

## **PRINTED AND HUMAN INFORMATION RESOURCE USAGE AMONG THE UNDERGRADUATES IN UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA**

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The researcher carried out a university-wide survey titled “Information seeking and research strategies of undergraduates in the digital age” and this paper discusses the findings of one aspect of the major survey with special reference to printed and human information resources (PHIR) used by the undergraduates. The objectives of this paper are 1) to present the trends of the use of PHIR for academic activities by the undergraduates, 2) to analyze the factors affecting their PHIR usage pattern, and 3) to make recommendations to improve their use of PHIR. A structured questionnaire with 20 questions was distributed among 558 students and 427 (77%) of them responded.

Of the printed resources, 80% uses Recommended Readings (RR), 63% uses Library Collection (LC) and 47% uses Personal Collections (PC). Of the human resources, Classmates (CM) are the most used resource (71%), followed by Lecturers (LEC) (65%), Friends and Family (FF) (43%) and Librarians (LIB) are the least used resource (27%). This general trend prevails with slight variations in the percentages, across the faculties. In the Faculties of Allied Health Science (FAHS), Dental Science (FDS) and Veterinary and Animal Science (FVAS), the mostly used resource is the RR. This is in conformity with some international studies, which established that veterinary and dental students prefer traditional sources like recommended readings. The respondents mentioned the lack of material, lack of knowledge to find material and inconvenient opening hours as factors to address. Notable findings are that, the first priority of the undergraduates in the Faculties of Agriculture (FAG), Engineering (FE) and Science (FS) is CMs while this is the second priority in FAHS and FVAS but LCs and Librarians are used minimally. The needs to be addressed are the over-dependence on CMs as an information resource, underutilization of the library collections developed at a cost of millions of rupees annually, and the under-exploitation of the information skills of the librarians.

It is recommended for librarians to revisit the library collections and services in consultation with staff and students to improve use of the collection, to empower CMs through Information Literacy programmes so that they provide support that is more advanced for their colleagues. Lecturers need to play a central role in facilitating information skills training through the librarians, so that the gap between the librarians and undergraduates is reduced and more professional support is provided to transform the undergraduates in to scholarly information seekers.

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