

Information Seeking Behaviors of Library and Information Science Students in Digital Age

**V.W.A.M.K. Weerasinghe¹, I.D.B.D. Dissanayaka², W.P.L. Ranathunga³,
H.M.S. R. Herath⁴, L.A.N.V. Ranahansi⁵, R.K.A.K. Chathuranga⁶,
A.K.G. Senevirathna⁷**

Introduction

It is surprising to realise that has always been interested in information in the production consumption and dissemination. Information has been described as the fifth need of Human being after air, water, food and shelter. In one form of the other, it has consistently been a significant element in the development of human society and it has shaped over a period of time in to the way in which we think and act. Marriam Webster Online Dictionary has defined information is “Knowledge obtained from investigation, study and instruction” in this definition it is emphasized that information is something that should be obtained by ourselves through studying, investigating and taking instructions and guidance. In higher education, students use different methods and different sources to seek information they need as per their requirements. Especially, there is a growing tendency that students are relying on digital resources and artificial intelligence tools for their studies. This study was covered the information seeking behaviors of students and what methods they use to fulfill their requirements and are they relying on digital and artificial intelligence tools seek information? at the department of library and information science of University of Kelaniya.

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- 1 Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. vwamkw251@kln.ac.lk
 - 2 Department of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, bhanukadushmantha.bd@gmail.com
 - 3 Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo, Colombo, Sri Lanka. pavithra.lakshane@gmail.com
 - 4 Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. hmsrhe251@kln.ac.lk
 - 5 Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. lanvra251@kln.ac.lk
 - 6 Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. kasunchaturanga38@gmail.com
 - 7 Department of Library and Information Science, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. gihankavinda330@gmail.com

Objectives

This study was conducted with the main objective of exploring the information seeking behaviors of students of department of library and information science in digital age.

- To identify whether students use Artificial Intelligence tools or digital resources to seek information
- To identify what are the most preferred tools for information seeking
- To identify the importance of understanding and addressing the changing needs of users in the digital age

Methodology

The study employed a mixed-method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data. The population of this research comprises the students who follow special degree in library and information science (LISC) at the department of Library and Information Science of Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Kelaniya. It was based on primary and secondary data sources. Purposive sampling method was employed for this study. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect primary data. E-journal articles, books and Websites were used as secondary data. Collected data were analyzed using thematic and descriptive statistical analysis through Microsoft Excel.

Results and Findings

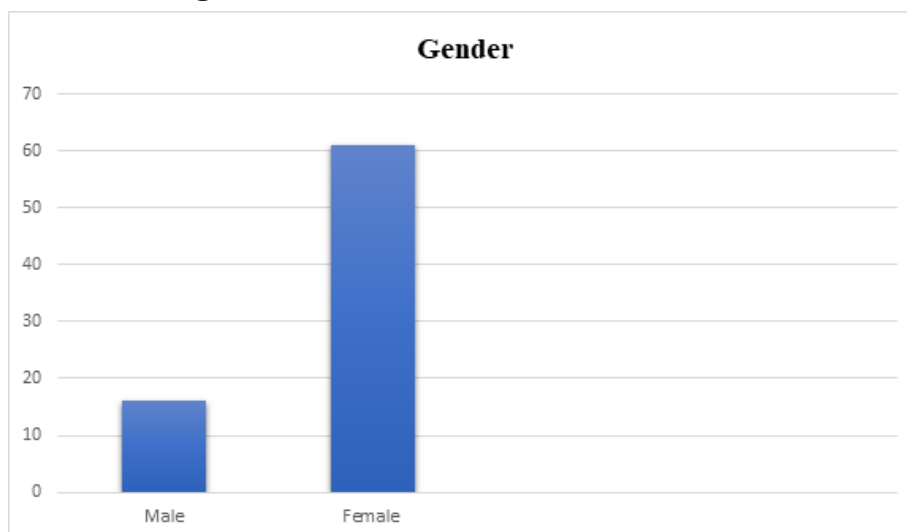


Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

According to the figure 1, 79.2% respondent were female and 20.8% were male.

It was revealed that the majority of the students were female.

