

## CRITICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEMAND FOR INFORMATION RESOURCES AMONG UNIVERSITY LIBRARY USERS IN SOUTH TAMILNADU

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### ABSTRACT

The study examines the economics of demanding for information resource, with emphasis on the critical factors affecting the demand for information resources among university library users in 5 out of the 7 Government universities that were fully operational in South Tamil Nadu during the study period. The study adopted descriptive survey and used quantitative methodology to collect data, via the use of questionnaire from 376 registered users that were randomly sampled for the study. Based on a

response rate of 75.2%, the study revealed that both library users and their libraries are responsible for the observed critical factors affecting demand for information resources, among the university libraries in South Tamil Nadu. While users were not following the appropriate technique for demanding information resources, it was discovered that university libraries were not good enough in providing current and up to date information resources to their users. The study shows that users of university libraries in South Tamil Nadu are fairly satisfied with information resources they demand because of the poor articulation of their information needs and their inability of using catalogue to demand for information resources. Other issues critically affecting demand for information resources include users' inability of using boolean search techniques, outdated or non-current resources as well as inadequate computer and other information technology hardware for accessing information resources.

### KEYWORDS:

Demand, Information Resources, Theory of Demand, University Libraries, Factors affecting demand for information resources.

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Universities are established for the purposes of teaching, learning, research and community services. All over the world universities strive for better ranking in terms of academic excellence, it is for this reason that they establish certain facilities to enrich tertiary education; the university library is the most crucial facility that vitalizes every excellence that a university strives for. The university library enables a university to properly develop, impart and conserve knowledge. Considering the importance of university

libraries Ifidon (1997) remarks that, “university libraries are the nerve wire that connects all that the university education is set up to achieve”. By their nature, university libraries are established to select, acquire, process and organize an array of pertinent books and other information resources capable of satisfying the demand for information resources by its user community.

There is a positive correlation between university libraries and information resources. If the library is deficient of relevant information resources, it goes on to tell that such a university library is not working in line with those purposes for which it was established. Akintunde (2006) remarked that; the information resources that a library contains continue to hold a place in the ranking of higher education worldwide. It has remained the strength of the best traditions in academics; it is this tradition that marked out Oxford University, Cambridge University, Harvard University, University of Illinois, University of Ibadan as well as the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) as centers of academic excellence. Ogunrombi (2004) highlighted that there is a correlation between quality of information resources and the quality of education (research and scholarship) because no educational system would be greater than the quality of its teachers. He argues that the quality of education and research depends on the quality of information sources.

Evidence from the literature indicates that both library and user could be blamed for information resource demand failure. This study is conducted to identify what are those factors that hinder the successful demand for information resources among university library users in South Tamil Nadu.

**The specific objectives of the study are as follows;**

1. To identify the information resources demanded by users in the Government university libraries in South Tamil Nadu.
2. To find out the purpose of demanding for information resources among users in the Government university libraries in South Tamil Nadu.
3. To determine the factors affecting the demand for information resources among university library users in South Tamil Nadu.
4. To ascertain the level of users’ satisfaction with information resources demanded from university libraries in South Tamil Nadu.

**2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Su (2005) attempted to discuss the concepts, characteristics of users and non users and ways of conducting public library user study. It was stated that better understanding of users and non users would indirectly contribute to the service quality of public libraries. It was also emphasized that some methodologies have to be suggested to have better understanding of the users. Mulla (2007) conducted that one of the major factors that have limited the expansion of internet in the country is the poor infrastructure. The use of internet by the users in post graduates of Mysore University campus the internet is useful to them to satisfy their daily information requirement. Mendhe (2008) said the users are aware of the major internet tool and resources but do not fully use the internet tools and resources related to their research. Lack of orientation/training in the use of internet affect the proper use of internet. Pushpalatha and Mallaiah (2009) conducted a survey of 138 users from the Department of Chemistry, Mangalore University. Oyewusi, Fadekemi Omabola (2009) revealed the use of E-Resources for gaining wide recognition among Nigerians under graduates. To improve the effectiveness of these resources could be alone by providing enough finding for the universities libraries. Pamela (2012) model and test the effects of perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, influence individuals' intentions toward and behaviours associated with technology use. While behavioural outcomes are more likely to be influenced by social and personal control factors in post-acceptance contexts. Munasinghe (2013) analysed among undergraduates

of Sri Lanka in Digital/Online Environment using the models of Information seeking behaviour and technology acceptance. Undergraduates seek more information on line information on digital/online environment. Therefore, traditional universities should provide more online facilities for undergraduates to improve their knowledge and skills.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study of critical factors affecting the demand for information resources was conducted during the year 2013-2015. The study was carried on undergraduate students that are in 5 out of the 7 Government universities that were fully operational in South Tamil Nadu during the study period. The universities studied include; Alagappa University, Bharathidasan University, Madurai Kamaraj University, Mother Teresa Women's University, Manonmaiam Sundaranar University.

The study adopted descriptive survey design and used quantitative methodology to present and analyze data collected. 376 users were selected by using random sampling method. Data for the study was generated using a structured questionnaire. 283 questionnaire were received after duly filled.

