Information seeking pattern at ICFAI business school library, Bangalore: A user study

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ABSTRACT

States the importance of library and information service on the basis of information needs of the users. User study and information seeking behaviour is defined, ICFAI Business School, Bangalore (IBSB) Library and Information Center (LIC) services are mentioned. Analyses the purpose of visit to the library, adequacy of library collection, methodology adopted by the users to locate the required information, online databases which they used frequently, users' satisfaction with the library services and working hours of the library, and the obstacles while seeking their required information in the LIC at IBS Bangalore campus. Finally highlights the findings and suggestions and concludes urging to improve the library and information services in the LIC under study.

INTRODUCTION

The structural components of any library consist of books, staff, and the readers. The basic objective of any library and information centre is to provide optimum library and information service to its users and the user satisfaction. Libraries and information centers are the repositories of books as well as depositories of information and knowledge. It is needless to emphasis that information is indispensable for any human activity aiming at social progress. Therefore, any library and information services should be based on the information needs of the users.

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In order to determine the information needs or users' requirements, it is needed to conduct systematically the user studies and information seeking pattern. User study is the one, which mainly focuses on 'users' to measure their information needs, their use behavior and use pattern. User study is the means for systematic examinations of the system and services provided by LIC. The user study is directly linked with the effectiveness of library and information services as they aim at satisfaction of users' needs. It implies a willingness to relate product or system design to the perceived needs of those for whom the product or system design is intended. This urges to conduct information seeking behavior studies so as to collect, organize and disseminate what is needed or required by the users. Information seeking behavior is concerned with who needs and what kind of information and for what purposes. It is also concerned how information is found, evaluated and used.

According to Wilson "Information seeking behavior is those activities a person may engage in when identifying his or her own needs for information searching for such information in any

way and using or transferring that information"[1]. However, in the words of Girja Kumar "Information seeking behavior is mainly concerned with who needs what kind of information for what reason; how information is found, evaluated and used"[2]. Hence, Information seeking behavior and user studies form the basis for building library collection and planning services in any library and information centers.

ICFAI BUSINESS SCHOOLS

IBS offers high-quality programs in different areas of management to a wide cross-section of students, executives and professionals across India. It was established in the year 1995 and within the short span of time IBS has grown impressively. ICFAI has already achieved widespread recognition from industry, academic circles, and professional bodies. IBS has also been consistently ranked among the top B-Schools in the country in the annual B-School surveys conducted by independent research agencies.

The IBS Bangalore campus is a leading name in Management education in the region. The two-year full-time program at the campus is designed to expose the students to concepts, policies and techniques for the effective and efficient management of global organizations. There are 540 students in the first year and 460 in the final year, totaling 1000 students perusing their Management studies.

IBS LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

All the IBS campuses have well established libraries and information centers. They are well equipped with latest collection and information resources on business and management related subjects. Professionally qualified and experienced library professionals manage them. The IBS Bangalore campus library and information centers provide the following services. They are:

· Library webOPAC and central webOPAC facility.

· Barcode-based computerized circulation system.

· Dspace based digital library facility.

· Online Journal Database search facility.

· Network based CD-ROM search facility

· Interlibrary loan and document delivery services.

· Reference service and General assistance facility.

· Xeroxing facility.

· User education program – Orientation program.

Besides the above services, the library also provides SDI and CAS services to users.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to explore information seeking behavior of users of ICFAI Business School, Bangalore and they are:

1. To find out the awareness and use of library resources by the students;

2. To find out the type of information sources used by the students;

3. To ascertain users opinion regarding usefulness and adequacy of information sources and services;

4. To identify the methods that the readers of the library adopt to locate the required information sources;

5. To identify the problems faced by the users in using the library; and

6. To help the administrator of the library in preparing an enrichment program for better use of the library.

METHODOLOGY

This study used questionnaire-based survey method and supplemented by informal discussion with the users. A sample of 324(60%) students from the first year and 276 (60%) from the second year was selected for distributing questionnaire. 422 students were responded to the questionnaire which comes to 70%. The collected data were analyzed, classified, and tabulated by employing statistical methods.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1: Purpose of Visit to the Library

S.No.	Purpose of Library Visit	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Borrow Books	304	72.04%
2	Consult Periodicals	232	54.97%
3	Consult Reference Documents	253	59.95%
4	Reading News Papers	320	75.82%

Purpose of Visit to the Library

The study indicates that 72.04% of the users visit the library to borrow books, 75.82% visit the library to browse newspapers and 68.9% of the users visit to refer project reports as indicated in table 1.

