

# Information seeking behavior of post graduate students in Lahore Pakistan

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## Abstract

*The present study was designed to identify the information seeking behavior and the related problems faced by post graduate students while seeking relevant information. A total of 176 MS/Mphil students were selected as the sample. A survey questionnaire and interview technique was used to collect data. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics with SPSS version 21. The demographic data was analyzed by using the descriptive statistics include mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution. ANOVA and t test and was used to know the significant influence of demographic variables on information seeking behavior of postgraduate students. The information seeking behavior of postgraduate students is satisfactory because from the results and discussion it is clearly indicate that all the students seek information for career development, solve immediate academic problems, write research articles, making notes for assignment, to update their present knowledge, preparation for examination and to read latest articles. Postgraduates students have also seek information to use HEC digital library services at home, university, use VPN code, read books online and to use different websites for research. There was a significant influence of age, gender, mothers'*

*and fathers' qualification in the information seeking behavior of post graduate students.*

**Key Words:** Lahore, Information, Postgraduate, Behavior

## 1. Introduction

Information is a useful resource of today's information in our society. It is the need of academic activities. Students seek information in order to complete their task. Wiberley (1989) said that seeking information is a basic activity of individuals. Information seeking is the procedure in which students demonstrate their data requirements, assess and select it and after that at long last uses it to fulfill their academic or other related needs. The part of information expert involves data assembling as well as controlling the users (Tunde, 2012). It might thoughts, actualities information and inventive works of human personality, that are conveyed formally or casually in any format (Chikonzo et. al., 2006). Lots of factors affects the information seeking behavior of students. Students also seek information for their personal usage. Information seeking is the process which is not artificial but important for the survival of human (Chikonzo et. al., 2006). Students look for current data from the print as well as from the different media accessible in



libraries, e.g. Reference books, diaries and all the more at present, electronic media. Students have access to use electronic resources in institutions only, and are not assigned any VPN code or passwords for use at home. Universities use their budgets to provide this opportunity for their students. It helps them in their learning process. When the students go to library looking for data, besides print they utilize PC based framework, for example, web (Wilson, 2000). The data and correspondence innovation must be successfully used in library activities and administrations by building a system. This enhances efficiency of libraries in extending electronic based information resources and services to the users and to satisfy the students of institution. Numerous universities in UAE, including University of Dubai, are anonymously investing in electronic resources to expand access to their developing groups in different horizons, yet there is a need of changing library information delivery way to deal with get important use of data, at the meantime students learn more how to utilize advanced data sources adequately (El-Maamiry, 2017). It is necessary for the students to seek information from these resources and collect the relevant data from the available resources (Watt & Ibegbulam, 2005). On the other hand students do not have access to use these resources in library which affects their information seeking behavior (Zaki, 1991). A few investigations have revealed that there was low utilization of electronic assets since students and library staff does not have skills on the utilization of electronic assets, web and PC application (Agaba et. al., 2005). Therefore it is needed to provide the students with such skills such as information literacy skills, information retrieval skills, and computer skills. In this way the usage of

electronic resources will develop (Adekinya & Adeyemo, 2006).

The present study investigation expects to identify the reason and utilization of different sorts of electronic data assets, area of get to, involvement of utilizing assets, and mindfulness about new assets subscribed by library, reason, advantages and issues of getting to electronic assets.

## 2. Material and methods

This study used a mix method approach. This research was about investigation of information seeking behavior of post graduate students. It was an exploratory research. Population of the study was MS/Mphil students. Total sample size of the study was 176 postgraduate students of different departments from public and private universities. Public universities in this study were Punjab University and Lahore College for Women University. Private universities were University of Central Punjab and Lahore Leads University Kamahan Campus. From Public universities ninety three students were selected. Fifty students were selected from Punjab University and forty three students from Lahore College for Women University, On the other hand 83 students were selected From Private universities. Forty six students were selected from university of Central Punjab and thirty seven students From Lahore Lead University Kamahan Campus. Data was collected from six departments' e.g. Education, Economics, Microbiology, Biotechnology, Mass communication, English. The departments were not equivalent in all the universities; therefore researcher selected these departments randomly. Eight semi-structured interviews will be taken, two from each university. Questionnaire and interview technique was used as the research instrument of the study. Questionnaire was



