Information Seeking Behavior of the Humanities and Social Science Undergraduates: A Case of University of Colombo¹

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Abstract

This paper discusses the Information Seeking Behavior (ISB) of the Humanities and Social Science (HSS) undergraduates of the University of Colombo with three objectives; to study the information resource usage of the undergraduates, to study the barriers they encounter in seeking and using the information and to study the information seeking process of the undergraduates. A questionnaire and Focus Group Meetings (FGMs) were used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. Convenient Sampling method was used and the response rate was 82% out of 550 questionnaires while 95 attended the FGMs. SPSS (ver. 22) and manual analysis were used to analyze data.

Most respondents use Internet instead of library resources and do not use standard criteria to evaluate information. The majority consult their batch mates for help in using information resources. At the same time, most of them have not received any training in using the library resources or Internet. They face several barriers related to library resources, facilities, services and training which prevent them from reaching the library first for their information needs. The processes they follow to search and use information correspond to some other information seeking models. It is recommended that additional research is required to substantiate the gravity of this issue and librarians need to collaborate with the faculty to improve their ISB.

Keywords: Social Science and Humanities, undergraduates, Information Seeking Behaviour



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1. Introduction

The current educational paradigm of university education has moved from conventional Teacher-Centred Learning (TCL), to Student-Centred Learning (SCL) changing the roles of both the students as well as the teachers considerably. Both teachers and students engaged in SCL essentially need an increased volume of information and skills to determine the amount and quality of information needed to access information effectively and efficiently in order to appraise information and its sources critically and also to use information ethically and legally to fulfill a specific purpose. The ability to perform all these tasks is defined as Information literacy (IL). IL programmes that develop a wide range of information management skills are essential in the Sri Lankan university context because the poor quality of school libraries and highly exam-oriented learning do not prepare the undergraduates to face the complicated information environment in the university libraries.

In the university, it becomes vital for the students to have access to the latest research information to strengthen their knowledge base, but at the same time searching, locating and accessing information, especially, through digital media, becomes a complex issue. Information offered through different publisher platforms and variations in the indexing of material makes searching and using information more complicated than using the printed material offered through the libraries. Though it is a common belief within the university system that the undergraduates do not need much guidance in using the university library, quite contrary to this incredulity, they need a considerable amount of guiding to use the advanced information system in the university.

Currently the university library offers an orientation programme for the new entrants and a limited number of training sessions for the third and the fourth year students on using information resources in writing dissertations, but they do not adequately prepare the students for SCL nor do they provide any transferable lifelong learning skills for them to survive in the world of work. Therefore, librarians must transform these programmes to be more student-centric and geared towards provision of more transferable skills than conventional library tours and orientation programmes. In order to develop more context specific information literacy programmes, a good understanding of the students' information seeking behavior is vital but there is a dearth of research carried out in a holistic manner with regard to the social science and humanities undergraduates of the University of Colombo. This paper discusses a research study carried out with the intention of filling this gap.

2. Research Problem and Objectives

The research problem involved the systematic study of the current position of the information resource usage and information seeking practices of the Social Science and Humanities (SSH) undergraduates of the University of Colombo with a view to discover the trends, practices and issues encountered by them. The main objective of the study was to raise awareness about the resource usage and information seeking

practices of the undergraduates in the SSH disciplines and to make recommendations to address the identified issues. Two specific objectives were formulated for the research and to achieve them, seven Research Questions (RQs) were formulated. To test whether there is a significant statistical relationship among the three independent variables (Year of study, Faculty and Gender of the respondents) and six dependent variables (use of resources, criteria used to evaluate library material, criteria used to evaluate web-based resources, people consulted for help in selecting information resources, training received in using Internet and training received in using library resources), five hypotheses were formulated (Table1).

Objectives	RQs	Hypotheses
1. To study the Information resource usag of the HSS	RQ1 – What are the types of information e resources used and the frequency of	H1. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the use of information resources
undergraduate	es their usage? RQ2 – What are the purposes for which they use these information resources?	AND year of study, faculty, gender and purpose of the respondents.
	RQ3 – What are the criteria they use to evaluate the information resources?	H2. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the criteria used to evaluate library material and web- based resources AND year of study, faculty and gender of the respondents.
	RQ4 – Who are the people consulted by the students to seek help with information resource usage?	H3. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the people approached for help AND year of study, faculty and gender of the respondents.
	RQ5 – What type of training have they received in using the information resources?	H4. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the training received in using the Internet and library resources AND year of study, faculty and gender of the respondents.