Adequacy of Library Collection

An important function of B-School library is to cater the information needs of users. The users need highly specialized and advanced material on subject of their specialization which consists of variety of information sources like books, periodicals, reports, e-resources and reference sources like encyclopedias, dictionaries etc.

It was therefore considered appropriate to know whether the existing collection of IBS, Bangalore library is adequate enough to meet the information requirements of its reader in their academic, research and development work. The details furnished in table 2 shows that the opinion expressed by the majority of students (55.92%) is that the collection of books was adequate to meet their information needs; whereas 37.44% of the students have the opinion that the periodical collection was only partially adequate. Hence the

Table 2: Adequacy of Library Collection

S.No.	Type of Source	Adequate	Partial Adequate	Inadequate	Not Responded
1	Text Books	236 (55.92%)	110 (26.06%)	76 (18%)	-
2	Periodicals	107 (25.35%)	158 (37.44%)	98 (23.22%)	59 (13.98%)
3	Annual Reports	128 (30.33%)	190 (45.02%)	74 (17.53%)	30 (7.10%)
4	Study Materials	101 (23.93%)	176 (41.70%)	126 (29.85%)	19 (4.50%)
5	Online Databases	253 (59.95%)	126 (29.85%)	30 (7.10%)	13 (3.08%)
6	Newspapers	326 (77.25%)	74 (17.53%)	15 (3.55%)	7 (1.65%)

periodical collection calls the attention of authorities. Similarly the collection of annual reports and study materials were also only partially adequate to fulfill the needs of the users. The number of newspapers and also the reference documents were reported to be adequate by the majority of respondents.

Methods used in locating the needed documents

The information needs may vary among users depending upon their nature of work. The study of users approach to locate needed documents/ information helps to improve the information services. Table 3 attempts to identify the methods used by the users in locating the needed documents. It shows that the students locate needed documents by seeking assistance from library staff (67.77%), by consulting Web-Opac

Table 3: Methods Used in Locating the Information

S.No.	Methods	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Assistance of Library Staff	286	67.77%
2	Consulting WEB-OPAC	215	50.94%
3	Guidance of teachers	51	12.08%
4	Help of Friends	151	35.78%
5	Self	177	41.94%

(50.94%) and their own (41.94%). The above analysis reveals that the assistance of library staff and Web-Opac were the primary means to locate the needed documents. Though the respondents

have other approaches such as help from friends, teachers were not found to be popular among them.

Online Databases Most Used by the Users

Table 4: Online Databases Most Used by the Users

S.No.	Data Bases	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	EBSCO host	329	77.96%
2	Emerald	291	68.95%
3	Market Line	173	40.99%
4	Cabell's online	160	37.91%
5	WDI	194	45.97%
6	Reuters Business Insight	219	51.89%
7	CMIE	274	64.92%
8	Cygnus	278	65.87%

The users were asked to indicate the online databases that they are using frequently to get the required information. Table 4 shows that 77.96% of the users were using EBSCO host database and 68.95% were preferring Emerald, while 65.87% of the users were using Cygnus database to get the right information.

Users' Satisfaction with Library Services

The prime objective of collection, storage, and organization of information in the library is to facilitate the academic community to exploit and harness fully the resources of the library. To this end, the library invites the reader, guides him and provides with literature in a satisfactory manner. Effective library services make a library more functional to deliver the right information at the right time in the right manner to the right user. The modern libraries require to use modern technologies to provide information services.

As evident from the table 5, the majority of students were of the opinion that circulation, general assistance and reference services were satisfactory to meet their needs. The majority of respondents found that current awareness service and reprographic services were not completely

Table 5: Users' Satisfaction with the Library Services

S.No.	Library & Information Services	Satisfactory	Partial Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Not responded
1	Reference services	282 (66.82%)	72 (17.06%)	49 (11.61%)	19 (4.50%)
2	General assistance service	295 (69.90%)	68 (16.11%)	46 (10.90%)	13 (3.08%)
3	Circulation Services	341 (80.80%)	46 (10.90%)	30 (7.10%)	5 (1.18%)
4	Current Awareness Services	122 (28.90%)	198 (46.91%)	58 (13.74%)	44 (10.42%)
5	Online database search service	219 (51.89%)	118 (27.96%)	72 (17.06%)	13 (3.08%)
5	Reprographic Services	135 (31.99%)	185 (43.83%)	97 (22.98%)	5 (1.18%)

satisfactory. The significant number of respondents was replied that the online database search facility in library is not satisfactory. Hence, it is suggested that the library should have more computer terminals within the library premises with internet connectivity.

