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Journal Usage among Aesthetic Studies Undergraduates during the Preparation of Projects Reports

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Abstract- Journals are essential information sources for research to obtain current and relevant information in any field of study. Journals play an energetic role in academic activities especially in the research process. This study discusses the level of usage of journals articles among undergraduates during the preparation of the final year research report at Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies Eastern University, Sri Lanka. The study uses semi-structured questionnaires and evaluates (observation) the reference list of research reports as the data collection instrument. Hundred and sixteen undergraduates were attached during the academic year 2014/15 to the Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, and their research reports formed the study population. Usage of journals during the research report writing was evaluated separately for print and e-journals. Rendering to the result, there are some similarities and differences in using the journals during the final year of research report writing in four fields of study. According to the result, Drama and Theater undergraduates (24.59%) highly used journals as references for their research activities. However, overall only 15.11% of the undergraduates used journals as a reference.

Keywords: journals, research report, undergraduates.

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Abstract- Journals are essential information sources for research to obtain current and relevant information in any field of study. Journals play an energetic role in academic activities especially in the research process. This study discusses the level of usage of journals articles among undergraduates during the preparation of the final year research report at Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies Eastern University, Sri Lanka. The study uses semi-structured questionnaires and evaluates (observation) the reference list of research reports as the data collection instrument. Hundred and sixteen undergraduates were attached during the academic year 2014/15 to the Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, and their research reports formed the study population. Usage of journals during the research report writing was evaluated separately for print and e-journals. Rendering to the result, there are some similarities and differences in using the journals during the final year of research report writing in four fields of study. According to the result, Drama and Theater undergraduates (24.59%) highly used journals as references for their research activities. However, overall only 15.11% of the undergraduates used journals as a reference. The study indicates that all categories of undergraduates used print journals compared with e-journals during the research report writing.

Keywords: journals, research report, undergraduates.

I. Introduction

The undergraduates are different from Secondary Education Students in their learning due to the experience that they have gained from their independent student-centered learning. This method should have the opportunity to develop intellectual abilities and learning styles based on resource-based learning. Therefore, many universities include research as one of the essential and partial activities in postgraduate and undergraduate curriculums. This academic research activity is called research report writing at the undergraduate level. As Etzkowitz (2003) discussed, universities are transforming from teaching Institutions to one that combines teaching with research. The research output can be considered a useful and valuable tool in the evaluation process of University performance. However, the quality of academic research depends on the information the undergraduates gather through information or reference sources. Since the current development technologies provide a tremendous amount of information sources within minutes, it is always difficult for users to select appropriate information. "The reasons users select specific information sources have become great importance because of developments in the field of information in the past decades, the information explosion, and the availability of contemporary information technologies for the effective use of information resources. (Jenny Bronstein, 2010)

An academic requires information resources for his or her learning and further research processes. When comparing the information resources, the usage of the journal is identified as an important information resource, especially the information found in research journals which are contemporary studies and are based on research findings. Moreover, research journals play a significant role in academic society and have been used in numerous academic disciplines. Thus Higher Education Institutions are expected undergraduates to have sound knowledge in seeking information from academic journals. Most institutions of higher learning had made frantic efforts to enforce journal usage among undergraduates. "Many internship courses also require the student journals are helpful to researchers or learners for utilized their academic knowledge in their fields" (Alm 1996). Similarly, Liverpool Hope University in 2016 described, "as issues of Journals are published more frequently, they are the best way of keeping up to date with the latest research in the field. Rallison (2015) also pointed out that a "Huge number of journal articles play a vital role in the performance and output of researchers, and where they appear. Journals have become deeply embedded in academic infrastructure as they are central to career paths". Seeking information from research journals generally allows undergraduates to organize ideas, recognize research problems, describe concepts analyze arguments, etc. Thus, journals have been extensively used in the research process and identified one of the existing aspects of research report writing. Ellen (n.d) stated in his study that publishing a journal for interested researchers, academics and practitioners benefits the advancement of knowledge. To be recognized as having an academic subject, a discipline must publish a peer-review journal. Moreover, Victor and Diaa (2018) mentioned that

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"scientific research is defined as relentless and incremental scholarly progress published in academic journals" in their article "Increasing Importance of Research Metrics: Journal Impact." Therefore, academic journals are still perceived as an essential role in the academic activities of undergraduates. Therefore, it is necessary to study the use of journals by Aesthetics studies undergraduates during the preparation of final year research reports at Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies.