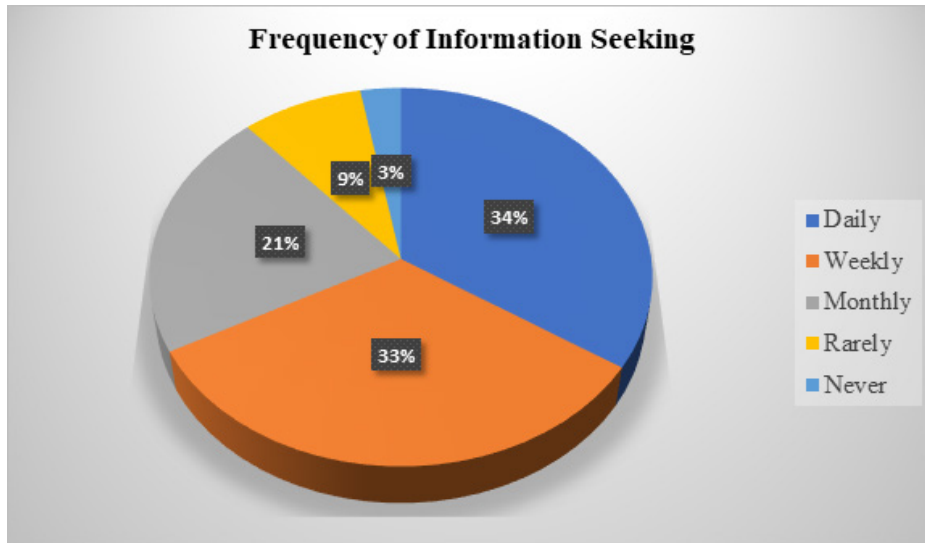


Figure 2: Frequency of Information Seeking

The response for the frequency of information seeking of students are shown in figure 4. The majority (34%) search information daily, (33%) weekly, (21%) monthly, (9%) rarely and (3%) never seeking information.

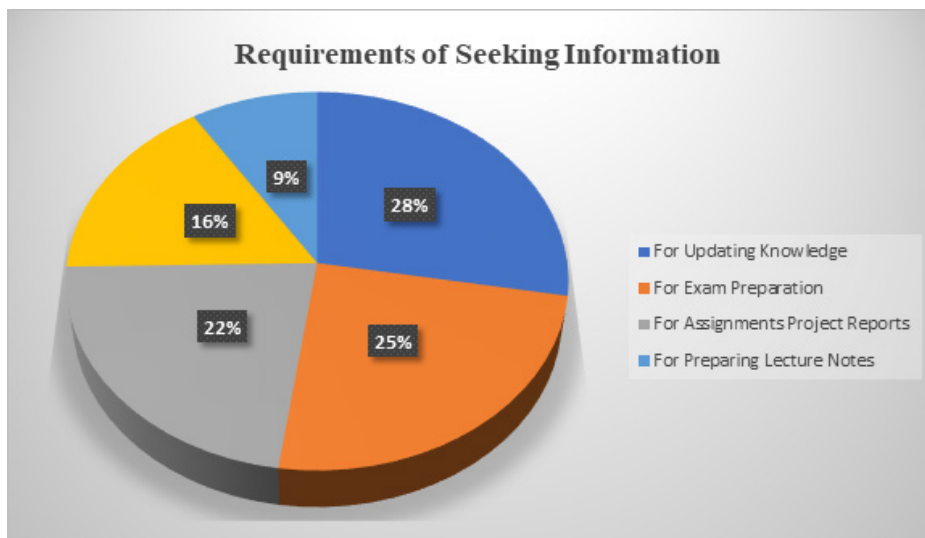


Figure 3: Requirements of Seeking information

Figure 3 indicates the responses for requirements of seeking information by students. Multiple choices were allowed for this question. 28% of students search

for information for updating knowledge, 25% of students search information for exam preparation, 22% seeking information for their assignments, project reports and presentations. Moreover, 16% of students seek information for preparing lecture notes. Only 9% seek information for their research works.

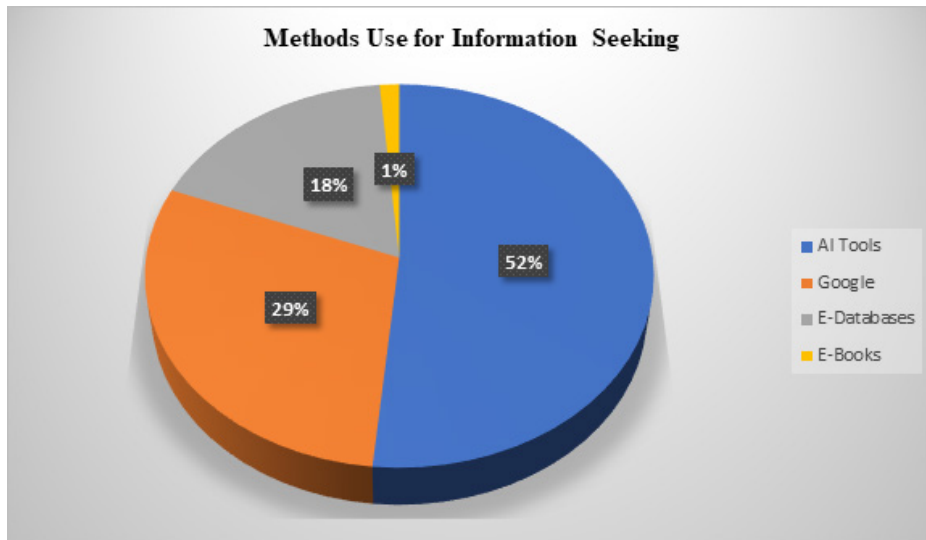


Figure 4: Method Use for Information Seeking

According to figure 7, the majority of the students use the AI tools as their main information seeking resources. It is 52. Google (29%) is the second most utilized method for information seeking. However, in comparison to the value of the usage of the AI tools, it is a relatively low percentage. E-databases are the third most utilized method (18%). (1%) of students use E-books. percentage. E-databases are the third most utilized method (18%). (1%) of students use E-books.

