Awareness and utility of abstract in the universities: A critical study

Dr. SHESH MISHRA
Assistant Librarian
Banasthali Vidyapith
Rajasthan, India
Shesh2709@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to investigate and determine the awareness and utility of abstract among the faculty members (FM), research scholars (RS) and post graduate students (PG) of Banasthali Vidyapith (BV), Rajasthan and University of Rajasthan (UR), Jaipur. In this study author has tried to find out the awareness level of users. This study reveals that awareness level of abstract tool among the users is very less. This study presents a platform for implementing information literacy program or library orientation in the institutions and for further suggesting ways to aware the secondary information sources in the library. The study has been carried out once with FM, RS and PG students of BV and UR, so the findings can only be regarded as interim.

Keywords: Information sources use pattern, Secondary Information Sources, Abstract, Academic Library, Information Literacy (IL), Higher Education

1. Introduction

University libraries are providing variety of resources (e - resources and print) for their benefits of their students and faculty members. University of Rajasthan’s Central Library holds the collection of more than 4 lacs documents which includes ; books, bound journals, thesis, reports, Microfilms/Microfiches etc. Library acquires current Journals pertaining to various subjects in addition to the E-Journals available online for use through UGC Infonet E-Journals consortia.

Banasthali Vidyapith is one of the oldest deemed university among five women’ university in India. Banasthali Vidyapith is expanding every year in respect to number of students, research scholars and faculty members. Its library is subscribing 550 print journals and getting more than 4000 electronic journals through UGC – INFONET. Besides this Library has 1,70,000 volumes (Encyclopedia, series, text books, manuals, etc). After providing lot of resources and expanding money yet not benefited by these resources, because of lack of information literacy. In an university library variety of information sources are available i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary information sources. For maximize the utilization of all the information sources we need user
education for our pattern. Before implementing the user education program, IL program or library orientation to the user of libraries, there is need to know the level of users.

The analysis and interpretation of the collected data in the following three phases:

- Status-wise or Designation-wise i.e. Among the FM, RS and PG students.
- University-wise i.e. Between BV and UR.
- Faculty-wise i.e. Among the Arts & Humanities (A&H), Social Sciences (SS), Pure & Applied Sciences (P&A) and Fine Arts and Music (F&A).

2. Literature Review

Rader reviewed the literature on information literacy from 1973 to 2002 and she noted an increase in the number of publications which focus on information literacy in higher education. She noted that from the 20th century right up to the early 21st century, academic and school librarians “developed the concept of information skills instruction from library orientation to library instruction to course-integrated user instruction”. These librarians developed, managed and administered teaching materials, guides, methods, library skills tests, web-based tutorials and other e-learning teaching modules. With the newly emerged information literacy movement and in the absence of national standards then, many states, school districts, state university systems and local institutions in the United States began to develop their own information literacy competency standards. In one instance, Brenenson listed seventeen information literature competencies, standards and outcome which were developed independently. She noted and made reference to numerous publications, researches by Breivik in 1985; Kulthau in 1990; Bruce in 1997; and Doyle in 1992, theories, and models by Eisenberg and Berkowitz in 1990; and Kulthau in 1993, which had began to emerge. Within the context of information literacy in higher education, various researches have been and are being conducted. One such research was undertaken in Australia by Bruce. She studied the experiences of higher educators in two Australian universities and categorized the seven faces of information literacy as:

i. The information technology conception where information literacy is seen as using information technology for information retrieval and communication,

ii. The information sources conception where information literacy is seen as finding information located in information sources
iii. The **information process** conception where information literacy is seen as executing a process

iv. The **information control** conception where information literacy is seen as controlling information

v. The **knowledge construction** conception where information literacy is seen as building up a personal knowledge base in a new area of interest

vi. The **knowledge extension** conception where information literacy is seen as working with knowledge and personal perspectives adopted in such a way that novel insights are gained

vii. The **wisdom** conception where information literacy is seen as using information wisely for the benefit of others

3. **Data collection and management**

Seven Hundred and Ninety Five questionnaires were distributed personally during the days between February 5, 2009 and December 22, 2009, to assure that all data were collected within the same timeframe. All data collected were returned to the researcher by December 22, 2009. Three Hundred seven questionnaires were returned to author. The data were coded, analyzed, and entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet program for maintenance and manipulation by the author.