developed under the guidance of supervisor from literature review. The entire questionnaire designed at five Likert scale. Items for the research instrument were developed after reviewing the previous research findings and under the guidance of research supervisor. It was developed in the light of relevant indicators to investigate the information seeking behavior of post graduate students. The survey questionnaire and interview technique was used as a measuring scale to collect data. Data was confidential and was not shared with anybody else. The collected data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21). The demographic data was analyzed by using the descriptive statistics include mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution. Inferential statistics was used for data of information seeking behavior. In inferential statistics t test and ANOVA (one way analysis of variance) was used to know the significant influence of demographic variables on information seeking behavior of postgraduate students.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Table 4.1 shows the gender wise distribution of the participants across public and private universities. According to the table, a higher percentage of the participants were female. There were 84.9% females in the public universities as compared to 27.7% males, and 72.3% as compared to 15.1% in the private universities. It also indicates that the number of female respondents is higher in both, public school and public universities.

Table 4.2 shows that participants varied in ages from 20 years to 60 years. (95.7%) age of the students of public universities have reported in 20 to 30 years as compared to the students of private universities (71.1%).

(24.1%) of students of private universities have reported their age in 31 to 40 years as compared to public universities (3.2%).

A look at the participants' Fathers' Qualification as found in Table 4.3 reveals that the (34.4%) participants from the public universities have reported that their fathers qualification were graduation as compared to participants of private universities (25.3%). On the other hand (28.9%) participants from the private universities have reported that their fathers' qualification were as master & above as compared to participants of public universities (21.5%).

As indicated in Table 4.4, the participants' mothers' qualification are reported. It reveals that the (25.8%) participants from the public universities have reported that the qualification of their mothers were intermediate as compared to participants of private universities (9.6%). On the other hand (33.7%) participants from the private universities have reported that their mothers' qualification were as graduation as compared to participants of public universities (20.4%). As indicated in Table 4.5, students of public universities (Female =79, Male =14) and private universities (Female= 60, Male= 23). The majority of female fall in Education in public universities reported as (90.6%) as compared to male (9.4%). On the other hand Education students of private universities reported as female (62.5) as compare to male (37.5).It has also reported that in private universities the majority of mass communication students female (100%) as compare to male (0%). On the other hand mass communication students of public universities reported as female (73.7%) as compare to male (26.3). On the whole overall percentage of public universities female (84.9%) and male (15.1%) is higher than private universities female (72.3%) and male (27.7%).



Table 4.6 shows the job status of students of public and private universities. It shows that majority of females of public universities are unemployed (85.3%) as compared to males (14.7%). on the other hand majority of female private universities are unemployed (74%) as compare to male (26.0%).

Table 4.7 shows the marital status of post graduate students of public and private universities. It shows that majority of females of public universities are married(85.7%) as compared to males (14.3%)on the other hand majority of female in private universities are unmarried (77.1%) as compare to male (22.9%).

From the Table 4.8, it is clearly indicate that mostly respondent use the general websites daily, university websites monthly and weekly, Digital library monthly, social websites daily, friends daily and email daily. Proficiency in using internet, searching relevant information, MS word, MS Excel and MS Power is good.

Most frequent strategies used in public and private universities by post graduates students have been ranked at first place. The first five most used information seeking strategies falls under high strategy usage criteria. The results showed that public and private sector students are “I seek information for to update with new knowledge”, “I seek information for to prepare myself for examination”. “I seek information for to making notes for an assignment”. “I have access to Use electronic resources”, “Teachers give relevant articles and journals through E-mail”. Table 4.9 reported five most used information seeking strategies, which are items ISB5, ISB6, ISB4, Acc14 and Acc15 are the most used information seeking strategies of postgraduate students. A majority of the Table 4.1 *Gender Wise Distribution of Sample*

(76.4%) students from public universities and (62.6%) private sector students seek information for to update with new knowledge. The second most strategy use (74.2%) public universities postgraduate students and (73.5%) private students use strategy “I seek information for to prepare myself for examination”. Furthermore, (75.3%) public and (56.6%) private postgraduate students use strategy “I seek information for to making notes for an assignment”. (71.6%) public universities students and (66.3%) private postgraduate students use strategy “I have access to use electronic resources”. Also, (72.1%) private and (65.1%) private students use strategy “Teachers give relevant articles and journals through E-mail.”

