

# Study the Usefulness of Digital Libraries with Reference to Students from Universities in India

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## Abstract:

Digital library is a platform which provides access to multiple contents and digital resources. The purpose of the study is to find important factors related to digital library use. The study explores the use of digital library among the university graduate and undergraduate students in India. It also explains the satisfaction level among the students regarding the usage of digital library. Some of the important categories were used for finding the usefulness such as frequency of use, perceived influences, satisfaction level, access to services etc. Survey method was used in which sample size of 400 students (graduate and undergraduates) were taken from different universities, purposive sampling technique was being used. The study suggests that digital library is very useful and far better than the traditional library system as 77% graduate users and 52.5% undergraduate users were highly satisfied by the services provided by digital library. Other vital factors under category apparent influences of digital library use were found to be reduced time in retrieving material, different range of material and no requirement for physical library visits.

**Keywords: Digital Library, ICT, Traditional Library System**

## 1. Introduction:

Today the popularity of digital libraries is increasing world-wide rapidly over the past few years. The faculty members, researchers, and students are moving towards the use of digital libraries as compared to traditional libraries. Currently very less research work is being done to find the similarities and differences between undergraduate students and graduate students while using digital libraries.

The study basically focusses on the extent to which the undergraduate and graduate students in India differ in various aspects of digital library use which includes various factors in favour and against of the digital library use, importance, perceived influences, and satisfaction level. Studying the various factors will help developing a more effective and responsive digital libraries.

In the study various success factors for digital library are being considered these factors include the frequency of use, perceived influences, satisfaction level, access to services etc. Mainly the study explores the use of digital library among the university graduate and undergraduate students in India. It also explains the satisfaction level among the students regarding the usage of digital library.

## 2. Related Work:

The digital library is an information source that reconstructs the knowledge and additional support of traditional library in digital platform. Basically, it is a collection of information including various supporting services in digital format which can be retrieved whenever required through the internet or networks. According to the Seadle, digital library consists of the contents which are basically interconnected through links, metadata, query relationship, applications, web pages in HTML format or the web-based database management system. Although single web page is not considered as digital library. Mainly the digital library requires the use of ICT to link the various resources containing digital information which further not restricted to only documents but are extended to various other digital artefacts. (Seadle, 2007)

According to Enrique (2005), the study reveals that more improvements are required in the field of digital library. In the research the author focused on cognitive style perspective and field & field dependency. The results suggests that more improvements are required in fielddependency and field independency, finally it can be concluded that level of expertise increases and satisfaction level of users decreases.

The author Anna (2008) suggests that user's perception about digital library varies from institute to institute which basically is due to the services offered. Majorly the users have positive attitude when it comes to digital library but lack of awareness regarding some of the services provided by the institute was found. Finally, it was found that the interface of the digital platform and awareness about various services are important factors for consideration.

According to Ming-der et al (2012) the research scholar are mostly the users of digital library. The factors investigated in the research work included the usage pattern, perception influences towards the digital library or resources etc. Study suggest that students using digital library are basically using it for thesis, research paper and articles also majority of them are from the area of Science and technology as compared to other disciplines.

The author Ahmed (2013) discussed the uses patterns of digital information resources with satisfaction level among the faculty members of university. Various service-related issues are there with the digital library. Main reason of dissatisfaction is limited title and access regarding past issues also there were some issues related to difficulty in finding information, slow download speed etc. Finally, researcher concluded that poor infrastructure and limited access is the major reason behind dissatisfaction.

## 3. Methodology:

The study covers five aspects which were used to evaluate the usage of digital libraries among university students in India. The five aspects include were as follows:

Factors related to access digital library

Main purposes for using digital libraries or resources

Apparent influences of digital library use

Frequency of usage digital resources

Overall satisfaction level

In the study sample size of 400 students (graduate and undergraduate) were taken from different universities of India. Sampling technique used was purposive sampling. A pilot survey was done with 50 students from different universities of India so as to pre-test the questions. The questions were significantly improved based on the pilot survey. Indian university undergraduate and graduate students were selected as the respondents under this study as digital libraries or resources are used majorly by research scholars and students for writing their thesis, research papers and dissertations. Primary source of data collection was being used. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected through structured questionnaire which was divided into two parts: Demographic details and Digital Library Usage.

#### 4. Results:

The digital resources are very useful to get information outside the traditional library, one can obtain full length paper of journals, chapters of books etc. The easy and effort less access of digital resources can be categorized into following factors in table 1 which represents factors related to access to digital library. The factors such as remote access, faster & 24 hours access, easy and early access to journals, articles, books etc., have better search capabilities, No limit on number of searches related to various items, additional information & better comparison between items.

