ASSESSING ANDHRA UNIVERSITY PG STUDENTS' DIGITAL LITERACY: DIGITAL RESOURCES' LEARNING IMPACT

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INTRODUCTION

- The emergence of digital technology has triggered an explosion of information in various formats, sparking concerns about its reliability and authenticity. In today's digital era, individuals must grapple with many electronic resources, emphasizing the growing importance of information literacy.

- Digital literacy also empowers students to collaborate, communicate, problem-solve, and share across various domains, including education and employment. As technology evolves, it is crucial for students to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to leverage digital resources. Educators and policymakers must integrate digital literacy into the curriculum and ensure access to necessary technology and resources (Shopova,2014)[4]. By nurturing digital literacy among students, we can enhance their academic and professional abilities, preparing them to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To discover how PG students are familiar with digital literacy and online resources.

- To look at the effective sources that PG students use to research any issue and obtain information.

- To evaluate how the internet affects and helps PG students with their education.

- To determine the limitations of PG students when utilizing the Internet.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- The present study examines and analyses digital literacy skills and the impact of the Internet on postgraduate students at Andhra University.

- This commitment to excellence was duly acknowledged when the university received an impressive A++ grade and CGPA of 3.74 out of 4 from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).

LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Boro et al. (2024)** explored digital literacy skills among Generation Z students at Mizoram University bond the impact of the Internet on academics. The study, involving 250 students selected via non-probability sampling, used an online questionnaire and SPSS for data analysis. Findings highlighted that digital literacy includes using technology for analysis, research, communication, and critically evaluating online resources. The study emphasized the Internet's role in enhancing digital literacy and technological skills, significantly influencing the academic environment.

- **Krishnamurthy and Shettappanavar (2019)** studied digital literacy among female postgraduate students at Karnatak University, focusing on ICT proficiency, internet usage, and E-resource search strategies. Google was the preferred search engine, with 68.83% aware of Google Scholar. Platforms like ResearchGate and Twitter were used, while LinkedIn and SciSpace saw less use. The study highlighted a lack of awareness in search strategies and copyright issues, with challenges like poor network connectivity and access restrictions hindering resource utilization.

- **Ukwoma et al. (2016)** examined the digital literacy proficiency of University of Nigeria Nsukka students using the MTN digital library. A survey of 281 students revealed that many possessed and regularly used digital literacy skills, with a majority noting a positive impact on academic performance. Key challenges included power outages, limited internet access, inadequate ICT infrastructure, and a lack of training programs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Postgraduate students at Andhra University in Visakhapatnam were given the survey questionnaire. It was decided upon by selecting a non-probabilistic sample of respondents.

- Two hundred students were given a structured online questionnaire (Google form) to which one hundred and seventy-seven responded.

- The information was gathered between March 2, 2024, and April 8, 2024. Various methods were used to contact the respondents, including direct communication, department visits, emails, and social media platforms like Facebook and WhatsApp. Using SPSS, additional review and analysis of the collected data was carried out.

SAMPLING

- The sample of 200 postgraduate students was distributed across various disciplines as follows:

- Science: 50 students

- Humanities: 40 students

- Engineering: 30 students

- Social Sciences: 30 students

- Commerce: 20 students

- Education: 20 students

- Law: 10 students

ANALYSIS

- **Gender-wise Respondents**

S. No.	Gender	Responses Frequency	%	Valid %
1	Male	82	55.40	55.40
2	Female	66	44.59	44.59
	Total	148	100 %	

Table 1 shows 148 responses were received from the respondents; the majority, 82 (55.40 %), were male, and the remaining 66 (44.59 %) were female. Here, the survey shows that male participation is higher than female participation.

ANALYSIS

- Familiarity with the Term Digital Literacy

S. No.	Familiarity	Responses Frequency	%	Valid %
1	Yes	142	95.94	95.94
2	No	6	4.05	4.05
	Total	148	100 %	

Table 2 shows that among all the responses, the majority of the respondents are familiar with the term 142 (95.94 %), and only 6 (4.05 %) need to be more aware.

ANALYSIS

- **Familiarity with Internet Resources**

S. No.	Familiarity	Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
1	Search engines	144	28.4	97.3
2	Online database	52	10.3	35.1
3	Web OPAC	41	8.1	27.8
4	Digital library archives	48	9.5	32.4
5	E-media - newspapers, magazines, books, encyclopedias, etc.	136	26.9	91.9
6	Electronic audio records	85	16.8	57.5
	Total	506	100	

Table 3 shows that the majority, 144 (28.4 %) respondents are familiar with search engines; more than half 136 (26.9 %) are familiar with E-media - newspapers, magazines, books, encyclopedias, etc., 85 (16.8 %) are familiar with electronic audio records, 52 (10.3 %) are familiar with online databases, 48 (9.5 %) are familiar with Digital library archives, 41 (8.1 %) are familiar with web OPAC.