**Table 3.0A Population Sample**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Member</th>
<th>Research Scholars</th>
<th>Post Graduate Student</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AH</td>
<td>AH</td>
<td>AH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>SS</td>
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<td>FM</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>F</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
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**Table 3.0B Population Sample**

<table>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### 3.1 Description Of Each Study Group

Two Hundred and forty One (241) self-administered questionnaires were distributed to FM of BV and UR. The faculty surveyed Eighty-Eight or 37% responded to the questionnaire. The faculty surveyed were 53% (n=46) BV and 47% (n=42) UR. Faculty surveyed for gender-wise were 74% (n=65) female and 26% (n=23) male. Faculty surveyed for qualification were 35% (n=31) PG, 59% (n=52) Ph.D. and 6% (n=5) others. Faculty members surveyed for faculty-wise were 10% (n=10) A & H, 34% (n=15) SS, 42% (n=37) P & A and 14% (n=26) M & F.

One Hundred and Sixty Eight (168) self-administered questionnaires were distributed to RS of both the universities. The RS surveyed seventy or 42% responded to the questionnaire. The RS surveyed gender-wise were 24% (n=17) (4 BV + 13 UR) male and 76% (n=53) (44 BV + 9 (UR) female. RS surveyed for faculty-wise were 23% (n=16) (10 BV + 6 UR) A & H, 25% (n=17) (14 BV + 3 UR) SS, 40% (n=28) (18 BV + 10 UR) P&A and 13% (n=9) (6 BV + 3 UR) F&A. The research scholars surveyed for university-wise were 69% (n=48) BV and 31% (n=22) UR.

Three hundred and eighty six (386) self-administered questionnaires were distributed to PG students of both the universities. The PG students surveys one hundred and forty nine or (39%) responded to the questionnaire. The post graduating students surveyed gender-wise were 90% (n=134) female and 10% (n=15) male. The post graduate students surveyed university-wise were 28% or n = 42 UR and 72% or n = 107 BV. The post graduate students surveyed faculty-wise were 21% or (n=32) A & H, 46% (n=68) SS 17% (n=26) P & A and 15% (n=23) F & A.

### 3.2 Objective:
To study in the context of awareness & utility of abstract among the users.
3.2.1 Status-Wise

3.2.1.1 Research Hypothesis: There is significant difference in the context of awareness & utility of abstract among the users status-wise.

3.2.2.2 Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the context of awareness & utility of abstract among the users status-wise.

**Awareness of utility of abstract among the users status-wise Table 3.1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Correct</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
<th>Chi-Square Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Member</td>
<td>40.90%</td>
<td>59.09%</td>
<td>df = 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Scholar</td>
<td>25.71%</td>
<td>74.28%</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ Tab = 5.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
<td>21.47%</td>
<td>78.52%</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ Cal = 10.598 p value = 0.004997</td>
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</table>

Table 3.1 shows the percent distribution in the context awareness of utility of abstract among the users status-wise. 40.90% faculty members, 25.71% research scholars and 21.47 post-graduating students were aware of the utility of abstract, while 59.09% faculty members, 74.28% research scholars and 78.52% post-graduating students were not. Table 2.1 also shows the Chi-square test for independence of attributes at 0.05 level of significance. The value of $\chi^2$ calculated is greater
than $\chi^2$ tabulated and the df is 2. The value of $p$ shows statistically significant $p \leq 0.05$. This implies that there is a significant variation among the user in the context of awareness of utility of abstract status-wise. It means variation of awareness of utility of abstract is affected by levels of users. Hence the attributes are dependent. Figure 3.0 shows the bar diagram of Awareness of utility of abstract status-wise.