Table 1 – Objectives, RQs and Hypotheses

		H5. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the need for training AND year of study, faculty and gender
2. To study the F barriers that they encounter, in seeking and using the information F	RQ6 – Do they encounter any barriers in seeking and using information resources? RQ7 – What are the barriers they encounter in seeking and using information resources?	of the respondents.

3. Review of Literature

Information Seeking Behavior is defined by Wilson (2000:49) as "the purposive seeking for information as a consequence of a need to satisfy some goal. In the course of seeking, the individual may interact with manual information systems (such as a newspaper or a library), or with computer-based systems (such as the World Wide Web)." Wilson (2000) perceives information seeking behavior as "a sub domain of Information Behavior which is the totality of human behavior in relation to sources and channels of information, including both active and passive information seeking, and information use." Wilson identifies more domains; Information Searching Behavior and Information Use Behavior. Information Searching Behavior "is the 'micro-level' of behavior employed by the searcher in interacting with information systems of all kinds. It consists of all the interactions with the system, whether at the level of human computer interaction (for example, use of the mouse and clicks on links) or at the intellectual level (for example, adopting a Boolean search strategy or determining the criteria for deciding which of two books selected from adjacent places on a library shelf is more useful), which will also involve mental acts, such as judging the relevance of data or information." (Wilson 2000: 49). Information Use Behavior "consists of the physical and mental acts involved in incorporating the information found into the person's existing knowledge base." (Wilson 2000:50). He perceives all four domains as a series of nested fields and this study specifically to Information Seeking Behavior as it studies the purposive seeking for information to satisfy academic goals by interacting with the information resources.

The search for literature related to undergraduates in SSH established that the previous research concentrates more on the faculty members and postgraduate students rather than the undergraduates. A major study on disciplinary differences of

undergraduates' information seeking behaviour was carried out by Whitmire (2002). The research classifies science as hard/soft, applied/pure and life /non-life. Students numbering 5,175 were selected from a sample of 10,000 attending 38 four-year institutions. The study established that the undergraduates in the soft disciplines (humanitis, business, social sciences and education) engage in more information seeking activities (using online catalogue, asking librarians for help, read in reference section, using indexes, browsing shelves, checking citations, reading basic references and checking out books) than the undergraduates in hard disciplines (physical science and engineering). The undergraduates in pure disciplines (physical sciences, humanities and social sciences) engage on more information seeking activities mentioned above than the undergraduates in appllied disciplines (engineering, business nad education). The undergraduates in life disciplines (social science and education) engaged in more information seeking activities than the undergraduates in non-life disciplines (physical sciences, engineering, humanities and business). Whitmire (2002) asserts that these findings have practical implications for academic librarians as one-size-fits-all model of delivering services is not suitable because the failure to recognise the disciplinary difference of information seeking patterns will favour only some groups. Tahir, Mahmood and Shafique (2010), in their study of 62 Arts and humanities faculty and research staff of University of Punjab ascertained that, corresponding with many previous studies the humanists stick to printed information sources but they still pay good attention to the e-resources and are regular users of a variety of e-resources. Reviewing the literature from 1996 to 2008, they conclude that books and journals are the first priority of humanities researchers, they still prefer the paper copy to e-copy of the same text. They are late and slow adopters of new technology in comparison with scholars in science and technology, and that they are less skillful in using ICT compared to scholars in other disciplines and need training.

In the Sri Lankan context, Dharmarathne (2008) reports the findings of a study of Arts undergraduates. He studied a total of fifty students from 2nd, 3rd and 4th years and concluded that the majority did not have a sound knowledge of e-resources. They used computers for entertainment and communication purposes than for academic purposes, the majority of them had not visited the library website, hence not aware of the resources available through the website, and that they lacked ICT and English skills. They were not guided by the academics adequately and this affected their information seeking behaviour. Wijetunge and Alahakoon (2017) concluded that the Arts undergraduates often used recommended readings (80%), library collection (85%), search engines (66%), databases in the library (33%), lecturers (65%) and classmates (62%).

4. Research Methodology

Data collection was carried out in two stages. Initially quantitative data were gathered on their information resource usage to satisfy the two objectives, using a questionnaire as the principle data collection instrument. The questionnaire was used because, the numbers needed to be surveyed within a short period were large and the use of any other method would not have been cost effective, the questionnaire being the most effective method of reaching a large number within a short period, and the responses expected were simple and straightforward, therefore the probability of getting irrelevant responses was less. There were several drawbacks in this method, i.e. the response rate is generally low, there is no opportunity to correct misunderstandings or to offer help or clarification to respondents, and it is not possible to check incomplete responses. Despite these drawbacks the questionnaire method was used to gather data, considering the above positive factors. The questionnaire was constructed using the previous research (Head and Eisenberg (2009 and 2010), Cheunwattana et.al. (2012), Wijetunge (2014, 2015), and was administered within the Main Library, University of Colombo from December 2016-March 2017. This instrument was piloted with a small group of respondents before administering to the full sample.