II. Significance of the Study

With the emergence of a research environment seeking information from journals has become an essential tool to effectively implement all undergraduates' research processes. Higher Education Institutions are expected undergraduates to have sound knowledge and skill in seeking information from journals. Therefore, it is vital to study the journal usage of a different kind of user group from different angles. Presently there is no in-depth data about journal usage during the preparation of projects reports at Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Eastern University Sri Lanka. The identification of perceptions and attitudes toward the usage of journals will be helpful for the institute to develop effective research activities. Moreover, to become a skillful, knowledgeable, and demand-driven graduate higher education institution students must be able to identify and access current information. As well as information found in research journals which are contemporary studies. Thus, this study may be helpful to undergraduates to become and archive the above capability. The undergraduate research students are a significant group in a Higher Education Institution. Their information needs, views, and suggestions are vital for improving research activities. Furthermore, this study is helpful to understand the weaknesses/ barriers of the undergraduate's in seeking information from research journals.

III. The Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to evaluate the journals usage trends of the aesthetic Studies undergraduates during the preparation of the final year research reports and to identify the challenges faced in the use of journals by the undergraduates.

IV. Review of Literature

The Council of biological editors described twenty steps to writing research articles or thesis. Based on these steps, Fischer and Michael (n.d) mentioned in their study that if twenty steps are too many to manage and introduce thirteen steps based on the Council of biological editor's decision. In that thirteen steps, they highlight "Select journal" as an essential step for writing research articles.

Although Miholic and Juznic (2016) conducted a study on the impact of better access to Scientific journals on the quality of research work by evaluating records access to scholarly journals in three International publisher databases (Science Direct, Springer link and Wiley online) cited by University of Primorska has gradually increased every year, ranging 13.5% in 2010 up to 24.8% in 2014. In the study done by Yusufand and Iwn (2010), one of the reasons for the study was to evaluate the use of academic libraries. The finding showed that most of the faculty members visited the Library to read journals both online and print. Angammana and Jayatissa (2015) conducted a research study titled "A bibliometric Study of Postgraduate Theses in Library Information Science." The main objective of this study was to find out the valuable features of postgraduate theses in the field. The results showed that usage journals are one of the heights used (out of total citation books used, 39.2% followed by journals, 34%) resources for thesis writing. Sunil (2017) examines the use of Electronic Information Resources by Arts undergraduates during final year Dissertations. Based on the findings, the final year undergraduates depend on printed journals and search engines to find information.

A cross-sectional study was conducted among undergraduate medical students of a government medical college in Puducherry, India. In this study, they analyzed the use of journals by the students such as frequency purpose preferred mode and type of journals. The result of this study, thirty-seven percent of the students used journals. Among them, the majority of the students (58.4%) used journals for project/ assignment activities. When this study considered their preferred mode of using journals 63.7% preferred the online version. Furthermore, Velmurugan, C.V. (2013) has carried out a study on awareness and usage of Electronic Journals among Undergraduate Studies in Engineering College, Chennai. Found that the majority of the respondents were well aware of e-journals usage. A higher percentage of respondents were using the electronic version, while a certain number of them used print and electronic versions for academic activities.

V. Research Problem

Academic journals promote active reading provoke deep thinking and offer wealth of knowledge (APIAR, 2017). Therefore, academic journals play a vital role in the research activities and provide more advances in preparing the research reports. However, researchers are not uniquely followed, especially undergraduates' researchers have a different usage trend in the research report writing. Therefore, this study is set to find out the usage trends of the academic

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journals in the Aesthetic studies undergraduate's research activities.

VI. Methodology

A descriptive survey method has been used for this study and observation (evaluating) the reference list has been used as the data collection instrument among the research reports submitted by the undergraduates in the year 2020/21 Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies, Eastern University, Sri Lanka. The total number of submitted final year research reports in the year 2020/21 was hundred and ninety-eight. According to Barttett, Kotrlik and Higgiris (2001), 116 reports were selected as a sample from 198 reports. Submitted research reports are stratified according to their field of studies such as Music, Dance, Drama & Theater and Visual & Technological Arts. The Sample calculated is given in table 01.