The least information seeking strategies used by public and private postgraduates of information seeking behavior have been ranked in the study. Table 4.10 reported the first least strategy used by public universities postgraduate students (38.7%) and private university students (32.6%) use strategy “I have access to the use VPN code or password at home”. The second least strategy use by (29%) public universities postgraduates and (33.7%) private universities postgraduates was “I have access to the HEC Digital Library Service at home”. On third rank frequently use strategy (28%) public and (31.3%) private universities postgraduates was “The behavior of Library staff is non supportive”, Fourth frequently used strategy (48.4%) public and (45%) private postgraduates students was “I have access to HEC Digital Library Service at university”. The fifth least strategy used by both, (39.8%) public and (32.5%) private postgraduate students was “Students don’t have access of using computer”.

Gender	Public Universities		Private Universities		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Male	14	15.1	23	27.7	37	21
Female	79	84.9	60	72.3	139	79
Total	93	100	83	100	176	100
Total	176					

Table 4.2 *Age of the Participants*

Ages	Public Universities		Private Universities		Total	
	N	%	N	%		%
20 to 30	89	95.7	59	71.1	148	84.1
31 to 40	3	3.2	20	24.1	23	13.1
41 to 50	1	1.1	4	4.8	5	2.8
51 to 60	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	93	100	83	100	176	100

Table 4.3 *Fathers' Qualification*

Father Qualification	Public University		Private University		Total	
	N	%	N	%		%
Illiterate	5	5.4	5	6.0	10	5.7
Primary	1	1.1	7	8.4	8	4.5
Middle	6	6.5	4	4.8	10	5.7
Matric	9	9.7	12	14.5	21	11.9
Intermediate	20	21.5	10	12.0	30	17.0
Graduation	32	34.4	21	25.3	53	30.1
Masters & Above	20	21.5	24	28.9	44	25.0
Total	93	100	83	100	176	100

Table 4.4 *Mothers' Qualification*

Mother Qualification	Public University		Private University		Total	
	N	%	N	%		%
Illiterate	8	8.6	11	13.3	19	10.8
Primary	2	2.2	9	10.8	11	6.3
Middle	9	9.7	6	7.2	15	8.5
Matric	20	21.5	12	14.5	32	18.2
Intermediate	24	25.8	8	9.6	32	18.2
Graduation	19	20.4	28	33.7	47	26.7

Masters& Above	11	11.8	9	10.8	20	11.4
Total	93	100	83	100	176	100

Table 4.5 *Disciplines within Private and Public Sectors*

Disciplines	Public University				Private Universities				Total	
	Female		Male		Female		Male		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Education	29	90.6	3	9.4	5	62.5	3	37.5	40	100
English	22	91.7	2	8.3	15	83.3	3	16.7	42	100
Economics	14	77.8	4	22.2	18	72.0	7	28.0	43	100
Mass Communication	14	73.7	5	26.3	7	100	0	0	26	100
Biotechnology	0	0	0	0	5	71.4	2	28.6	7	100
Microbiology	0	0	0	0	10	55.6	8	44.4	18	100
Total	79	84.9	14	15.1	60	72.3	23	27.7	176	100

Table 4.6 *Job Status*

Job Status	Public Universities				Private Universities				Total	
	Female		Male		Female		Male		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Employed	15	83.3	3	16.7	23	69.7	10	30.3	51	100
Unemployed	64	85.3	11	14.7	37	74	13	26.0	125	100
Total	79	84.9	14	15.1	60	72.3	23	27.7	176	100

Table 4.7 *Marital Status*

Marital Status	Public Universities				Private Universities				Total	
	Female		Male		Female		Male		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Married	12	85.7	2	14.3	23	69.7	10	30.3	47	100
Unmarried	67	84.8	12	15.2	37	77.1	11	22.9	127	100
Divorced	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100	2	100
Total	79	84.9	14	15.1	60	72.3	23	27.7	176	100