The second stage of the data collection was carried out using Focus Group Meetings (FGMs) to gather qualitative data to establish the validity of findings received through the questionnaires. Once the questionnaire responses were collected, students were invited to participate at the FGMs through a banner and notices displayed in the Main Library. Qualitative data gathered were textually recorded and analyzed manually.

The total undergraduate population in the Faculties of Social Sciences and Humanities was 6,065 (University of Colombo 2017) and the Convenience Sampling method was used to select the sample. According to Dörnyei (2007), Convenience sampling which is also known as Haphazard Sampling or Accidental Sampling is a type of non-probability or non-random sampling where members of the target population that meet a certain practical criteria, i.e. easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate, are included for the purpose of the study. Convenience samples are sometimes regarded as 'accidental samples' as the elements in the sample can be selected as they just happen to be situated, spatially or administratively, near to where the researcher is conducting the data collection (Etikan, Sulaiman and Alkassim 2016). These authors further comment that, though this method has a lot of limitations, it is useful especially when randomization is impossible when the population is very large. It can also be useful when the researcher has limited resources, time and workforce. Although stratified random sampling method is ideal for the survey, there were many practical difficulties in identifying and surveying a random sample from the individual academic departments. Therefore, convenient sampling method was used.

The questionnaire was distributed in the Main Library with several promotional banners and the questionnaire was handed out to all the undergraduates from the Faculties of Arts (FA), Education (FE), Law (FL) and Management & Finance (FMF) who willingly approached the special desk during a four-month period. To encourage the students to respond, a Raffle Draw was planned with a Media Pad, smart phone and a Power Bank as the first three prizes. In addition seven consolation prizes were also offered. The questionnaire and the Raffle Draw were designed in such a way, to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. The study was approved by the Ethics

Review Committee for Social Science and Humanities of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo.

Quantitative data were coded and entered to SPSS (ver. 22) for analysis and presented as frequencies and percentages. Cramer's V tests were used to examine the Association between the independent and dependent variables. MS Excel 2010 was used to generate summarized Tables and Figures. Qualitative data gathered through FGMs were textually recorded and the contents were analyzed manually.

5. Findings

The following sections present the findings and each table presents the total number of responses received for a particular survey item (n) and the answers provided by the respondents as a percentage of that total.

5.1 Demographic details of respondents

During the survey, 550 questionnaires were distributed, of which 457 responded, however, six were removed as they were not from SSH domain. The total number of responses (451) which is 82% of the total distributed conforms with recommended sample sizes by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The majority (77.3%) were female in the age group of 21-23 years (77.4%), from the Faculty of Arts (48.7%) and the largest group of respondents (130) was from the first academic year (Table 2). Thirty-four students voluntarily attended the FGMs representing Faculties of Arts, Law and Management.

Catagory	Sub Catagory	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	No	Total	0/
Category	Sub Category	Year	Year	Year	r Year respons		Total	70
Gandar	Male	37	22	29	14	0	102	22.6
Gender	Female	198	61	54	34	2	349	77.4
Total		235	83	83	48	2	451	100.0
	18-20 years old	51	2	4	4	0	61	13.5
Age	21-23 years old	172	75	68	20	2	337	74.7
	24-26 years old	5	2	7	22	0	36	8.0
	Over 26 years old	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.2
	Not responded	7	4	4	1	0	16	3.5
Total		235	83	83	48	2	451	100.0
	Arts	130	40	29	15	1	215	47.7
Faculty	Education	1	7	2	2	0	12	2.7
	Law	49	23	20	20	1	113	25.1

Table 2 – Demographic Details

	Management & Finance	51	12	29	9	0	101	22.4
	Not responded	4	1	3	2	0	10	2.2
Total		235	83	83	48	2	451	100.0
Participati	Arts	14	20	17	10	0	61	64.2
on at	Education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Focus	Law	5	6	7	1	0	19	20.0
Group Meetings	Management & Finance	2	3	10	0	0	15	15.8
Total		21	29	34	11	0	95	100.0

5.2 Usage of Resources

From the list provided, respondents indicated the frequency that they used different resources. Of the resources, they often used Recommended Readings (70%), Internet (62.6%), Personal Collections (57.1%) and Library Books (55.9%) (Table 3).