Table 01: Sample size by field of study

Field of Study	Total Population (Number of Project Reports submitted)	Sample
Music	69	41
Dance	45	26
Drama & Theatre	33	19
Visual & Technological Arts	51	30
	198	116

VII. Results and Discussion

The survey investigated 2078 references referred to write the project reports; among them 314 (15.11%) references were referred from journals for writing their research reports. Comparatively, it is a lower percentage of the participants (usage). Therefore, overall, undergraduates' usage level of journals for their research report writing was in need of improvement level table 02 indicates the details.

Table 02: Overall Usage of Journals

Total Number of Reference usage by Undergraduates	The Information referred from Journals	Percentage
2078	314	15.11%

In-depth, a majority of the Undergraduates preferred to use print journals. Out of the respondents (complete references used from the journals), 74.52% used print journals. However, only 25.48% were used online journals. Therefore, a majority of the undergraduates at the institute used print journals for their research works. Furthermore, final year Undergraduates highlighted several reasons for their inability to access print and online journals. Limited abilities of Tamil language print Aesthetic journals in Sri Lanka, poor availability of opportunities for access to databases in the aesthetic field in Tamil are the primary and apparent reasons. Table 03 shows the details.

Table 03: Overall usage of print and e-journals by Undergraduates

Total Number of journals referred	Print Journals	Percentage	e-Journals	Percentage
314	234	74.52%	78	25.48 %

Moreover, the study reveals the purpose level of usage journals of undergraduates by field of study. More than two-thirds of the respondents of music students (84.74%) used non-journals references to seek information for their research report writing. Therefore, only 15.26% of the music students used journals to seek information in depth out of the total journal usage by music undergraduates (116). Most of the respondents 73.27% (85) used print journals, but only 26.73% (31) used e-journals for their academic research writing.

In this scenario, only 12.91% of dance undergraduates used journal articles to seek information and 10.25% of Visual Technological Arts undergraduates used journals for their research reports writing activities. However, ultimately 25% (24.59%) of the Derma and Theatre undergraduates used journal articles to seek information. The study reveals the print and e-journal usage of undergraduates. According to that, the majority of the Aesthetic studies undergraduates used print journals to seek information

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for their research report writing process. In the field of Dance, 75.80% used print journals and 24.20% used e-journals; likewise, in the field of Drama and Theatre, 72.52% used print journals and 27.48% used e-journals. In Visual Technological Arts, 75% used printed journals and 25% used e-journals. The four user categories of this study have shown different usage levels in journal usage. Drama and Theatre undergraduates (24.59%) had become the most usage of journals in four fields of studies. However, other three categories of undergraduates have used journal articles less than 16% in their research report writing.

Meantime, data were analyzed to identify whether statistically significant differences exist in the usage of various types of journals (Print journals and e-journals) among undergraduates across the field of studies namely Music, Dance, Drama & Theatre and Visual & Technological Arts. However, statically significant differences have not been found either in the usage of various types of journals tests results. Thus the use of printed journals of the undergraduate percentage from 73.27% to 75% and e-journals percentage from 24.20% to 27.48%. The details of using them are shown in Table 4.

Table 04: Usage range of printed and e-journals by Undergraduates

Field of Study	Printed Journals	e- Journals
Music	73.27%	26.73%
Dance	75.8%	24.2%
Drama & Theatre	72.52%	27.48%
Visual & Technological Arts	75%	25%
Usage of Journals (percentage)	73.27% - 75%	24.2% - 27.48%

VIII. Conclusion and Recommendation

The four undergraduate categories of this study have shown different usage levels for using the journal for their research report writing. The study depicts that usage of e-journals was comparatively low compared with the usage level of print journals. The study also revealed that the Visual and technological Arts undergraduates had lower level users for the journal as a reference and Dance undergraduates had lower users for e-journals. Meantime nearly twenty-five percent of Drama and Theatre undergraduates use the journals as references for their research writing process at the Swami Vipulananda Institute of Aesthetic Studies.

Consideration of these factors is helpful to develop the journal's usage among the Aesthetic studies. Undergraduate increase in journals usage may lead to improving the organization's research and learning quality. Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made.

- There should be a continuous awareness for the undergraduates on maximizing the usage of journals for their academic activities.
- The administration of the institute would consider on introducing information literacy skills to the undergraduates.
- Research supervision should encourage the final year students to use research journals in their research field.

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