

Dependency on e-resources social science faculty Universities in Iran

Mohamad Bagher Negahbari*

V.G. Talawar**

ABSTRACT

The present study is aimed at assessment of e-resources dependency by Iranian social science faculty members. A total of 232 faculty members from various universities from Iran was randomly selected. A questionnaire measuring dependency on various e-resources: e-books, e-journals, e-tutorials, online databases, CD-ROM databases and e-reports was prepared by the investigator and administered to the sample selected. Statistical methods like descriptive statistics and chi-square tests were employed to verify the hypotheses. Results revealed that Iranian faculty members were more dependent on all the e-resources except for e books selected for the study. It was also observed that Iranian faculty members were more dependent on e-journals, followed by Online data bases, e tutorials and least on e-reports. The reasons for dependency on various e-resources have been discussed.

Keywords: Electronic resources, e-books, e-journals, e-tutorials, CD-Rom databases, Online databases, e-report.

INTRODUCTION

Electronic information resources, in reality have become the backbone of many academic organizations. The awareness and use of electronic information sources by faculty members depends mainly on skills of each individual to locate discrete knowledge elements. Information explosion has increased in the amount of electronic information sources available on the web. Electronic information resources help to expand access, increase usability and effectiveness and establish new ways for individuals to use information to be more productive in their endeavors. Awareness of electronic resources may aid the users in keeping

abreast with current developments in their respective subject fields, in contrast with print media. The use of electronic information resources is necessary for users mainly because the electronic resources provide better, faster and easy access to information than information accessed through print media. Electronic information resources can be relied upon for timely information which upholds the quote: right information to right user at right time.

Numerous studies have been undertaken to explore the Electronic Information sources: Lee (2002) presents a handbook on building electronic resource collections, beginning with a definition of electronic databases and the general principles of collection development and discusses the purchase and use of e-books and e-journals, as well as methods of user access. The author highlights the collection development activities of assessing, acquiring, and delivering electronic databases from initial appraisal through acquisition, budgeting, installation, marketing, and evaluation. Linda Ashcroft and Chris Watts (2004) state that there are similar issues in the take-up of

Author's Affiliations: *Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information science, University of Mysore, Mysore, India., E-mail:negahban2003@yahoo.com; **Professor, Department of Library & Information science, University of Mysore, Mysore, India., e-mail:muvgt@yahoo.co.in

Reprints Request: Mohamad Bagher Negahban, Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information science, University of Mysore, Mysore, India., e-mail:negahban2003@yahoo.com

(Received on 26.8.09, accepted on 10.10.09)

e-books to those regarding the take-up of other electronic resources, such as e-journals. These include changes in professional and management skills, such as collection development, marketing and evaluation, user education, technological skills and communication skills. Bayugo and Agbeko (2007) report on a survey of convenient access to, and use of, electronic databases (CD-ROM and online) including full text journals and their effect on information seeking behavior of health sciences faculty at the College of Health Sciences of the University of Ghana Medical School. The survey documented preferences between print and electronic resource use, and the specific databases and full text journals that faculty have particularly found useful. The results showed faculty lack of awareness and use of the two most resourceful full text journal databases available at the library (HINARI and PERI), hence they resorted to PUBMED as their source of access to full text articles. They conclude that most faculties now prefer using electronic access to information (CD-ROM/online) than traditional print indexes and abstracts which include recommendations for more functional and effective use of these electronic databases and full text journals that are available at the library.

Dugdale (2001) emphasizes the Internet contradiction facing these in higher education who are attempting to create equality of access to information, where nevertheless new aspects of inequality may be created. This may occur even where all members theoretically possess equal access to the same material. Fisher (1998), briefly reviews information's chequered history and critically analyzes electronic information sources with particular reference to social science CD-ROMs and the Internet. The content of such databases is nothing like as geographically and culturally diverse as we are led to believe. This unequal and discriminatory supply of information, aided and abetted by increasing commoditization, is both the product of, and an influence on, the quality of academic research and teaching, information professionals can take steps to mitigate information inequality. Stabler (1991), explains end users of CD-ROM often need

assistance in data base content, search protocols, and use of microcomputers. There is a necessity for a good training program which will develop a positive attitude, competency of staff, and consistency of service. He describes a model training program developed by New Mexico State University Library. By using a team approach of a subject specialist and the CD-ROM Coordinator, the staff can be trained quickly and efficiently. The training emphasizes data base content, software comparison and application, and basic knowledge of microcomputers.