Table 1  
Factors related to access digital library

Factors	Undergraduate students (n=200)	Graduate students(n=200)
Remote access, faster & 24 hours access.	101	110
Easy and early access to journals, articles, books etc.	38	37
Have better search capabilities.	23	31
No limit on number of searches related to various items. (books, articles, journals etc.)	17	6
Additional information: latest updated	10	8
Better comparison between items.	11	8

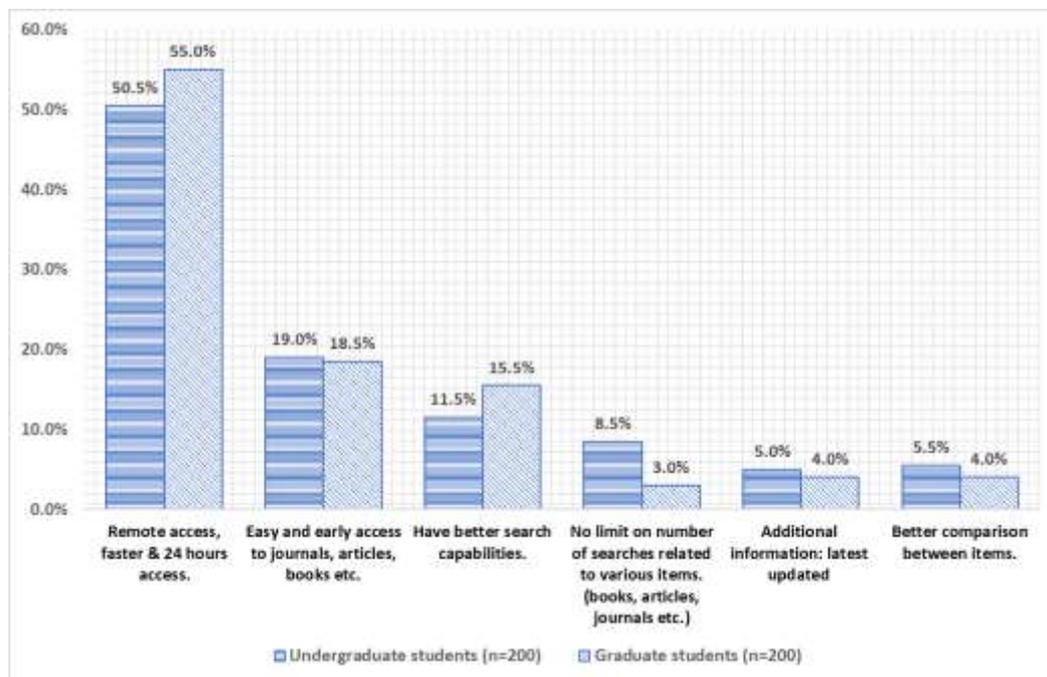


Figure 1

Access digital library in percentage

The figure 1 above suggests that both the groups of students graduate or under graduate show similarity on the various factors related to access digital library. According to the respondents' view point the factor remote access, faster & 24-hour access was being considered as very important factor with 55.05% respondents from under graduate and 50.5% respondents from graduates were in favour of this factor. The three important factors that encourages the use of digital library under this category were found to be Remote access, faster & 24 hours access, easy and early access to journals, articles, books etc. & have better search capabilities. One possible explanation of using digital library as compared to traditional library is fast and timely access.

The table 2 shown below categorizes the main purpose of using digital libraries into following factors complete projects, presentations, report writing and research work (College / University based), resources available electronically only, retrieve facts early, proper citation and referencing, entertainment & others.

Table 2

## Main purpose of using digital libraries

Factors	Undergraduate students(n=200)	Graduate students(n=200)
Complete projects, presentations, report writing and research work (College / University based)	90	68
Resources available electronically only	44	56
Retrieve facts early	26	33
For proper citation and referencing	26	23
Entertainment	4	4
Other	10	16