Data analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 16.0) while data interpretation was done by using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages and mean. The analysis regarding factors affecting the demand for information resources was done based on the average mean score of 3, which was obtained by averaging the values of the Likert scale between 1-5. To specify whether a factor affecting the demand for information resources mean value  $>3$  signifies an issue affects the demand for information resource while score  $<3$  was considered less important to affect the demand for information resources .

**Table 1 - Response Rate**

<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Number of questionnaires duly returned	283	75.2
Number of questionnaires not returned	93	24.8
Total Number of questionnaires administered	376	100

Table 1 shows the response rate of the study. 376 questionnaires were administered to respondents of the study out of which 283 copies representing 75.2% were duly filled returned and found useful for the study, while 93 representing 24.8% were not returned. The response rate of 75.2% reveals that the study has a relatively high response rate and this is attributed to the time frame used for data collection as well as the pre-test of the questionnaire's reliability before administering it to its intended respondents. Accordingly the response rate would greatly increase the reliability of the result of the study.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.1 RESPONDENTS PERSONAL INFORMATION**

**Table 2: Personal Details of the Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	195	68.9
Female	88	31.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Respondents' Age</b>		
18-27	191	67.5
28-37	63	22.3
38-47	29	10.2
48-57	0	0
58 and above	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Year of the Students</b>		
I	80	28.2
II	83	29.3
III	124	43.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Faculties of Study</b>		
Physics	45	15.9
Chemistry	52	18.4
Mathematics	67	23.7
Tamil	19	6.7
English	15	5.3
Social Sciences	35	12.4
Commerce	12	4.2
Economics	30	10.6
Others	8	2.8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 2, Data regarding gender distribution shows that 195 (68.9%) are male while 88 (31.1%) are female. This implies that there is a gender imbalance among undergraduate users of university libraries in South Tamil Nadu. The figure of male users is twice that of their female counterpart.

The age distribution of the respondents indicates that majority of them are in their youthful age, data shows that users between the age of 18-27 are the majority and they are 191 (67.5%), then followed by 28-37 who are 63 (22.3%) and then those between the ages of 38-47 (10.2%). There were no undergraduate users identified within the ages of 48-57 likewise 58 and above.

With regards the Undergraduate Students year of study, data shows that the respondents fall within all the Students year of the study. Majority are those in III year 124 (43.8%), II year 83 (29.3%) as well as those in I year (28.3%).

The study identified undergraduate users in numerous faculties of study. Majority are from the faculties of Mathematics 67 (23.7%), then followed by those in the faculties of Chemistry 52 (18.4%). Those from the faculty of Physics are relatively many, they are 45 (15.9%) while those from the faculties of social science and Economics are 35 (12.4%) and 30 (10.6%) respectively. The few ones are from the faculties of Commerce 12 (4.8%), English 15 (5.3) and Tamil 19 (6.7%).

**4.2 TYPES OF INFORMATION RESOURCES DEMANDED**

Respondents were asked to indicate the information resources they demand as shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Types of Information Resources Demanded**

S/N	Information Resources	Yes	No
1	Textbooks	229 (81%)	54 (19%)
2	Journals	166 (58.6%)	117 (41.4%)
3	Newspaper	186 (67.7%)	97 (34.3%)
4	Index and abstracts	35 (12.4%)	248 (87.6%)
5	These and dissertation	97 (34.3%)	186 (67.7%)
6 sources demanded	Magazines	128 (45.2%)	155 (54.8%)
	Government publications	32 (11.3%) <sup>(45)</sup>	251 (88.7%)
8	Technical report	17 (6%)	266 (94%)
9	Encyclopedia	174 (61.5%)	109 (38.5%)
10	Manuscript	8 (2.8%)	275 (97.2%)
11	Micro form	-	-
12	Manuals	2 (0.7%)	281 (99.3%)
13	Offline database	173 (61.1%)	110 (38.9%)
14	Online database	173 (61.1%)	110 (38.9%)
15	E-Books	112 (39.6%)	171 (60.4%)
16	E-Journals	97 (34.3%)	186 (65.7%)

Table 3 presents the types of information resources demanded by the respondents in South Tamil Nadu. Data indicates that university library users demand for numerous information resources. Majority stated that they demand for information resources such as textbooks, newspaper, online database, offline database, encyclopedia, journals, magazines, e-books and e-journals.

On the other hand, it was discovered that the least demanded information resources include; manuals, manuscript, technical report, government publication as well as index and abstracts.

**4.3 PURPOSE OF DEMANDING FOR INFORMATION RESOURCE**

The respondents were asked to indicate their purpose of demanding for information resources

**Table 4: Purpose of Demanding for Information Resources**

S/N	Purpose	Yes	No
1	For completing assignment	204 (72.1)	79 (27.9%)
2	For conducting research	72 (25.4%)	211 (74.6%)
3	For preparing notes	97 (34.3)	186 (65.7%)
4	For leisure reading	45 (15.9%)	238 (84.1%)
5	To read for examination	226 (80%)	57 (20%)
6	For borrowing books	36 (12.7%)	247 (87.3%)

Table 4 shows that majority of the respondents demand information resources to read for examinations and to complete assignment. Data shows that 226 (80%) demand for information resources to read for examinations while 204 (72.1%) out of the entire 283 respondent demand for information resources to complete assignments. On the contrary, less than half of the entire 283 respondents of this study indicated that they demand for information resources for conducting research, preparing notes, leisure reading and for borrowing books to use outside the library.

