non-cooperative library staff	52	27.37
Complexity of the catalogues	94	49.47

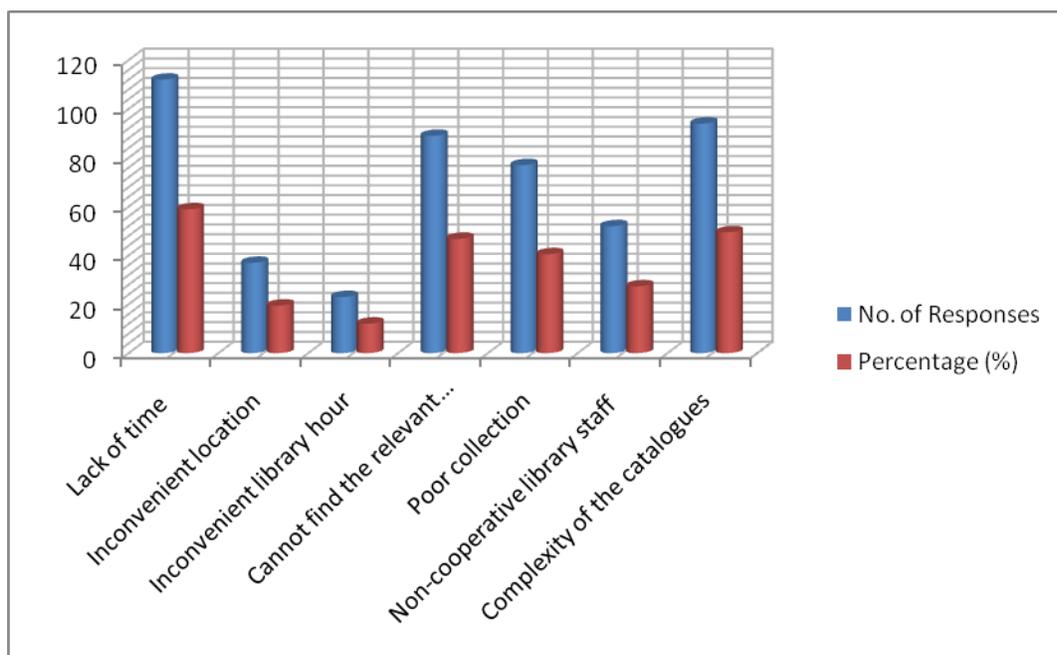


Fig-3: Reasons for less use of library

It is evident from Table-7 (Fig-3) that the three major difficulties pointed out by the respondents are *lack of time* (58.95%), *complexity of catalogues* (49.47%) and they cannot find their relevant information in the library (46.84). Concomitantly, 40.53% of respondents opine that BIET library has a very poor collection. To sum up the responses, *lack of time* of students may obviously be associated with students' class loads and related academic assignments. However, other two aspects *non-availability of literature*, and *poor collection* may be paid due attention by

the library management so that the library can enhance its usage trends towards the affordable goal of users in general and students in particular.

Key findings of the study

The key findings of the present study derived from the analysis of data are summarized below:

1. It is evident that there is a decreasing trend of library use by the students' community which may be attributed to the fact that students of BIET are complacent with their teachers' class notes and limited text books or some free web resources they catch hold of through general Google search which they might be availing well beyond the library via wi/fi;
2. The study depicts that majority of respondents avail photocopying services from library and a little over one-third of respondents visit library for the sake of reading newspapers and borrowing books. However, the other key purposes of library use like use of Internet, consultation of journals, consultation of research materials, use of reference materials, and reading study materials are found very less and insignificant;
3. It is evident that majority of students take the help of library staff in getting their information needs fulfilled;
4. Services like, online journal service, interlibrary loan service and OPAC service offered by the library are not up to the students' satisfaction. It is crystal clear that there is a declining trend of usage of core library services by the students of this engineering institution;
5. It is found that majority of respondents are satisfied with the collection of *Reference Section* and *Text Book Section*. However, students have expressed their utter dissatisfaction over periodical section (67.37%); and
6. The analysis shows that the three major difficulties pointed out by the respondents are lack of time, complexity of catalogues and they cannot find their relevant information in the library.

Views of the respondents

The respondents were asked to express their views on use of library services. In this regard, a few respondents opined that a simple Google search that provide them plenty of supporting resources which they very often do with their laptops anywhere on campus via wi/fi network and hence they need not feel like going to the library in pursuit of information. Another respondent opined, "I fetch only the syllabus prescribed books from the library and prepare my own notes comfortably at home, thus I found hardly any time to pay regular visit to library". Someone expressed, "I cannot sense that librarian can better recommend than my teachers do, therefore, I never consult a librarian for any academic matters". Some other remarked that the more books they consulted the more confused they became so they were reluctant to visit the library. Interestingly, someone reported that excepting hard copies of the books available in the library,

he did not know any other ways to find any other relevant materials that could supplement her curricular needs. A few others opined that sometimes library staffs express unfriendly attitude which dissuades them to have some academic interaction with them.

Discussion and Conclusion

The last several years have seen academic librarians struggle for a framework to support research and instruction within commercial courseware such as Blackboard, WebCT or Prometheus¹⁵. However, the idea of a librarian as an academic expert who is available to talk about assignments and hold their hands through the research process is, in fact, foreign to most students. Those who even have the word “librarian” in their vocabularies often think library staffs are only good for pointing to different sections of the stacks¹⁶. This very perception of the students has really made them detached from having a potential interaction with the academic librarians. The other way round, the library staffs are reluctant to explore innovative information services like library 2.0/3.0, blogs, wikis, social networking, etc which can be voluntarily offered to the students community so that they can develop more interest to exploit the library services towards their scholastic information needs. The findings of the study indicate that there is a diminishing use of library services by the students’ community. Therefore, collaborative efforts should be made by the faculty members and library staff to design and develop a user responsive collection based upon the course curriculum and more particularly, BIET library management should strive hard to re-design and revamp its systems and services tailoring to the academic needs of the students so that the use of library services by the students can be considerably enhanced and enriched for the sake of promoting academic excellence.

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