Although the findings illustrate that the Recommended Readings are the most often used resource by 70%, FGMs confirmed that they often used the Internet more than any other type of resource as it was convenient. It was also revealed that Library books are used often by 55.9%. However, the user statistics of the library illustrated that the borrowing of library books is considerably low (Table 4) and the FGMs established that the respondents were not satisfied with the library collection for several reasons as discussed in section 4.7.

Type of Resource	n	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Recommended Readings (text books)	423	70.0	25.1	3.1	1.9
2. Handouts given in the class	370	46.2	40.0	9.7	15.0
3. Library Books	417	55.9	24.2	17.7	2.2
4. Journals available in the library	359	25.6	38.2	24.2	12.0
5. Full text databases provided through the library	291	31.3	36.4	18.9	13.4
6. Internet	396	62.6	26.8	7.8	2.8
7. Wikipedia	382	41.1	283.0	16.5	14.1
8. Batch mates	415	55.4	35.2	5.8	3.6
9. Senior Students	407	31.7	49.1	14.0	5.2
10. Friends /family	396	36.9	38.1	19.4	5.6
11. Social Networking sites	395	38.0	39.7	14.9	7.3
12. Personal Collection (materials owned)	368	57.1	20.9	13.9	8.2

Table 3 – Usage of resources

From 2017.01.01 to 2017.09.30							
Academic Year	Registered Students	Total No. of Books Borrowed	Average borrowing per 9 months				
1st Arts	605	1788	3.0				
2nd Arts	738	7567	10.3				
3rd Arts	823	8264	10.0				
4th Arts	444	6466	14.6				
1st Mgt	428	77	0.2				
2nd Mgt	411	1115	2.7				
3rd Mgt	432	456	1.1				
4th Mgt	419	395	0.9				
1st Law	251	480	1.9				
2nd Law	246	654	2.7				
3rd Law	250	667	2.7				
4th Law	482	803	1.7				
Total	5529	28732	51.6				

Table 4 – Borrowing of books from the Main Library

Source: Library circulation statistics

Of the respondents, the majority (84.1%) confirmed that they used the given resources often for assignments (84.1%), to supplement lecture notes (65.6%), to increase subject knowledge (64.9%) and to write dissertations (47.7%) (Table 5).

Table 5 – Purpose of using resources

	Purpose	n	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1.	To write Assignments	434	84.1	13.4	1.8	0.7
2.	To Supplement Lecture Notes	425	65.6	26.1	8	0.2
3.	To write a Dissertation	344	47.7	33.1	11.9	7.3
4.	To increase subject knowledge	424	64.9	23.3	10.6	1.2
5.	To relax	410	20.7	35.4	28.5	15.4
6.	To develop personal skills and	405	33.6	45.4	16.8	4.2
	competences					
7.	To develop non-subject	413	38.5	39.7	17.9	3.9
	knowledge					

Findings indicate that the main purpose they use the information resources often is to write assignments and to supplement lecture notes. Using the given resources for relaxation or to develop personal skills and non-subject knowledge is practiced only by less than 50% of the respondents.

Cramer's V tests (Table 6) proved that there is no statistically significant positive relationship between the use of resources and the year of study, faculty or gender of the respondents. Therefore, these findings reject the hypothesis 1 that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the use of information resources AND year of study, faculty or gender of the respondents.

Type of Resources	Ye	ear of Stu	ıdy		Faculty	Faculty Gender			
	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS
1. Recommended Readings (text books)	433	0.113	.057	425	0.182	0.000	372	0.167	0.002
2. Handouts given in classroom	377	0.102	.220	372	0.124	0.078	379	0.159	0.008
3. Library Books	426	0.094	.255	293	0.114	0.269	427	0.077	0.280
4. Journals available in the library	366	0.108	.168	360	0.098	0.326	367	0.116	0.083
5. Full text databases provided through the library	298	0.092	.577	293	0.114	0.269	300	0.048	0.707
6. Internet	406	0.061	.877	398	0.088	0.408	408	0.006	0.992
7. Batch mates	424	0.100	.175	417	0.076	0.571	426	0.101	0.113
8. Senior students	416	0.083	.469	409	0.099	0.236	418	0.050	0.592
9. Friends /family	405	0.063	.855	398	0.086	0.428	407	0.050	0.605
10. Social Networking sites	404	0.082	.512	397	0.091	0.367	406	0.117	0.061
11. Personal Collection (materials owned)	377	0.110	.135	370	0.175	0.001	379	0.124	0.053

