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Impact of ICT on Social Science Faculty Members' Information Usage Pattern at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

Abstract

This study explores the growing effect of information and communication technology on information usage pattern of the faculty members of Social Science at Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. The findings show that Internet has become a significance source for the faculty members and researchers as they use internet for education purposes, research work and updating knowledge. Google, Yahoo and MSN are widely used search engines and majority of the respondents' don't use the Excite, Snake, Kapok and Alta vista. Faculty members frequently use Science Direct to seek relevant information for their research. The problems include that Internet facility, digitized materials and audio visual materials are not provided in most departmental libraries of faculty of Social Sciences. The study suggests that information literacy programmes should be provided in every departmental library of Faculty of Social Sciences. Professional staff should be recruited in the departmental libraries of Social Sciences. Internet service, reference service, abstracting and indexing services should be provided by the departmental libraries for maximum users' satisfaction.

Introduction

The present era is the age of “Information and Communication Technology” which has revolutionized the whole world that is why the whole world has converted into a global village. The growing role of information has made information indispensable in all the fields of research. It has a significance importance for scholars and researchers who are totally dependent on current information. It is rather the first step to promote the area of research. Internet has affected the nature of information behavior in all segments of the society. No one can deny the importance of information in the society (Fidel, 1999).

Information Technology has changed the whole world into a global village that is why it is said that today’s man is living in information society. Information has much importance in educational field. The present scholars and researchers cannot survive without update information. It is considered that air water, food and shelter are the basic needs of man, so Kemp (1976) also measured that information is the fifth basic need of a man. Professionals cannot provide better services without latest information.

Information seeking behavior basically refers to the searching and utilization of information by an individual (Khan, 2010). The nature of information seeking behavior differs from group to group and person to person in the society or in an environment. Information need is an individual concept. It is necessary to search new information when scholars and researchers feel the importance of new information and think that the old ideas are outdated (Kemp, 1976, p.1-25).

It is very essential for the professional staff of the library to know the users’ demands and way of seeking information. The successful function of libraries depends upon the right choice of library collection. The collection should meet the overall (education and research) requirements of the library users. Librarians and library staff should be aware of how faculty members seek information and concerned materials. Knowledge of faculty members’ information seeking behavior is crucial for improving the services of the library. If the library staff knows the faculty members’ seeking behavior, they can provide the effective services to the users (Bhatti, 2009).

If the professional staffs are aware of the users’ way of seeking behavior, they can provide better facilities to their users. They can guide users in the use of OPAC, search engine, e-mail, databases and famous websites available through the various networks. So the library should provide the maximum ICT facilities to their users. The professional staff must be given ICT facilities such as internet, laser printer, scanners, fax machine, telephone and modern methods of searching information (Patitungkho, 2005).

It is also very necessary for the library staff to keep pace with the change of technology. As the technology changes the sources of information are also changed. New sources and channels particularly the world wide websites have brought new

challenges and issues. The retrieval of right kind of information is the main philosophy of librarianship. In these entire situations, the libraries should provide the related and current materials according to the users' requirements (Yousefi, 2007).

Objectives of the Study

The basic purpose of the research is to explore the impact of ICT and to obtain information related to purposes, search engines, database being used by the faculty members of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan. It also aimed to make suggestions for the improvement of the departmental library services attached to the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Literature Review

Lokman and Stephanie (2001) studied "The information Seeking Behavior and use of Social Sciences Faculty Members." Results of the study show that members of the Social Sciences faculty use the World Wide Web and electronic mail for locating particular government information. They also use traditional methods for searching information. Lack of knowledge about information services and sources was due to lack of information about library collection and service.

Borgman, and Smart (2005) indicated that the faculty members represent a wide range of research interest. However there is a prominent difference in information seeking behavior between physical and human geographers. The study concludes and suggests that digital libraries promote the undergraduates education and help to access the primary as well as secondary sources of information.

Hemming (2008) investigated "The Information Seeking Behavior of visual artists." It is a literature review based research article. The results of the study show that there are many differences between the seeking behavior of the visual artists and the other users of the community. It indicated that it is a particular community who has different approach from others. Mostly the respondents liked to use visual resources more than textual ones and they prefer to go to home rather than libraries. It also shows that they visit the library only for specific purpose.