Table 4.8 *Most Frequently Used Internet Facility by postgraduate students*

Study variables	Frequency (%)						Total
	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly	Yearly		
Q1.a. How frequently do you use the General websites?	54	25.6	10.2)	9.1	1.1		100

Q1. b.How frequently do you use university Websites?	16.5	29.0	28.4	15.9	10.2	100
Q1. c.How frequently do you use Digital library?	15.9	22.7	29	14.2	18.2	100
Q1.d. How frequently do you use Social Websites (facebook, blog, etc.)?	61.9	15.9	6.3	4.5	11.4	100
Q1.e .How frequently you do it with your friends?	61.9	14.8	12.5	8.5	2.3	100
Q1.f. How frequently you do use Email?	52.3	21.0	11.9	10.2	4.5	100
<b>Study variables</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Total</b>
Q2. a.Proficiency in using the Internet	13.6	9.1	16.5	37.5	23.3	100
Q2. b. Proficiency in searching the relevant information	10.2	8.5	23.9	38.1	19.3	100
Q2. c. Proficiency in using the MS Word	9.7	12.5	19.3	35.8	22.7	100
Q2. d. Proficiency in using the MS Excel	10.8	17.0	27.8	35.2	9.1	100
Q2. e. Proficiency in using the MS Power Point	11.9	10.8	19.9	30.7	26.7	100

Table 4.9 *Most Frequent information seeking Strategies used by public and private postgraduate 's students*

Items	Statement	Public and Private	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
			Mostly						
ISB5	I seek information for to update with new knowledge.	Public	1.1	14	8.6	32.3	44.1	4.04	1.093
		Private	6	12	19.3	33.7	28.9	3.67	1.19

ISB6	I seek information for to prepare myself for examination.	Public	1.1	10.8	14	34.4	39.8	4.01	1.037
		Private	7.2	8.4	10.8	28.9	44.6	3.95	1.248
ISB4	I seek information for to making notes for an assignment.	Public	2.2	10.8	11.8	36.6	38.7	3.99	1.068
		Private	10.8	13.3	19.3	24.1	32.5	3.54	1.355
Acc14	I have access to use electronic resources.	Public	3.2	17.2	7.5	35.5	36.6	3.85	1.188
		Private	3.6	13.3	16.9	42.2	24.1	3.7	1.09
Acc15	Teachers give relevant articles and journals through E-mail.	Public	4.3	9.7	14	35.5	36.6	3.9	1.133
		Private	12	14.5	8.4	47	18.1	3.45	1.281

Table 4.10 *Least information seeking strategies used by public and private postgraduate students*

Items	Statement	Public and Private	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Acc10	I have access to the use VPN code or password at home.	Public	33.3	24.7	17.2	21.5	3.2	2.37	1.24
		Private	33.7	8.4	25.3	18.1	14.5	2.71	1.461
Acc8	I have access to the HEC Digital Library Service at home.	Public	29	32.3	9.7	20.4	8.6	2.47	1.332
		Private	28.9	16.9	20.5	27.7	6	2.65	1.32
P16	The behavior	Public	29	29	14	17.2	10.8	2.52	1.356



	of Library staff is non-supportive.	Private	19.3	32.5	16.9	22.9	8.4	2.69	1.258
	I have access to HEC	Public	17.2	19.4	15.1	36.6	11.8	3.06	1.317
Acc9	Digital Library Service at university.	Private	24.1	9.6	19.3	33.7	13.3	3.02	1.397
	Students don't have access of	Public	14	28	18.3	28	11.8	2.96	1.268
P22	using computer.	Private	37.3	21.7	8.4	21.7	10.8	2.47	1.451

The response of the students on the statement that “I seek information for to solve immediate academic problems” is as the mean score of public universities students was 3.87 and private universities students was 3.61 in this regard which supported the statement. Information seeking to solve the problem of academic field is also a good practice and general behavior of all level students. Adedibu, et al., (1997) also report resemblance results in his study on information seeking behavior of students. In our study the response of the respondent on the statements that “I seek information for to write research articles” is the mean score of public universities students was 3.61 and private universities students was 3.57 in this regard which supported the statement. At master and postgraduates level the all student study research articles for the research work and this is a good practice for student and a good indication of their information seeking behavior these findings are also confirmed by the study of (Shokeen & Kushik, 2002).