Table 6 - Association between	the use of resourc	es and Yea	r of study,	Faculty
and Gender				

CV - Cramer's V; AS - Approx. Sig

5.3 Criteria used to evaluate information resources

Respondents were given nine criteria to indicate the frequency of their use to evaluate the library material and eleven criteria to indicate the frequency of their use to evaluate the web-based resources. Of the respondents, 61.1% mentioned that they often used the currency of the material followed by prior use of the resource (54.4%), reputation of the author (46.8%), and whether they had heard of the item before (46.8%) in evaluating resources (Table 7). However, the FGM participants mentioned

that they did not use any of these criteria but used what was readily accessible to them if the material contained the information they needed.

Criteria	n	Often	Some times	Rarely	Never
1. Currency	414	61.1	30.0	6.8	2.2
2. Reputation of author/s	417	46.8	29.7	20.9	2.6
3. Whether content acknowledges different viewpoints	411	38.0	38.4	19.2	4.4
4. Author gives credit to the ideas of others	397	41.6	30.5	18.1	9.8
5. Availability of a bibliography	399	39.6	34.1	17.0	9.3
6. Availability of essential information in charts, graphs etc.	406	35.7	40.9	19.5	3.9
7. Reputation of publisher	395	36.7	29.9	22.5	10.9
8. Heard of the material before	406	46.8	33.5	13.8	5.9
9. Used the material before	410	54.4	27.8	14.4	3.4

Table 7 - Criteria used to evaluate Library material

Of the respondents, 68.3% confirmed that they often used currency of the website followed by whether they had used the website before (44.9%), whether the author gave credit to the ideas of others (44.3%) and whether the website had links to other resources (41.7%) (Table 8). However, the FGMs participants mentioned that they never used these criteria but just selected what was suitable for their purpose from the first couple of screens of the hit list.

Criteria	n	Often	Some	Rarely	Never
			times		
1. Currency of the website	410	68.3	24.4	5.4	2.0
2. Reputation of author/s	397	39.3	33.0	19.1	8.6
3. Content acknowledges different	386	41.2	37.0	14.0	7.8
viewpoints					
4. Availability of essential information	406	38.2	39.9	18.2	3.7
in charts, graphs etc.					
5. Author gives credit to the ideas of	395	44.3	33.4	16.2	6.1
others					
6. What the URL is	394	39.3	31.5	21.8	7.4
7. Whether website has links to other	386	41.7	28.2	22.8	7.3
resources					
8. Availability of a bibliography	374	31.8	34.8	23.0	10.4
9. Heard of the website before	406	36.7	43.3	15.8	4.2
10. Used the website before	410	44.9	34.9	15.1	5.1
11. Design of the website	371	40.7	29.9	24.5	4.9

 Table 8 - Criteria used to evaluate web-based resources

Cramer's V tests (Tables 9 and 10) proved that there is no statistically significant positive relationship between the criteria used to evaluate library material and webbased resources AND year of study, faculty or gender of the respondents. Therefore, these findings reject the hypothesis 2 that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the evaluation of information resources AND year of study, faculty or gender of the respondents.

Criteria used to	Yea	ar of Stu	ıdy		Faculty	/		Gende	r
evaluate library material	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS
1.Currency	424	.093	.281	416	0.051	0.952	426	0.059	0.691
2. Reputation of author/s	426	.092	.290	419	0.056	0.911	428	0.089	0.339
3. Whether content acknowledges different viewpoints	419	.118	.042	413	0.081	0.526	421	0.047	0.814
4. Author gives credit to the ideas of others	406	.083	.053	399	0.120	0.044	408	0.096	0.292
5. Availability of a bibliography	407	.037	.996	401	0.114	0.072	409	0.053	0.763
6. Availability of essential information in charts, graphs etc.	414	.082	.490	408	0.080	0.546	416	0.081	0.437
7.Reputation of publisher	403	.062	.862	397	0.092	0.350	405	0.06	0.686
8. Heard of the material before	415	.135	.007	408	0.081	0.529	417	0.091	0.328
9. Used the material before	418	.092	.306	412	0.074	0.667	420	0.062	0.654