From the preceding studies it is clear that the information on dependency on e-resources was scanty and the researcher planned to conduct a survey to understand the level of dependency on various e-resources by social science faculty members in Iran. Hence the study attempts to find answer to the question about the specific dependency on electronic information sources among the Social science faculty members in Iran.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the use/dependency of different types of Electronic sources by Iranian social science faculty members.
2. To understand the preferences of e-resources by Iranian social science faculty members.

HYPOTHESIS

Iranian social science faculty members differ significantly in their dependency of e-resources: e-books, e-journals, e-tutorials, CD-Rom databases, Online databases, e-report.

PROCEDURE

The study covered a total of 232 social science faculty members from various universities (6) of Iran. The universities selected were Ran University, Shiraz University, Ahvaz University, Karman University Esfahan University, Tehran University and Mashhad University. The questionnaire method was used to elicit data on the dependency on various e-resources by the faculty

members in Iran. A set of questions were formulated keeping in view, the need and objectives of the study. The questionnaires were personally distributed to 232 members who were selected randomly. Further, statistical methods like chi-square tests and descriptive statistics were

employed using SPSS for Windows (version 16.0).Table.1

Frequency and percent values for dependency on various e-resources by Iranian social science faculty members and results of chi-square tests.

Responses		E-resources					
		E-books	E-journals	E-tutorials	Online database	CD ROM database	E-reports
No dependency	F	72	4	19	10	22	51
	%	31.0	1.7	8.2	4.3	9.5	22.0
Depend rarely	F	71	25	39	55	62	48
	%	30.6	10.8	16.8	23.7	26.7	20.7
Depend occasionally	F	54	38	56	43	46	62
	%	23.3	16.4	24.1	18.5	19.8	26.7
Depend frequently	F	4	88	85	74	68	59
	%	1.7	37.9	36.6	31.9	29.3	25.4
Depend highly	F	31	77	33	50	34	12
	%	13.4	33.2	14.2	21.6	14.7	5.2
Total	F	232	232	232	232	232	232
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Chi-square		72.27	107.61	55.33	47.10	31.45	34.68
P value		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Mean dependency		2.40	3.90	3.32	3.43	3.13	2.71

F-Frequency; %-Percent

RESULTS

Table 1 presents frequency and percent values for dependency on various e-resources by Iranian social science faculty members. The table also presents results of chi-square tests and descriptive statistics. Following paragraphs highlight the analysis of results in brief.

a. E-books: In the case of dependency on e-books it was found that 13.4% of the sample depended highly, 1.7% depended frequently,

23.3% depended occasionally, 30.6% depended rarely and remaining 31.0% did not depend on e-resources. Chi-square test revealed a significant difference between groups of responses ($\chi^2=72.27$; $P=.000$). The mean dependency score was found to be 2.40.

b. E-journals: 33.2% of the sample depended highly on e-journals, 37.9% depended frequently, 16.4% depended occasionally, 10.8% depended rarely and remaining 1.7% did not depend on e-journals. Between these

responses a significant difference was observed, where Chi-square value of 107.61 was found to be significant ($P=.000$). The mean dependency score was found to be 3.90.