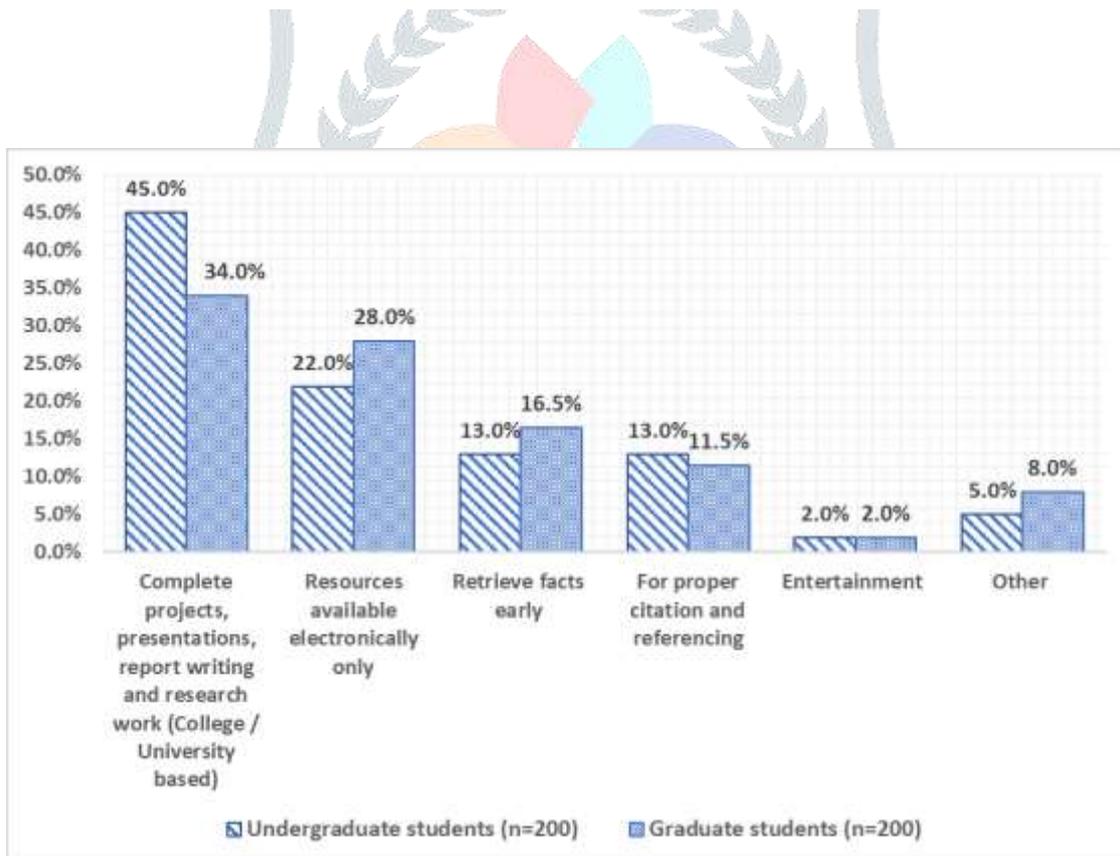


Figure 2

## Main purpose of using digital libraries in percentage

According to the figure 2 it can be suggested that 45% of the undergraduate & 34% graduate students from universities use digital library for completing projects, presentations, report writing and research work as compared with other factors. The three important factors in this category were found to be completing

projects, presentations, report writing and research work, resources available electronically only and retrieve facts early. Although entertainment is lowest ranked factor in the opinion of the digital library users both graduates and under graduates with 2% each.

According to table 3 apparent influences of digital library use covers the following aspects reduce time in retrieving material, no requirement for physical library visits, different range of material, find the required documents easily / accidently& easily maintain updated information.

Table 3  
Apparent influences of digital library use

Aspects	Undergraduate students (n=200)	Graduate students(n=200)
Reduce time in retrieving material	103	68
No requirement for physical library visits	22	24
Different range of material.	40	84
Find the required documents easily / accidently	12	11
Easily maintain updated information	23	13

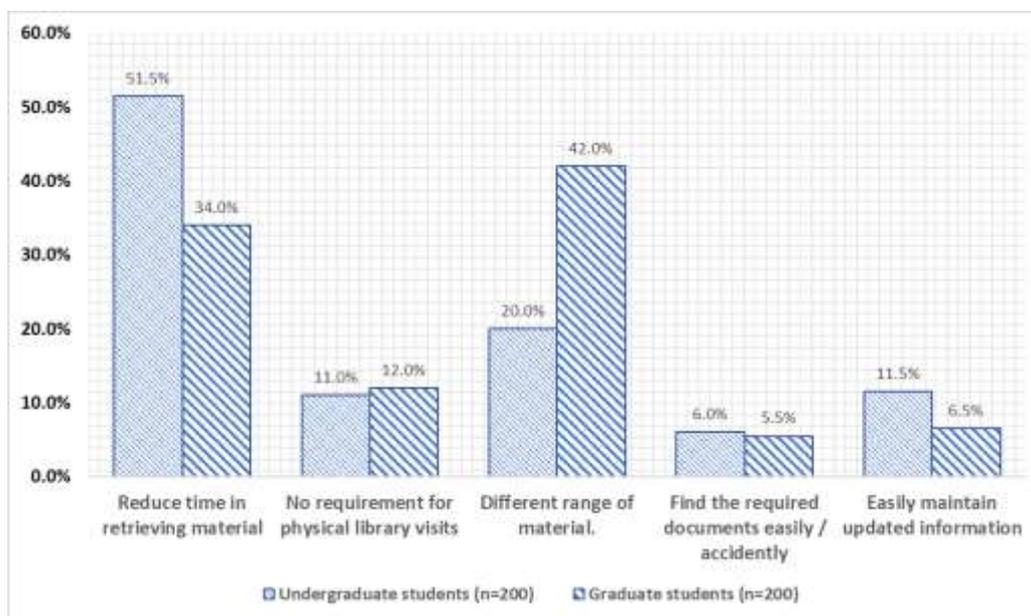


Figure 3

Apparent influences of digital library use in percentage

The figure 3 reveals that graduate students consider different range of material as one of the important factors with 42% opinion as compared to undergraduate students with 34%. The undergraduate students consider reduce time retrieving material as one of the important factors with 51.5% opinion. Three important factors in this category are reduce time in retrieving material, different range of material and no requirement for physical library visits.