Bhatti, Asghar, Mukhtar and Chohan (2011) surveyed Internet use by Social Scientists at the Bahauddin Zakaryia University, Multan, Pakistan. The findings of the study revealed that internet in the academic institutions have changed the methods of searching and retrieval of information. Social scientists not only use printed materials but also e-resources. The results of the study show that if the internet connectivity is improved in the seminar libraries of Social Sciences departments, the social scientists will use the internet in a more effective way. The study also revealed that users of the libraries are not given any training about information technology. That is the reason that the social scientists lack different informational skills. Apart from it lack of computer, lack of professional training, lack of time and shortage of E-resources of materials are the common problems.

A study by Khan, Khan and Bhatti (2011) assessed the use of Internet among students at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur by using a structured questionnaire. The study concluded that most of the students learn to use the Internet by themselves or with the assistance of their friends. The students showed their dissatisfaction with the Internet service provision, slow speed of the internet connection and inadequate number of computers in computer labs. They use the internet mostly for academic purposes and use online databases, dictionaries, encyclopedias and online courses. Google was the most used search engine.

In another study conducted by Khan, Bhatti and Khan (2011) investigated the ICT behavior of the students studying at education faculty, Islamia University of Bahawalpur. It was found that majority use ICTs at their departmental computer lab and their computer knowledge was found quite sufficient for learning. They agreed that ICTs have positive impact on their learning and it helps them in improving their CGPA. They highlighted the problems they faced in accessing ICTs. They mentioned slow speed of Internet, lack of computers, shortage of time and electricity failure as the problems faced by them. The study recommended that number of computers should be increased in the computer labs and respondents should be trained in utilizing electronic sources of information.

Research Methodology

This study is based on descriptive research. Survey research method has been used in this research work. The literature was reviewed to understand the concept of information seeking behavior. A comprehensive questionnaire was developed for data collection from the faculty members (teachers) of thirteen departments of Faculty of the Social Sciences at Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) Multan. These included Departments of Economics, Education, History, Geography, Pakistan Studies and Gender Studies, Political Science and International Relation, Mass Communication, Sociology, Applied Psychology, Philosophy, Sports Sciences, Multan College of Arts and Undergraduate Studies in Social Sciences. Total population for this study was 100 out of which 81 was responded. The response rate was 81%. Collected data was analyzed with the help of statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) for conclusions and recommendations.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Personal Profile of the Respondents

First part of the questionnaire dealt with the personal profile of the respondents. It collected information about departments, professional experience, qualification, gender, age, designation, and information needs and ICT seeking behavior of the respondents. The total response rate was 81% with 56% males and 44% females.

Age of the Respondents

Thirty one (17.9%) respondents were between 20 to 30 years of age, twenty six (15.0%) between 31 to 40 years, and fourteen (8.1%) between 41 to 50 years respectively. Only ten (5.8%) faculty members were 50 years and above (Table 1).

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Age

Teachers' Age	Frequency	Percent
20-30	31	17.9%
31-40	26	15.0%
41-50	14	8.1%
50+	10	5.8%
Total	81	100.0

Respondents' Experience

Frequency distribution of the respondents' experience shows that 40 (49%) respondents had professional experience between 1-5 years, 15 (19%) 6-10 years, 7 (9%), 11-15 years, 7(9%) 16-20 years, 5(6%), 21-25 years, and 1 (1%), 26-30 years respectively. One each had professional experience between 31-35 years, 41-45 years and 46-50+ years respectively (Table 3).

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Respondent's Professional Experience

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	40	49%
6-10	15	19%
11-15	7	9%
16-20	7	9%
21-25	5	6%
26-30	1	1%
31-35	1	1%
36-40	3	4%
41-45	1	1%
46-50+	1	1%
Total	81	100.0

Qualification of the Respondents

Frequency distribution of respondents' academic qualification presented in table 4 shows that thirty seven (45.6%) faculty members had M. Phil and Nineteen (23.4%) PhD degree. Sixteen (20%) were holding Master degrees. One each faculty members had a B. Designing, MBA and B.F.A. degrees respectively. Whereas three (3.7%) were holding Master degrees in Fine Arts and Sciences respectively (Table 3).

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Respondent's Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
B. Des.	1	1.2%
B.F.A	1	1.2%
M.A.	16	20.0%
M.F.A	3	3.7%
M.Sc.	3	3.7%
M.B.A	1	1.2%
M. Phil.	37	45.6%
PhD	19	23.4%
Total	81	100.0

Designation of the Respondents

Frequency distribution of the respondents' designation shows in table.5 that a significant number of teaches were lecturers, 52(64.2%). Four (4.9%) were Chairmen, Five (6.2%) Professors, Four (4.9%) Associate Professors and Fifteen (18.6%) Assistant Professors, Only one faculty member was on visiting basis (Table 4).