**4.4 FACTORS AFFECTING DEMAND FOR INFORMATION RESOURCES**

Respondents were asked to indicate factors affecting their demand for information resources. The mean score of the response generated was used as a basis for making remark regarding whether a factor affect the demand for information resources or not, while the remark on the last column of further indicates the extent at which respondents are affected by factors affecting demand for information resources.

**Table 5: Factors Affecting Demand for Information Resources**

S/N	Factors	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	Remarks
1	poor articulation or understanding of information needs by users	3.7	<b>A</b>
2	Poor organization of library resource	2.4	<b>D</b>
3	Ineffective/outdated library catalogue	3.3	<b>FA</b>
4	Inability of using catalogue to identify information resources	3.9	<b>A</b>
5	Inadequate collections	2.2	<b>D</b>
6	Irrelevant collections	2.8	<b>FA</b>
7	Inaccessible collections	2.1	<b>D</b>
8	Outdated/non-current collections	3.7	<b>A</b>
9	Absence of library guide	1.9	<b>D</b>
10	Users illiteracy of boolean search techniques	3.9	<b>A</b>
11	Unfriendly staff behavior	2.1	<b>D</b>
12	Inadequate computer and other information technology hard wares	4.2	<b>A</b>
13	Inadequate internet	2.6	<b>FA</b>
14	Inadequate knowledge of using online and offline library information database	3.4	<b>FA</b>

**Key to Remarks:** 0.5-1= Strongly Disagree (SD), 1.5-2 = disagree (D), 2.5-3 = Fairly Agree (FA), 3.5-4 = Agree (A) while 4.5-5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

Data presented in table 5 shows that respondents agree that 5 factors affect their demand for information resources. These include, the poor articulation or understanding of information needs by users, inability of using catalogue to identify information resources, out dated or non-current resources, users’ illiteracy of using (Boolean) search techniques as well as inadequate computer and information technology hard ware for accessing information resources.

Similarly, respondents fairly agree that 4 factors affect their demand for information resources, these include; ineffective/ outdated library catalogue, irrelevant collections, inadequate internet as well as inadequate knowledge of using online and offline information database.

On the contrary, data shows that respondents disagreed that their demand for information resources were affected by four factors. These include; inadequate collections, inaccessibility of resources, unfriendly staff behavior as well as absence of library guide.

#### 4.5 RESPONDENTS SATISFACTION WITH INFORMATION RESOURCES

Respondents were asked to state how satisfied they are with information resources they demand from their libraries

**Table 6: Respondents Satisfaction with Information Resources**

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfied	23	8.2
Satisfied	55	19.4
Fairly	119	42.1
Unsatisfied	77	27.2
Very Unsatisfied	9	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 is on how respondents describe their satisfaction with the information resources demanded from university libraries in South Tamil Nadu. The data presented shows that majority 119 (42.1%) are fairly satisfied with the information resource they demand. Only 23 (8.2%) of the respondents are very satisfied while 55 (19.4%) indicated that they are satisfied. Furthermore, 77 (27.2%) and 9 (3.1) were unsatisfied and very unsatisfied respectively with the information resources demanded from the university libraries in the region under study.

#### 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After five decades of university education in Tamil Nadu, this study highlights that the university libraries in Tamil Nadu especially those in the region understudy are yet to exonerate themselves from their users' inability to efficiently demand for information resources. The study also reaffirms that factors affecting the demand for information resources can be viewed from a dual perspective. Findings of this study imply that both the university library and its users are still blameworthy regarding factors affecting the demand for information resources. It can thus be concluded that the university libraries in the region under study are plagued by inadequate current information resources as well as inadequate information and computer infrastructures that would enable library users to demand for information resources. On the other hand, users lack the wherewithal to independently navigate the library resources using search tools and techniques. In essence, the study has opened a gap of knowledge regarding the practice of efficient information retrieval among university library users in South Tamil Nadu.

University libraries are the sole information service provider that supports the academic functions of a university; it is highly recommended that this study should be replicated in other regions of South Tamil Nadu with the view of exposing those issues hindering demand for information resources across university libraries in the whole country. It is also recommended that university libraries should align themselves with this report and make necessary corrections in a tactical and strategic manner.

Regarding the inability of users to efficiently retrieve information resources from their libraries, it is high time librarians consider teaching their users efficient information retrieval techniques a serious business that would not only help in advancing their worth to the society, but sustain their profession in this changing times where librarians are constantly threatened by the vicissitude of information and communication technologies. Accordingly, teaching users what they need to know about information retrieval should not only be on theoretical terms but should also incorporate and lay more emphasis on the practical terms of teaching users how to articulate their information needs to retrieve information resources based on library search tools.

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