 Table 9 -Association between the criteria used to evaluate library material and

 Year of study, Faculty and Gender

CV - Cramer's V; AS - Approx. Sig

Criteria used to	Yea	ır of Stu	ıdy		Faculty	у		Gende	er
evaluate web- based materials	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS
1. Currency of the website	420	.083	.470	412	0.101	0.177	422	0.105	0.202
2. Reputation of author/s	406	.057	.910	399	0.129	0.019	408	0.099	0.260
3. Content acknowledge s different viewpoints	394	.077	.633	388	0.085	0.494	396	0.107	0.212
4. Availability of essential information in charts, graphs etc.	414	.099	.208	408	0.091	0.341	416	0.088	0.362
5. Author gives credit to the ideas of others	402	.075	.658	397	0.108	0.131	404	0.066	0.623
6. What the URL is	402	.042	.989	396	0.106	0.152	404	0.083	0.423
7. Whether website has links to other resources	395	.088	.418	387	0.085	0.494	396	0.177	0.006
8. Availability of a bibliography	381	.094	.342	376	0.096	0.318	383	0.084	0.439
9. Heard of the website before	414	.063	.845	408	0.081	0.530	416	0.098	0.266
10. Used the website before	419	.055	.923	412	0.076	0.616	421	0.016	0.991
11.Design of the website	379	.081	.598	373	0.112	0.120	381	0.038	0.905

Table 10 - Association between criteria used to evaluate web-based resources and Year of Study, Faculty and Gender

CV - Cramer's V; AS - Approx. Sig

5.4 People approached for help

Respondents were asked to identify the people they approached whenever they needed any help with selecting information resources. Of the respondents, 69.1% often approached their batch mates for advice, followed by their lecturers (62.7%),

friends and family (37.5%), and librarians (27%) (Table 11). The FGM participants confirmed that they approached their own batch mates for advice, considering its convenience, but none of them had approached librarians for help. The findings did not indicate that, with the academic progression their help-seeking practices mature.

People	n	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Lecturers	416	62.7	25.5	8.7	3.1
2. Librarians	397	27	32.5	25.4	15.1
3. Batch mates	424	69.1	23.3	6.4	1.2
4. Friends and family	403	37.5	35.2	22.3	5
5. Licensed professionals (i.e., Accountants, Lawyers, etc)	395	13.7	44.3	32.4	9.6
6. Senior students	190	6.3	34.7	30.5	28.4

Table 11 - People approached for help

Cramer's V tests (Table 12) proved that there is no statistically significant positive relationship between the people approached for help AND year of study, faculty and gender of the respondents. Therefore, these findings reject the hypothesis 3 that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the people approached for help AND year of study, faculty and gender of the respondents.

Table 12–Association between people approached for help and Year of Study,Faculty and Gender

Criteria used to evaluate web-	Ye	ar of St	udy		Faculty	/		Ger	nder
Dased materials	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS	n	CV	AS
1. Lecturers	425	.084	.430	418	0.069	0.741	427	0.172	0.006
2. Librarians	406	.108	.112	399	0.078	0.615	408	0.060	0.690
3. Batch mates	434	.092	.266	426	0.116	0.047	436	0.045	0.825
4. Friends and family	412	.070	.729	405	0.069	0.761	414	0.028	0.957
5. Licensed professional s	404	.078	.591	397	0.105	0.162	406	0.138	0.051
6. Senior students	194	.128	.391	192	0.124	0.449	196	0.139	0.287

CV - Cramer's V; AS - Approx. Sig

5.5 Training in using Internet and library resources

Respondents were asked to comment on the training they received in using Internet and the library resources for their academic purposes, and of them nearly 60% from the FA confirmed that they had received training in using Internet, but most of the respondents from FL (67.3%) and FMF (63%) had not received any training in using Internet for their academic purposes. There was no response from the FE (Table 13).

Faculty	Received training	Did not receive training		
Arts (FA)	59.9	40.1		
Education (FE)	No responses			
Law (FL)	32.7	67.3		
Mgt & Finance (FMF)	37	63		

Table 13 - Training received in using Internet

Table 14 illustrates that majority of the respondents from FMF (64.3%), FA (58.4%) and FL (50.5%) have not received any training in using the library resources while the majority from FE (54.5%) has received training in using the library resources.

Faculty	Received training	Did not receive training
Arts (FA)	41.6	58.4
Education (FE)	54.5	45.5
Law (FL)	49.5	50.5
Mgt & Finance (FMF)	35.7	64.3

Table 14 - Training received in using the library resources

Of the respondents, 80% (361) indicated that they would like to receive training from the library in using the Internet and library resources for their academic purposes (Table 15), As revealed by the FGM participants, majority of students are unaware of the available resources and the facilities through the library, despite the information provided through the library website and notices. As some FGM participants revealed that they were overwhelmed by the size and the structure of the library since they had never been ardent library users at school. They further reported that during the first couple of years they struggled to find appropriate information for their assignments and tried to learn from senior students and by the third year they learned by trial and error, however they were not confident whether they were doing the right thing or not.