According to table 4 the overall satisfaction level by using digital library as compared to traditional library was being measured as high, medium and low. The responses were collected from students from different universities.

Table 4

Overall satisfaction by using digital library

Level of Satisfaction	Undergraduate students (n=200)	Graduate students (n=200)
High	105	154
Medium	55	31
Low	40	15

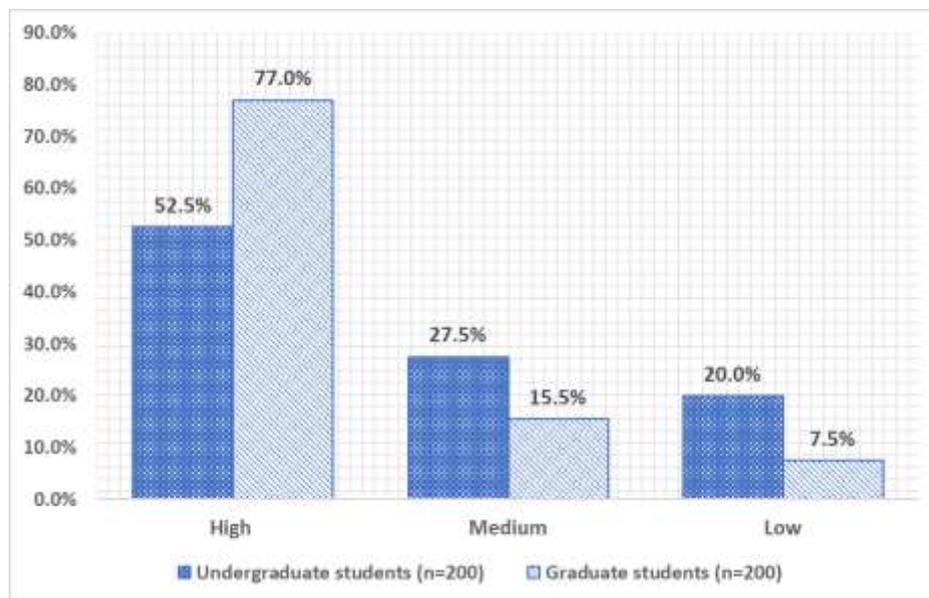


Figure 4

Overall satisfaction by using digital library in percentage

The figures 4 suggests that majority of both graduate and under graduate students were highly satisfied by the use of digital library with 77% and 52.5% having opinion in favour. 27.5% undergraduate students and 15.5% graduate students were having medium satisfaction level. Similarly 20.0% undergraduate students and 7.5% graduate students were having low level of satisfaction through digital library use. The reason for low level of satisfaction can be lack of appropriate content, long time in information retrieval, lack of different range of material etc.

The table 5 shows the frequency of digital library used by the university students. Accordingly, the frequency counts were being measured on daily, weekly, monthly, once or twice only.

Table 5

Frequency of digital library use

Frequency / Count	Undergraduate students (n = 200)	Graduate students (n = 200)
Access Daily	25	40
Access Weekly	70	80
Access Monthly	90	70
Access once or twice only	15	10

Majority, 45% of undergraduate students access the digital library monthly, 35% weekly, 12.5% access daily. 7.5% of the respondents as undergraduate students have used digital library once or twice only. Similarly, 40% of the graduate students uses digital library weekly, 35% monthly, 20% access daily. 5% of the respondents as graduate students have used digital library once or twice only. It can be concluded

that all over 12.5 % respondents have used the digital library once or twice only which suggest they are still dependent on traditional library.

## 5. Conclusion:

The study concludes that digital library is very useful and far better than the traditional library system as majority 77% graduate and 52.5% undergraduate students were highly satisfied by the use of digital library services. According to the respondents the important factors related to digital library use were found to be remote access, faster & 24 hours access, easy and early access to journals, articles, books etc. & better search. Similarly based on the purpose of using digital libraries the important factors were found to be completing projects, presentations, report writing and research work, resources available electronically only and retrieve facts early. According to apparent influences of digital library use the vital factors were found to be reducing time in retrieving material, different range of material and no requirement for physical library visits. All over the factor remote, faster & 24 hours access was found to be the most important success factor with 52.75% opinion in favour including both undergraduate & graduate students.

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