Users' Satisfaction with the Working Hours of the Library

IBS B library is kept open for 13 hours per day that is from 8am to 9pm.The respondents were asked to give their opinion on the satisfaction or

Table 6: Users' Satisfaction with the Working Hours of the Library

S. No.	Working Hours	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	245	58.05%
2	No	152	36.01%
3	Not Responded	25	5.92%

otherwise of the existing working hours. Table 6 below shows that 58.05% of respondents indicated that they were completely satisfied with the present timings. However, a significant percentage i.e. 36.01% of the respondents were not satisfied with the present working hours of the Library.

Problems in Seeking Information

It is clear from the data furnished in table 7

Table 7: Problems Faced by the Users

S.No.	Problems	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Material is not available	89	21.09%
2	Incomplete information/ materials	119	28.19%
3	Information scattered in too many sources	236	55.92%
4	Outdated Information	89	21.09%
5	Lack of knowledge in using the library	80	18.95%
6	Information is too vast	215	50.95%
7	Library staff is not co-operative	38	9%
8	Do not know how to use OPAC	118	27.96%

that the large number of respondents expressed that scattering of information in many sources (55.92%) and incomplete information/material (28.19%) were the major hindrance while seeking

information. Unfortunately, significant percentage of respondents that is 27.96% stated that, they do not have the knowledge of using

Table 8: Need of User Education Programs

S.No.	User Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Needed	304	72.03%
2	Not Needed	43	10.18%
3	Not Responded	75	17.77%

Web-Opac facility.

Need of User Education Programs

Table 8 demonstrates that the most of the respondents (72.03%) clearly stated to have proper user education program to know about the sources and services available in the library.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study 'Information seeking behavior of users of ICFAI Business School, Bangalore has revealed that the majority i.e., 72.04% of the users visit library to borrow books and 75.82% to browse newspapers. Regarding the adequacy of library collection, 55.92% of respondents feel that the textbook collection is adequate, 26.06% as partial adequate and 18% as inadequate. Significant percentages of the users have suggested for library to build up the reference collection. The majority of users (59.95%) responded that the Online Journal databases are adequate. Further, it is interesting to note that most of the users prefer both printed as well as non-printed sources of information. Hence, it is suggested that the LIC should stock more text books, periodicals collection and reference collection. Besides, the library must build up E-resources to satisfy the

information needs of the users under study.

The study clearly shows that 67.77% of respondents were locating their required information with the assistance of library staff and 50.94% by consulting Web-opac. The study further reveals that 77.96% of users prefer EBSCO host database and 68.95% depend on Emerald database for their required information and that the circulation service, reference service and general assistance service are being provided very satisfactory. However, the online database search facility in library and reprographic services are not satisfactory. Regarding working hours of the library, 58.05% of the respondents like to extend the present library timings.

However, the majority that is 55.92% of the respondents finds the scattering of information in different sources and 50.95% of users indicated that information is too vast as the obstacle or difficulty in seeking their required information. Surprisingly 27.94% of respondents have stated that they don't know to make use of Web-opac facility. Though the library provides orientation program periodically, it is interesting to note that 72.03% of the respondents are of the opinion that the library should conduct proper orientation programs and further help and assist readers to improve their skills in searching the documents/ information.

Therefore, it is suggested that the LIC should have more computer terminals within the library to make use of the online database search facility and also the library have to conduct user education program, library orientation and information literacy programs more frequently. The users must be also provided with extensive and intensive SDI and CAS services both in anticipation and on demand to satisfy the information needs of ICFAI Business School library users.

CONCLUSION

Using information is a key issue in the information age. The real challenge of our time is not producing information or storing information, but getting people to use information and its accessibility. The successful operation of any library depends to a large extent on the choice of library collections, its services and the user satisfaction. The choice of the collection should meet the needs and requirements of the end users. Consequently, librarians must be aware about how the users seek information.

Therefore, whatever that is selected, stored and maintained must be used to the maximum and made accessible to the users. The IBS Bangalore Library and Information Center though strives to serve its readers in the best ways possible however need to take the above suggestions seriously in view of the findings. The library should actively participate in the library consortia and networking to give optimum library and information services and satisfy the ever increasing and complex needs of their readers in this cutting edge of competitive 21st century.

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