Preference	%
Would like to receive training	80
Would not like to receive training	8.2
No Response	11.8

Table 15 - Preferences to receive training in using Internet / Library resources

Cramer's V tests (Table 16 and 17) proved that there is no statistically significant positive relationship between the training received in using the Internet and library resources and year of study, faculty or gender of the respondents. Therefore, these findings reject hypothesis 4 that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the training received in using the Internet and library resources and year of study, faculty and gender of the respondents.

Table 16 – Association between training in using Internet and Year of study, Faculty and Gender

Association	n	CV	AS
Have you received any training in using Internet for	429	.135	.051
your studies from the university? X Year of study			
Have you received any training in using Internet for	421	.254	.000
your studies from the university? X Faculty			
Have you received any training in using Internet for	431	.055	.257
your studies from the university? X Gender			

CV - Cramer's V; AS - Approx. Sig

Table 17- Association between usinglibrary resources and Year of study,Faculty and Gender

Association	n	CV	AS
Have you received any training in using Library	414	.142	.039
Resources for your studies, from the university? X			
Year of study			
Have you received any training in using Library	406	.101	.248
Resources for your studies, from the university? X			
Faculty			
Have you received any training in using Library	416	.043	.384
Resources for your studies, from the university? X			
Gender			

CV - Cramer's V; AS - Approx. Sig

Of the respondents, 80% commented that they would like to receive such training from the library but Cramer's V tests further proved (Table 18) that there is no statistically significant positive relationship between the expressed need for training and year of study, faculty or gender of the respondents. Therefore, these findings reject the hypothesis 5 that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the need for training and year of study, faculty and gender of the respondents.

Association	n	CV	AS
Have you received any training in using Library	449	.123	.033
Resources for your studies from the university? X			
Year of study			
Have you received any training in using Library	441	.229	.000
Resources for your studies from the university? X			
Faculty			
Have you received any training in using Library	451	.108	.073
Resources for your studies from the university? X			
Gender			

Table 18 – Association	between the	need for trainir	g and Faculty	and Gender
1			- <u>6</u>	

CV - Cramer's V; AS - Approx. Sig

5.7 Barriers encountered in seeking and using information

Of the questionnaire respondents, 55.43% indicated that they have various barriers related to their information seeking. The barriers related to the respondents' information seeking and use are summarized under four categories; barriers related to collection, facilities, training needs, and services (Table 19). Of the respondents 55.4% identified barriers related to the collection, 11.5% identified barriers related to facilities and 18.6% identified barriers related to training while 8.9% identified barriers related to services (Table 19). These barriers were endorsed by the FGM participants.

Barriers	Frq.	%
Collection		
Finding resources in the library	32	48.1
Lack of relevant books/newspapers/journals	18	4.0
Lack of multiple copies in heavily used books	6	1.3
Categorization of books is not clear	5	1.1
Lack of Sinhala / Tamil books	4	0.9
Total	250	55.4
Facilities		0.0
Current lending period (two weeks) is not adequate	42	9.3
Only two books can be borrowed at a time	4	0.9
Inability to bring our own books to the library	2	0.4
Need to wait till 2.45 pm to borrow overnight reference books	2	0.4
Library should be opened earlier	2	0.4
Total	52	11.5
Training Needs		0.0
To use Internet	46	10.2
To use the online catalogue	10	2.2
To manage resources/ referencing /summarizing	10	2.2
To access databases in the library	8	1.8

Table 19 -	Barriers	encountered	in	the	library
					•/

6. Discussion

The objective of this survey was to raise awareness on the resource usage and information seeking practices of the undergraduates in the Social Science and Humanities (SSH) disciplines. Findings revealed that the majority (51.2%) of the respondents consisted of first year students and of them, 56.27% were from the Faculty of Arts. This is considered as a positive factor, because the early identification of the issues concerning their ISB could be addressed early, so that the quality of their academic ISB could be improved.