- c. **E-tutorials:** When dependency in the case of e-tutorials was verified, it was found that 14.2% of the sample depended highly, 36.6% depended frequently, 24.1% depended occasionally, 16.8% depended rarely and remaining 8.2% did not depend on e resources. Chi-square test revealed a significant difference between groups of responses ($X^2=55.33$; $P=.000$). The mean dependency score for e-tutorials was found to be 3.32.
- d. **Online databases:** 21.6% of the sample depended highly on online databases, 31.9% depended frequently, 18.5% depended occasionally, 23.7% depended rarely and remaining 4.3% did not depend. Between these responses a significant difference was observed, where Chi-square value of 47.10 was found to be significant ($P=.000$). The mean dependency score was found to be 3.43.
- e. **CD-Rom databases:** When dependency in the case of CD-ROM databases was verified, it was found that 14.7% of the sample depended highly on online databases, 29.3% depended frequently, 19.8% depended occasionally, 26.7% depended rarely and remaining 9.5% did not depend. Between these responses a significant difference was observed, where Chi-square value of 31.45 was found to be significant ($P=.000$). The mean dependency score was found to be 3.13.
- f. **E-reports:** 5.2% of the sample depended highly on online databases, 25.4% depended frequently, 26.7% depended occasionally, 20.7% depended rarely and remaining 22.0% did not depend. Between these responses a significant difference was observed, where Chi-square value of 34.68 was found to be significant ($P=.000$). The mean dependency score was found to be 2.71.

On the whole, we see that Iranian faculty members were dependent high on all the e

resources selected except for e-reports. It was found that Iranian faculty members were more dependent on e-journals, followed by e-books, and Online databases and less dependent on e reports.

DISCUSSION

Main findings of the present study are:

- Iranian faculty members were more dependent on all the e-resources selected for the study except for e-books.
- It was observed that Iranian faculty members were more dependent on e-journals, followed by online databases, e-tutorials and least on e-reports.

All the faculty members in the Iranian universities have been provided computers and net facilities. Further, the faculty members have been given net connections freely to their residences too through the universities. Some of the campuses are WI-FI enabled. So the access to e-resources is quite easy, hence there could be more dependency.

It was found that Iranian social science faculty members were highly dependent on e-journals and e-books. The reason could be that most of the faculty in Iran in higher education is trying to get their doctoral and post doctoral degrees. Some of them are trying to pursue their doctoral and post doctoral degrees in other countries. This brings more dependency on e-journals and e-books. The Iranian universities have special reward systems for those who publish articles/books on International level. This factor also motivates the faculty members to be more dependent on e-resources like journals and books.

REFERENCES

- Davis, Philip M. 2002. Patterns in Electronic Journal Usage: Challeng ing the Composition of Geographic Consortia. *College and Research Libraries* 63(6): 484-497.
- DeGroote, Sandra L. and Josephine L. Dorsch. 2003. Measuring Use Patterns of Online Journals and Databases. *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 91(2): 231-240.

3. Dugdale, C. 2001. Equality in an electronic environment. *ELVIRA 4: Proceedings of E-book technology on academic libraries. Information technology and libraries* 20(2):104-113.
4. EPIC: Online Use & Cost Evaluation Program. 2001. The Use of Electronic Resources Among Undergraduate and Graduate Students. Available at <http://www.epic.columbia.edu/eval/find03.html>.
5. Fisher, D.1998. Information technology and inequality in higher education. *Education libraries journal*. 37(3): 21-32.
6. Guthrie, Kevin M. 2001. What Do Faculty Think of Electronic Resources? ALA Annual Conference Participants' Meeting Available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/faculty.survey.ppt>
7. MacDonald, Brad and Robert Dunkelberger. 2000. Full-text Database Dependency: An Emerging Trend Among Undergraduate Library Users? *Research Strategies* 16(4): 301-307.
8. Majid, Shaheen and Alfia Faniyevna Abazova. 1999. Computer Literacy and Use of Electronic Information Sources by Academics: A Case Study of International Islamic University Malaysia. *Asian Libraries* (4): 100-111.
9. Mercer, Linda S. 2000. Measuring the Use and Value of Electronic Journals and Books. *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship* 25(Winter). Available at <http://www.library.ucsb.edu/istl/00-winter/article1.html>.
10. Park, Soyeon. 2000. Usability, User Preferences, Effectiveness, and User Behaviors When Searching Individual and Integrated Full-Text Databases: Implications for Digital Libraries. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 51(4): 456-468.
11. Tenopir, Carol and Eleanor Read. 2000. Patterns of Database Use in Academic Libraries. *College & Research Libraries* 61(3): 234-246.
12. Worlock, Kate. 2002. Electronic Journals: User Realities – The Truth About Content Usage Among the STM Community. *Learned Publishing* 15(3): 223-226.