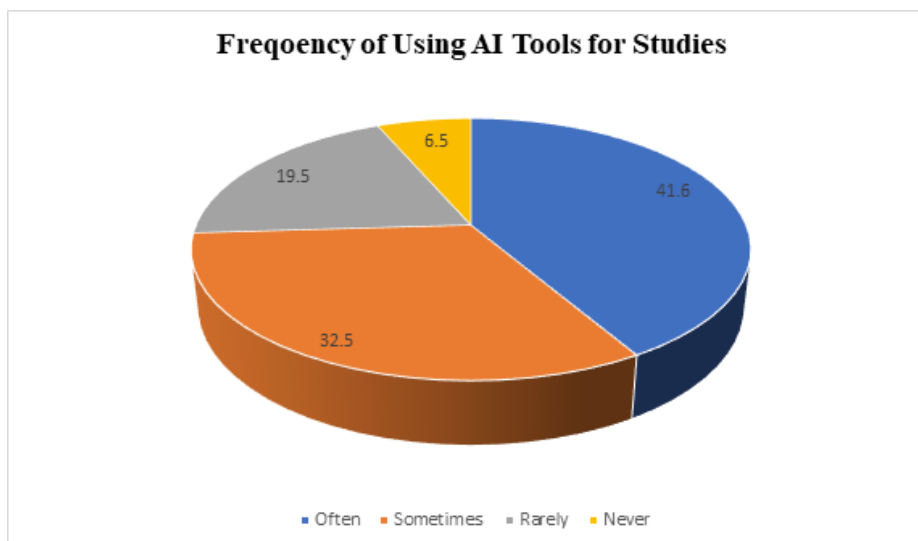


Figure 5: Frequency of Using AI Tools for Studies

According to figure 5, 41.6% of the students use AI Tools often. 32.5% of students use “sometimes”. 19.5% of students responded that they use AI tools “rarely”. Additionally, 6.5% have never used AI tools for their studies. The present study reveals that there is a significant increase in using AI tools for seeking information.

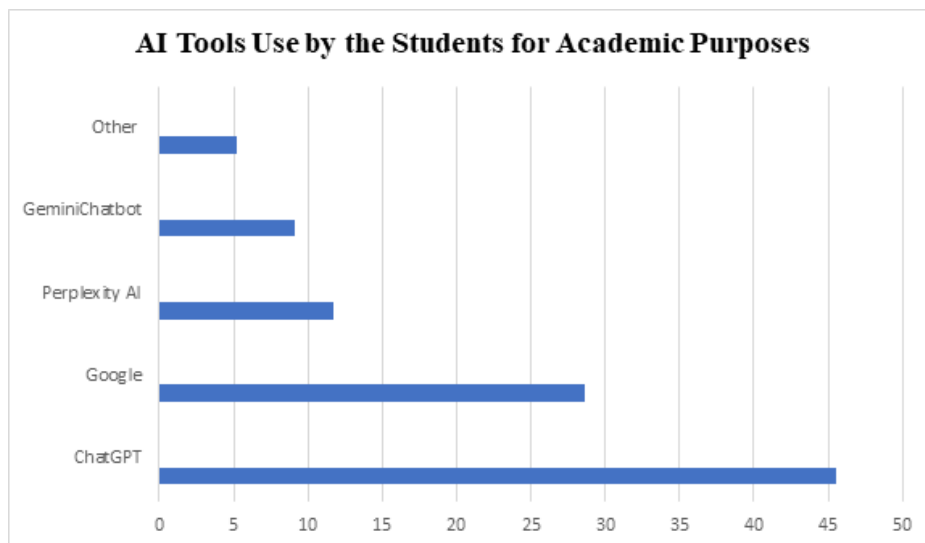


Figure 6: AI Tools Use by the Students for Academic Purposes

Figure 6 shows the preferred AI tools among students. The above figure shows that there is a significant preference for using ChatGPT among students which is 45%. Secondly, Google has indicated as the most preferred tool (28.6%). Other AI tools have considerably lower usage compared to ChatGPT and Google. Perplexity AI is 11.7%, Gemini Chatbot has 9.1% and other tools are 5.2%. As per this data it can be identified that the majority of the students rely in ChatGPT, Google for their information seeking.

Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of identify information seeking behavior of LISC students in digital age. Current research has revealed that majority of the students at the department of library and information science at the University of Kelaniya and majority of them are female. Students usually seek information daily. The most preferred method of accessing information is AI tools. The findings reveled that there is a fast-growing tendency in using Artificial Intelligence tools among students in higher education (52%) for seeking information. The study showed that the most popular AI tools among students are ChatGPT, Google and perplexity.

Keywords - AI Tools, Digital Age, Education, Information Seeking Behaviors

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