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Designation

Designation	Frequency	Percent
Chairmen	4	4.9%
Professors	5	6.2%
Associate Professors	4	4.9%
Assistant Professors	15	18.6%
Lecturers	52	64.2%
Visiting Teacher	1	1.2%
Total	81	100.0

Acquisition of Information for Educational and Research Needs

Respondents were asked to indicate the sources via which they acquire the needed information for their educational and research purposes. Most of the respondents mentioned Internet search engines (mean=4.38) followed by departmental libraries' catalogues (mean=4.05), Discussion with colleagues (mean=3.91), Dictionaries (mean=3.90), Personal Collection (mean=3.84), Journals and Periodicals (mean=3.81), Review Articles (mean=3.63), Media, T.V. Radio, Newspapers (mean=3.55) and Encyclopedia (mean=3.54) via which they acquired the needed information respectively. Respondents also mentioned Online databases (mean=3.47), Conference Seminars and Workshops (mean=3.40), and Online Publishers Catalogues and Flyers (mean=3.32) for acquiring information for research and educational purposes (Table 5).

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics of Respondent's Opinions about Obtaining Information for Fulfilling their Education and Research Needs

Option	Mean	Median	Mode
Internet search engines	4.38	5.00	5
Department library catalogue	4.05	4.00	5
Books on related subjects	4.05	4.00	4
Discussion with colleagues	3.91	4.00	4
Dictionaries	3.90	4.00	5
Personal collection	3.84	4.00	4
Journals & periodicals	3.81	4.00	4
Review articles	3.63	4.00	4
Media: TV, Radio, Newspapers	3.55	3.50	3
Encyclopedias,	3.54	4.00	4
Online databases	3.47	4.00	4
Conferences, seminars and workshops	3.40	3.00	4
Online publisher catalogues & flyers	3.32	3.00	3
Citations	3.31	3.00	4
Main library catalogue	3.27	3.00	3
Abstracts	3.23	3.00	3
Websites of book stores	3.21	3.00	4
Annual reports	2.99	3.00	3
Ask the librarian	2.97	3.00	3
Through purchase	2.94	3.00	3

Note: 5= Always, 4= Frequently, 3= Sometimes, 2= Seldom, 1= Never

Frequency of Time Spent by the Respondent's on Different Places

The respondents were asked to mention the time being spent by them in different places for study and reading purposes i.e. home, departmental library, central library, public library and office or staff room. According to the results, a majority 79% spend their time in Departmental Library for study purposes followed by Central Library (67%), Public Library (57%), Office Staff Room (54%) and Home (43%) respectively. The table is given for further details (Table 6).

Table 6
Descriptive Statistics of Responses about Time Spent per week in Different Study places

Convention Places	1-5 hrs	6-10 hrs	11-15 hrs	More than Fifteen	No Response
Home	35(43.2%)	26(32.1%)	9(11.1%)	7(8.6%)	4(4.9%)
Departmental library	64(79%)	7(8.6%)	3(3.7%)	-	7(8.6%)
Central library	54(66.7%)	5(6.2%)	1(1.2%)	-	21(25.9%)
Public library	46(56.8%)	1(1.2%)	-	-	34(42.0%)
Office or staff room	44(54.3%)	23(28.4%)	5(6.2%)	4(4.9%)	5(6.2%)

Use of Internet by the Respondents

Internet has a significance and important factor in everybody's life. It provides an opportunity to introduce a huge bulk of important information to the users. Faculty members of Social Sciences were asked whether they use the internet in their search for information or not. Ninety three percent of the faculty members 76(93.8%) were using internet in their search for information. Only 2(2.5%) faculty members opted the No option and do not use the internet. Three (3.7%) of the respondents did not give their answers (Table 17). Most of the faculty members were using it for Education (mean=4.57), Research (mean=4.54) and obtaining up to date Information (mean= 4.48). Some of them also mentioned it for getting General Information (mean=3.54), News (mean=3.48), and Entertainment (mean=3.34) (Table 7).