3.2.2 University-Wise

3.2.2.1 Research Hypothesis: There is significant difference in the context of awareness & utility of abstract among the users university-wise.

3.2.2.2 Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the context of awareness & utility of abstract among the users university-wise.

**Awareness of utility of abstract among the users university-wise Table 3.2**

<table>
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<th>Chi-square Test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banasthali Vidyapith</td>
<td>21.39%</td>
<td>78.60%</td>
<td>df = 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>$\chi^2$ Tab = 3.841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Rajasthan</td>
<td>40.56%</td>
<td>59.43%</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ Cal = 12.651</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>p value = 0.000375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 shows the percent distribution in the context of awareness of utility of abstract among the users university-wise. 29.39% users of Banasthali Vidyapith and 40.56% users of University of Rajasthan were aware the utility of abstract, while 78.60% users of Banasthali Vidyapith and 59.43% users of University of Rajasthan were not. Table 2.2 also shows the Chi-square test for independence of attributes at 0.05 level of significance. The value of $\chi^2$ calculated is greater than $\chi^2$ tabulated and the df is 1. The value of $p$ shows statistically significant $p \leq 0.05$. This implies that there is a significant variation among the user in the context of awareness of utility of abstract university-wise. It means variation of awareness of utility of abstract is affected by both the universities’ users. Hence the attributes are dependent. Figure 3.1 shows the bar diagram of Awareness of utility of abstract university-wise.

Figure 3.1
3.2.3 Faculty-Wise

3.2.3.1 Research Hypothesis: There is significant difference in the context of awareness & utility of abstract among the users faculty-wise.

3.2.3.2 Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the context of awareness & utility of abstract among the users faculty-wise.

### Awareness of utility of abstract among the users faculty-wise Table 3.3

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Correct</th>
<th>Wrong</th>
<th>Chi-Square Test</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts &amp; Humanities</td>
<td>22.41%</td>
<td>77.58%</td>
<td>df = 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>29.00%</td>
<td>71.00%</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ Tab = 7.815</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pure &amp; Applied Sciences</td>
<td>34.06%</td>
<td>65.93%</td>
<td>$\chi^2$ Cal = 3.505</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Arts &amp; Music</td>
<td>22.41%</td>
<td>77.58%</td>
<td>p value = 0.320107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 shows the percent distribution of awareness of utility of abstract among the users faculty-wise. 22.41% users of Arts & Humanities, 29.00% users of Social Sciences, 34.06% of Pure & Applied Sciences and 22.41% users of Fine Arts & Music were aware the utility of abstract, while 77.58% users of Arts & Humanities, 71.00% users of Social Sciences, 65.93% users of Pure & Applied Sciences and 77.58% users of Fine Arts & Music were not. Table3.3 also shows the Chi-square test for independence of attributes at 0.05 level of significance. The
value of $\chi^2$ calculated is less than $\chi^2$ tabulated and the value of df is 3. The value of p shows statistically non-significant $p \geq 0.05$. This implies that there is a non-significant variation among the user in the context of awareness of utility of abstract among all the faculties’ users. It means variation of awareness of utility of abstract is not affected by all the faculties’ users. Hence the attributes are independent. Figure 3.2 shows the bar diagram of awareness of abstract among the users faculty-wise.

4. Conclusion
Status-wise there were significant differences were found in awareness level of utility of abstract among the users. Faculty members were maximum aware of the utility of abstract, second were research scholars and third post graduating students were minimum. University-wise there were significant differences were found in awareness level of utility of abstract among the users. Users of University of Rajasthan were more aware of the utility of abstract in compare to users of Banasthali Vidyapith. Faculty-wise there were no significant differences found in awareness level of utility of abstract among the users. Users of Pure & Applied Sciences were maximum aware of the utility of abstract, second were users of Social Sciences and third users of Arts & Humanities and Fine Arts & Music were minimum. So there is strong need of implementing the user education, information literacy program or library orientation for maximizing the utilization of available information sources in both the universities. There is need of assignment based
teaching so students visit library frequently and use different types of information sources available in the library.

References:


Bibliography


