

Use of Formal Sources Information by the Engineering College Students to Meet their Information Needs

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Introduction

There is no doubt that the present era is the “Information era.” In arguably, the information has become the most important element for progress in today’s society. Moreover, it (information) plays a significant role in our professional and personal lives. Besides, the nature of information availability on various media has significantly affected information seeking behaviour of everyone. Although the information availability has made significant changes in our lives, the technical education field has been the most affected one (Catalano, 2013). This is because; the complete structure of technical education is basically dependent on the availability and appropriate use of information (Basha et al., 2013).

The challenge for technical education in the twenty-first century is to prepare students to use information in their work places, in their personal lives, and as responsible citizens. Everyone is aware of the importance of technical education (Rani 2014). It helps students to develop theoretical and practical knowledge (Nwagwu and Segilola, 2013). To fulfil the need of the modern era, the education system should focus on technical and practical knowledge (Hertzum and Pejtersen 2000). Moreover, it (technical education) contributes a major share to the overall education system and plays a vital role in the social and economic development (Saravanan and Esmail 2015) of our nation (Lakshmi Sankari et al., 2011). There are a number of private and government engineering colleges in the study area. Not just that Nagpur is considered as the major hub of engineering education in Maharashtra. Hence, in the backdrop of above information this study was carried out to understand the use of formal information sources by the Engineering College Students to meet their Information Needs.

Research Methodology

Study of Universe

In the present study, all the Engineering Colleges running in the Nagpur City were considered as the universe of this study.

Research Design

In the present study researcher has used a descriptive cross sectional design for data collection from the students of Engineering Colleges of Nagpur City.

Sampling Method and Sample Size

All the final year students of Engineering Colleges of Nagpur City formed the population of the study. In all a total of 15 notable colleges are present in the Nagpur City. From each of the Engineering Colleges, 30 students were selected randomly as sample for this study. Thus the total sample size for this study was 450. However, during the course of this study the researcher could get data from more than 450 respondents and hence, the actual sample size was 522 students of Engineering Colleges.

Data Collection

The primary data for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire and by following the survey methodology. In the present study, Fixed Response Rating scale was used. This type of scale was selected as fixed response questions are quick to answer, which facilitates analyzing the results. Prior to its use, reliability and validity of the questionnaire was checked by the researcher.

Statistical Analysis of Data

Statistical analysis of the data was carried out with the help of various statistical tests. The descriptive statistics, such as frequency, percentage, etc were determined from the collected data. The Chi-square test was also used and the significance level was chosen to be 0.05 (or equivalently, 5%). The data was analyzed using SPSS 18.0 software.

Results and Discussion

Use of Textbooks, Reference sources, technical reports, dictionaries

Table 1: Use of formal sources of information (Textbooks, Reference sources, technical reports, dictionaries) by Engineering College Students

Type of resource	High		Average		Low		Total	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
Text Books	49	94.2	30	5.7	0	0.0	52	100.0
Reference sources	44	84.1	72	13.8	9	1.7	52	100.0

Technical Reports	20 1	38. 5	24 3	46. 6	78 14.	52 9	100 2	0 .0
Dictionaries	22 8	43. 7	15 9	30. 5	13 5	25. 9	52 2	100 .0

Above **Table 1** presents information pertaining to the use of formal sources of information by the students of engineering colleges of Nagpur City.

- Text Books:** Based on the data it is observed that 94.3% students highly use text book for work, while 5.7% students averagely use it.
- Reference Sources:** Based on the data it is observed that 84.5% students highly use reference sources for work, while 13.8% students averagely use it. In addition to it 1.7% students use reference sources below averagely.
- Technical Reports:** Based on the data it is observed that 38.5% students highly use technical reports for work, while 46.6% students averagely use it. In addition to it 14.9% students use technical reports below averagely.
- Dictionaries:** Based on the data it is observed that 43.7% students highly use dictionaries for work, while 30.5% students averagely use it. In addition to it 25.9% students use technical reports below averagely.

Use of Encyclopedias, Conference Proceedings, E-books, Online-Journals/database

Table 2: Use of formal sources of information (Encyclopedias, Conference Proceedings, E-books, Online-Journals/database) by Engineering College Students

Type of resource	High		Average		Low		Total	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
Encyclopedias	17 7	33. 9	90 2	17. 2	25 5	48. 9	52 2	100. 0
Conference Proceedings	17 1	32. 8	14 7	28. 2	20 4	39. 1	52 2	100. 0
E-books	42 6	81. 6	96 4	18. 4	0 0	0.0	52 2	100. 0
Online - Journals/ database	18 9	36. 2	18 4	35. 2	14 9	28. 5	52 2	100. 0

Above **Table 2** presents information pertaining to the use of formal sources of information by the students of engineering colleges of Nagpur City.

- Encyclopedias:** Based on the data it is observed that 33.9% students highly use encyclopedias for work, while 17.2% students averagely use it. In addition to it 48.9% students below averagely use encyclopedias for work.
- Conference Proceedings:** Based on the data it is observed that 32.8% students highly use conference proceedings for work, while 28.2% students averagely use it. In addition to it 39.1% students below averagely use conference proceedings for work.

- E-books:** Based on the data it is observed that 81.6% students highly use e-books for work, while 18.4% students averagely use it.
- Online-Journals/Database:** Based on the data it is observed that 36.2% students highly use online-journals/database for work, while 35.2% students averagely use it. In addition to it 28.5% students below averagely use online-journals/database for work.

Use of Internet sources, Library catalogue (OPAC), Review articles/Theses)

Table 3: Use of formal sources of information (Internet sources, Library catalogue(OPAC), Review articles/Theses) by Engineering College Students

Type of resource	High		Average		Low		Total	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
Internet sources	44 7	85. 6	60 5	11. 5	15 2.9	2.9	52 2	100. 0
Library Catalogue (OPAC)	17 7	33. 9	72 8	13. 3	27 3	52. 3	52 2	100. 0
Review articles / Theses	15 3	29. 3	10 2	19. 5	26 7	51. 1	52 2	100. 0

Above **Table 3** presents information pertaining to the use of formal sources of information by the students of engineering colleges of Nagpur City.

- Internet Sources:** Based on the data it is observed that 85.6% students highly use internet sources for work, while 11.5% students averagely use it. In addition to it 2.9% below averagely use internet sources for various work.
- Library Catalogue (OPAC):** Based on the data it is observed that 33.9% students highly use library catalogue (OPAC) for work, while 13.8% students averagely use it. In addition to it 52.3% students use library catalogue (OPAC) for various work.
- Review Articles/ Theses:** Based on the data it is observed that 29.3% students highly use review articles/theses for work, while 19.5% students averagely use it. In addition to it 51.1% students use review articles/theses for various work.

Conclusions

Use of Formal Sources of information like Textbooks, Reference Sources, Technical Reports, Dictionaries)

- In view of the study results, it is evident that most of the students of engineering colleges of study area highly use textbooks, reference sources and dictionaries for various work.

Use of Formal Sources of information like Encyclopedias, Conference Proceedings, E-books, Online-Journals/Database

- In view of the study results, it is evident that most of the students of engineering colleges of study area rarely use encyclopedias for various work.

Use Formal Sources of Information like Internet Sources, Library Catalogue (OPAC), Review Articles/Theses

- In view of the study results, it is evident that most of the students of engineering colleges of study area highly use internet sources for various work.

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