In seeking information to make notes for assignment the mean score of public universities students was 3.99 and private

universities students was 3.54 in this regard which clearly indicate the positive behavior of students that most of the students from public and private universities are in favor and seek information to make assignments. In updating present knowledge with the new knowledge the mean score of the students in our study is as the mean score of public universities students was 4.04 and private universities students was 3.67. From the mean score of public and private university students showed that mostly the respondents of our study seek information for to update with new knowledge. The Mean score of public universities students was 3.76 and private universities students’ were 3.64 in seeking information for to read latest articles. The overall mean is 4 in both cases from public and private universities postgraduate’s students. Mostly students are agree on the information seeking for to read latest articles and the behavior for this is a good practice. In information seeking behavior of postgraduates students there are some access are required for information seeking in their field of education. The mean score of public universities students in access to the HEC



digital library service at home was 2.47 and for private universities students was 2.65. The mean score is less than 3 which indicates that the students of our study have not access to the HEC digital library services at home so their mean score are below 3. At postgraduate level all the students have this access so they got knowledge in best way. Similarly the mean score of public universities students was 3.06 and private universities students was 3.02 in access to digital library services at university. The mean score in this case is greater than at home. So there is need to give access the students of digital library services at home for better education system and for the betterment of students education. In using of the VPN code or password at home in our study the mean score of the public universities students was 2.37 and private universities students was 2.7 which not support the statement. Students have this access also to use the VPN code and password at home at postgraduate level education. In accessing to read books online the mean score of public universities students was 3.40 and private universities students was 3.36 which supported the statement of our study that I have access to the read books online. Today the world is digital and paper books replaced by soft copy books so need is to give this access also at lower levels of education. At postgraduate level the students need for research to use such websites which not available freely at internet. To use such websites students have to pay some money for them and in our study the mean score of the students from public universities was 2.53 and private universities was 3.30 to use paid websites for research. So there is need in public sector universities to make availability for such websites to the students that they do research according to new and latest literature available in these websites. Similarly a facility is also very important for

students in their research have access to print material in library. The mean score in this case is in public universities was 3.30 and in private universities was 3.59 which supported the statement of our study. It was also noted that print notes were mostly preferred information sources of students (Kakai et al, 2004).

The mean score of public universities students was 3.85 and private universities students was 3.70 in having access to use electronic resources. Barrett (2005) explore the information seeking habits of graduate students researchers in humanities and the results was reported that humanities like to use electronic resources like online journals, OPAC, CD-ROM's, internet search engines and websites frequently. It was carried out in the University of West Indies, Jamaica. A comparative study of information seeking behavior between first and final year biology students has been reported that the level of study also affect how they sought information. It was concluded that final year biology students made more use of Electronic resources than first year students (Callinan, 2005).

Another comparative study has been done on the information need and Information seeking behavior between two universities students' and results was reported that there was high awareness of the information resources in the library; both print and electronic resources are available but some problems such as poor internet facilities, inadequacy of the materials, lack of relevant materials and non-cooperative behavior of library staff were faced by students. These factors created many problems for these two universities students to seek the current or relevant information (Nwobasi et al, 2013). Similarly the mean score of public universities students was 3.90 and private universities students was 3.45 in "teachers

give relevant articles and journals through email". The overall information seeking behavior of the students of our study is good.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study conducted in Lahore in public and private universities to know about the information seeking behavior of post graduate students, problems faced by the postgraduate's students in information seeking and also to explore the influence of public private universities, age, gender, mothers' and fathers' education on information seeking behavior of postgraduate's students. The number of female respondents in this study is higher than male students. The age of the respondents of our study is varied from 20 years to 60 years. 95.7% of students from public universities have age in 20 to 30 years as compared to the students of private universities which was 71.1. The most of the mothers of respondent have graduation and master level education like father education. The information seeking behavior of postgraduate students is satisfactory because from the results and discussion it is clearly indicate that all the students seek information for career development, solve immediate academic problems, write research articles, making notes for assignment, to update their present knowledge, preparation for examination and to read latest articles. Postgraduates students have also seek information to use HEC digital library services at home, university, use VPN code, read books online and to use different websites for research

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