The respondents mostly use recommended readings (70%) in conformity with several international studies (Cheunwattana 2012, Head 2013, Head and Eisenberg 2009 and 2010,) as well as Sri Lankan studies (Gunasekera 2010, Ranawella and Rajapaksha 2017, Wijetunge and Alahakoon 2017). Internet was the second most used resource (62.6%) according to the quantitative survey and all the FGM participants confirmed that the first place they looked for information was the Internet. Cheunwattana (2012), Dubicki (2010), Head and Eisenberg (2009 and 2010), Head (2013), Premarathne (2017) echoes this trend. However, some Sri Lankan studies have proved that the use of Internet is lower than that of books (Jezeel and Dehigama 2014, Wijetunge and Alahakoon 2017). Karunarathne (2015) and Wijetunge (2014) established that lack of computers, English language skills and lack of training as reasons for low use of Internet, but the respondents of the current survey do not seem to be affected by these factors.

Although Internet was popular among the respondents, the databases provided by the library were not. Only 31.3% uses them. This reflects the trend of many other research findings (Dubicki 2010, Gunasekera 2010, Jezeel and Dehigama 2014, Premarathne 2017, Ranawella and Rajapaksha 2017), although Head and Eisenberg (2009, 2010) and Head (2013) have proved that the use of databases are very high among their respondents (94%, 88% and 82% respectively). Findings of the FGMs established that most respondents are not aware of the available databases or they are not guided to read scholarly material from the databases and they are satisfied with the content found from the Internet. In addition, they commented that searching Internet is easy, fast and more results can be obtained than from the databases. This conforms to Dubicki (2010) who established that the "weighted relevance" of the search results draws more towards the Internet. However, the use of library collection proved to be low (55.9%) which is also similar to some previous findings (Cheunwattana 2012, Dubicki 2010, Head 2013, Head and Eisenberg 2009 and 2010). Wijetunge and Alahakoon (2017) established that the library collection is used more than the search engines but slightly less than the recommended texts. Difficulty in finding books in the library, lack of relevant books, and issues with the lending policy were identified as the barriers against the use of library books among the current survey respondents.

Head and Eisenberg (2010) identified three types of evaluation standards for web content; 1) traditional standards of timeliness and authority, 2) domain-specific standards like URL and presence of links to other sites, and 3) self-taught methods

like familiarity with the site and visual presentation of the site, learnt from friends, classmates or other informal contacts. As depicted in findings, currency of the material is used by the majority but the other criteria used are more of self-taught methods, in contrast to Cheunwattana (2012) and Head and Eisenberg (2010), which asserts that currency and author reputation are used often by the respondents to evaluate library material and web resources. Almost all the FGM participants confirmed that they depend on the first few screens of the results instead of applying any other evaluation criteria.

Majority of the respondents consult their batch mates, lecturers, friends and family for assistance in selecting information resources in conformity with Cheunwattana's (2012) findings, but Wijetunge (2014) established that they first consult lecturers, classmates and friends and family. Nevertheless Dubicki (2010), and Head and Eisenberg (2010) established that their respondents first consult the faculty members. secondly classmates and thirdly friends and family. All these studies confirm that librarians are consulted only by a smaller percentage. As some of the FGM participants commented, this could be because they do not know who the librarians are, or what their role is, and that they do not feel comfortable in approaching the librarians when they are inside the office rooms.

Majority of the respondents confirmed that they had not received any training in using Internet or library resources, This situation is not uncommon in other libraries as many Sri Lankan researchers (Gunasekera 2010, Jezeel and Dehigama 2016, Karunarathne 2015, Premarathne 2017, Ranawella and Rajapaksha 2017 and Wijetunge 2014) as well as international researchers (Head and Eisenberg 2010, Kumar 2013 and Vighnarajah 2016) have identified that the students are not aware of the available library resources and services. Head and Eisenberg (2010) comments that there is a gaping hole in the understanding of the students on how the vast range of resources provided by the libraries could meet their need for trusted information. All the above-mentioned authors have recommended comprehensive training for the students.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings it can be concluded that the majority of students use Internet instead of trusted resources provided by the library. Their main purpose of using information is to write assignments. The majority use self-taught criteria to evaluate information instead of standard methods. They mostly consult their peers and senior students for help with information resource usage and the majority have not had any training in using the library resources or Internet for their academic activities. Students encounter many barriers related to resources, facilities, services and training which discourage them from approaching the library as the first place to satisfy their information needs. Students do not gain maturity in information seeking behavior through the progression of their academic period and therefore they have problems irrespective of their academic year of study, faculty or gender. More in-depth studies would be needed to make any concrete conclusions about the depth of the issues related to their information seeking behaviour. Until such time, librarians in collaboration with the faculty members need to provide adequate help to SSH undergraduates to improve their information seeking behavior by offering subject-specific support programmes.

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