ANALYSIS

- **Resources Consulted by Students to Find Information**

S. No.	Resources	Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
1	Internet websites	142	26.4	95.9
2	Databases	45	8.3	30.4
3	Social media	139	25.9	93.9
4	YouTube Channels	140	26.1	94.5
5	Journals	71	13.3	47.9
	Total	537	100	

Table 4 reveals that 142 (26.4%) of the respondents said they looked up information through the Internet; 140 (26.1%) said they looked up information on YouTube; 139 (25.9%) said they looked up information on social media; 71 (13.3%) said they looked up information in journals; and 45 (8.3%) said they looked up information in databases.

ANALYSIS

- **Impact of the Internet on the Academics**

S. No.	Impact of the Internet	Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
1	Stays current with the most recent information	142	17.4	95.9
2	Access to resources for online learning	135	16.6	91.2
3	Easily accessible high-quality education	126	15.5	85.1
4	Information dissemination	140	17.2	94.6
5	increases academic output	132	16.2	89.1
6	Visual techniques to help comprehend complex subjects	140	17.2	94.5
	Total	815	100	

Table 5 shows that the majority of respondents, 142 (17.4%), said that Stays are up to date with the most recent information; 140 (17.2%) said that visual aids aid in understanding complex subjects; 140 (17.2%) said that they aid in the dissemination of information; 135 (16.6%) said that they have access to online learning resources; 132 (16.2%) said that they aid in increasing academic output, and 126 (15.5%) said that they have easy access to high-quality education.

ANALYSIS

- **Constraints Faced While Using the Internet**

S. No.	Constraints faced while using the Internet	Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
1	Insufficient technical expertise	57	22.8	38.5
2	Inadequate internet access	32	12.8	21.7
3	Restricted availability of Internet resources	64	25.6	43.2
4	Concerns about privacy and safety	97	38.8	65.5
	Total	250	100	

Table 7 shows that the majority of respondents, or 97 people, or 38.8%, said they faced privacy and safety concerns, 64 (25.6%) reported limited access to Internet resources, 57 (22.8%) reported insufficient technological knowledge, and 32 (12.8%) reported insufficient internet connectivity.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- The study presents responses regarding familiarity with "Digital Literacy." Out of 148 respondents, 142 indicated they were familiar with the term, representing 95.94%. Conversely, only six respondents, or 4.05%, stated they were unfamiliar with the term. Overall, most respondents demonstrated familiarity with Digital Literacy, suggesting a high level of awareness among the surveyed population.

- Search engines are the most familiar resources, with 144 respondents indicating familiarity, representing 97.3% of the cases. E-media, including newspapers, magazines, books, and encyclopedias, garnered familiarity from 136 respondents, accounting for 91.9% of cases. Electronic audio records were familiar to 85 respondents, constituting 57.5% of cases. Other resources, such as online databases, web OPAC, and digital library archives, were less familiar, with percentages ranging from 27.8% to 35.1%. Overall, while search engines and e-media are widely familiar among respondents, other resources like online databases and digital library archives are less familiar to a significant portion of the surveyed population.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Out of 148, 142 respondents, representing 95.9% of cases, reported consulting internet websites for information. A significant portion of respondents, 139 individuals (93.9% of cases), relied on social media for information. Similarly, 140 respondents (94.5% of cases) utilized YouTube channels as a resource for gathering information. A smaller proportion of respondents, 45 individuals (30.4% of cases), consulted databases for information. Among the resources listed, journals were consulted by 71 respondents, accounting for 47.9% of cases. Overall, internet websites, social media, and YouTube channels are students' most frequently consulted resources, while databases and journals are consulted to a lesser extent.

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 57 respondents (38.5% of cases) reported facing challenges due to inadequate technical knowledge. Thirty-two respondents (21.7% of cases) cited limited internet access as a constraint. Sixty-four respondents (43.2% of cases) highlighted issues with the limited availability of internet resources. A significant majority of respondents, 97 individuals (65.5% of cases), expressed concerns regarding privacy and safety while using the Internet. Overall, the data indicates that concerns about privacy and safety are the most prevalent constraints faced by individuals using the internet, followed by restricted availability of internet resources, insufficient technical expertise, and inadequate internet access.

SUGGESTIONS

- The institution has numerous databases covering various courses, but students are still unaware of these resources. As a result, library administrators should spread the word about these databases and encourage users to use them. The library must raise awareness among students through awareness-raising events.

- Students use databases and journals less frequently than on internet websites, social media platforms, and YouTube channels. Because we occasionally encounter false material on various social media platforms, university staff must develop awareness campaigns.

CONCLUSION

- While respondents demonstrated reliance on online platforms for information access, challenges such as inadequate technical knowledge and limited internet access underscore the need for targeted interventions to address digital literacy gaps. Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the digital landscape among postgraduate students, emphasizing the importance of digital literacy and internet proficiency in today's information-driven world.

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