Table 7
Frequency Distribution of Respondent's Internet Usage

Internet Usage	Frequency	Percent
Yes	76	93.8%
No	2	2.5%
Missing	3	3.7%
Total	81	100.0

Table 8
Descriptive Statistics of Respondent's Opinions about the Purpose of Information Seeking on Internet

Purposes of information seeking on internet	Mean	Median	Mode
For education	4.57	5.00	5

For research	4.54	5.00	5
For up to data information	4.48	5.00	5
For general information	3.54	4.00	3
For news	3.48	4.00	4
For internet surfing	3.39	3.00	3
For entertainment	3.34	3.00	3
For health information	2.92	3.00	3
For sports	2.73	3.00	3

Note: 5= Always, 4= Frequently, 3= Sometimes, 2= Seldom, 1= Never

Search Engines Used for Information Seeking

Information about search engines was also asked from the respondents. In response to it majority of the respondents mentioned Google (mean=2.74) as the most preferred search engine for searching the required information followed by Yahoo (Table 9).

Table 9
Frequency Distribution of Respondent's Search Engines

Search Engines	Mean	Median	Mode
Google	2.74	3.00	3
Yahoo	2.21	2.00	3
MSN	1.62	1.00	1
Info	1.40	1.00	1
Alta Vista	1.29	1.00	1
Seek	1.25	1.00	1
Excite	1.18	1.00	1
Snake	1.16	1.00	1
Kapok	1.10	1.00	1

Note= 3= Daily, 2= Weekly, 1=Rarely

Databases Used for Information Seeking

Respondents were also inquired about the databases they access for their required information. Majority of them frequently use Science Direct (mean=3.53), J. Store (mean=3.41) and Emeralds (mean= 3.26) respectively (Table 10).

Table 10
Frequency Distribution of Respondent's Databases Used for Information Seeking

Databases	Mean	Median	Mode
Science Direct	3.53	4.00	5
J. Store	3.41	4.00	5
Emerald	3.26	4.00	4

Note: 5= Always, 4= Frequently, 3= Sometimes, 2= Seldom, 1= Never

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Information technology has revolutionized the whole world. It has affected all the disciplines of the society. The entire world has become a global village because of electronic technology. Particularly Internet has revolutionized the whole world. This thing has also affected the behavior of social scientists about seeking information. Information has significance importance for social scientist. Statistics show that 94% of the respondents use internet regularly. They consistently use different search engines for seeking their information. It shows that internet is the biggest source of providing the current information. Data regarding the use of databases show that they were using Science Direct, Emerald and J. Store for their information requirements. They were found to be using Google, Yahoo and MSN for different academic and research needs. It is encouraging to note that they have been using it in their different purposes and have a good impact on their research and academic performance.

The research study has the following findings such as:

- Internet has become a significance importance for the researchers and social scientists. It has provided the maximum facilities to provide information to their users. It has played a major role to spread knowledge and updating information.
- The users of the library mostly use the internet for education purposes, research work and updating knowledge. Internet has changed the concept of a library and the users have no relied only library. They have also many other sources of information.
- Google, Yahoo and MSN are their favorite search engines of the social scientists.
- Majority of the respondents' don't use the Excite, Snake, Kapok and Alta vista as search engines.
- Science Direct is the most favorite data base of the social scientists. They mostly use it to seek their relevant information.
- Internet facility is not provided mostly in the departmental libraries of Social Sciences at Bahauddin Zakariya, Multan.
- Non-books materials such as digitized materials are not available in the departmental libraries of Social Sciences.
- Audio visual materials are not available in the departmental libraries of Social Sciences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All the departmental libraries of Social Sciences should be inter-connected with online internet and inter-loan library loan services should be started.
- Central library should be equipped with current materials and various types of technical tools should be provided on every departmental library of Social Sciences.
- All the departmental libraries should be connected with online system of the Central Library at Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan so that resource sharing system should be maintained and users of the Social Sciences may gain advantage from different materials provided by the central library of university.

- Professional staff should be recruited in the departmental libraries of Social Sciences because most of the departmental libraries are run by non-qualified staff.
- Internet service, reference service, abstracting and indexing services should be provided by the departmental libraries of the faculty of Social Sciences.
- All the departmental libraries of Social Sciences should be digitized and inter-connected with online system of Central Library of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan, HEC Digital library and international reputed digital libraries.
- The Faculty of Social Sciences should conduct workshops about latest technology regularly. It should be arranged in the Central Library of Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan.
- Information literacy program should be arranged in every departmental library of Social Sciences.
- Professional staff should be given technical training of all the above services and about latest technology.
- All the departmental libraries of Social Sciences should be automated and digitized.
- Special workshops about information technology should be arranged for the faculty members. Latest awareness about information technology, search engines and reputed data bases should be given to the users of the library.
- The problem of electricity load shedding should be solved at first priority bases. If possible generator should be provided to every departmental library of Social Sciences.

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