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USABILITY PATTERN OF E-RESOURCES IN PRESENT SCENARIO OF E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

We are living in the environment of e-learning where there has been a greater emphasis on the use of electronic sources and platforms. In the present era that is usually referred to as 'Information era', people largely depend on information to accomplish day to day tasks and to solve certain problems. E-resources are among the major sources for procuring information in this ever changing world. The teaching- learning process is also based on online platforms in the present scenario. This paper attempts to observe the usability pattern of e-resources among the students in present scenario of e-learning environment. An online survey is conducted on the students of University of Jammu to satisfy the motives of this study. The information received from the particulars made by the students in questionnaires brings into light their awareness of e-resources, various reasons to use e-resources, the type of e-resources they use and their proficiency of using them. It also highlights students' familiarity with e-learning platforms as well as problems confronted by the students while e-learning and their satisfaction while learning from e-resources and e-learning platforms.

Keywords: Information, E-resources, E-learning, E-learning platforms, Online learning

INTRODUCTION:

The development of ICT has completely changed the way people acquire information. It has led to change in information seeking behaviour of users and the way libraries function and offer services to their users. To meet the information needs of present generation users, the libraries actively procure,

organize and issue e-forms of books, dissertations, theses, journals, newspapers, etc. The electronic resources, also known as online information resources are materials accessible through a computer network which include both online and offline resources such as CD- ROMs. These may be accessed through connected devices such as computers, tablets, smart phones, etc. In the present scenario of e-learning, these resources as well online learning platforms have tremendous potential to satisfy the needs of the users. These have greatly helped students, teachers and institutions with online classes and valuable learning resources thereby continuing the educational pursuits during the closure of academic institutions due to COVID-19 guidelines. The users in this "information age" prefer online resources as they have certain characteristic features which offer convenience and provide information just at the click of mouse.

Objectives:

This study is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

To examine the awareness of e-resources among the students.

To examine the reasons behind usage of e-resources and their usage frequency.

To explore which e-resources are used by the students to satisfy their information needs.

To examine the proficiency of the students in using e-resources for collecting information.

To find out students' ability to weigh up information suitable to the intended task.

To find out the level of familiarity with e-learning platforms.

To explore the platforms mostly preferred by the students for online learning.

To examine the problems encountered while e-learning.

To analyze what the students perceive about the importance of e-resources in educational pursuits.

To find out students' overall satisfaction level with e-resources and e-learning platforms.

Scope:

The scope of this paper is to study the usability pattern of e-resources in present scenario of e-learning among the post graduate students studying at the main campus, University of Jammu, Jammu & Kashmir. It takes into account several aspects related to usage of electronic information resources and learning platforms like awareness, proficiency, problems associated with them and their perceived importance of such learning resources. The outcomes of this study are only based on the particulars received by the post graduate students of Jammu University.

METHODS:

This study is based on survey research method

that primarily used structured questionnaire to collect data from the intended population under study. Some secondary information sources such as journal articles, websites, etc. were also consulted. The questionnaire was created in Google forms keeping in mind the focus of the study and was distributed among the post graduate students of various teaching departments of University of Jammu, Jammu. The link to the Google form was shared among the students with the help of Departmental social media groups such as Whatsapp and Telegram. The link was kept open for about two to three weeks and it was closed after getting 116 responses. Hence, the sample size of this study is 116 post graduate students on whose basis the results have been compiled. The distribution of sample population is shown as below:

Table 1: Distribution of sample population based on gender and age

Sample size = 116			
Gender		**Age (in years)**	
Male	**62 (53.4%)**	**Below 21**	**20 (17.2%)**
Female	**54 (46.6%)**	**21-25**	**46 (39.7%)**
Other	**0**	**26-30**	**40 (34.5%)**
		Above 30	**10 (8.6%)**

Out of total 116 respondents, 62 are male (53.4%) and 54 are female (46.6%). Maximum respondents i.e. 46 (39.7%) belong to the age group of 21-25 years, 40 respondents (34.5%) belong to 26-30 years, 20 respondents (17.2%) are below 21 years and 10 respondents (8.6%) are above 30 years.

1. Awareness of e-resources:

RESULTS:

The results of this study are the outcomes of the information submitted by the students in the questionnaire which have been represented in percentages. The results are shown with the help of tables and charts.
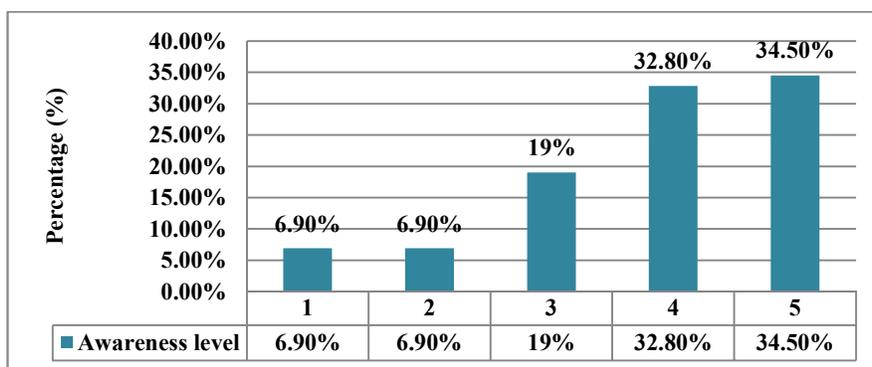

Figure 1: shows awareness of e-resources among the students

	1	2	3	4	5
Awareness level	6.90%	6.90%	19%	32.80%	34.50%

In above **Figure 1**, the awareness of various e-resources among the students is depicted on a scale of 1-5. Most of the students are very well aware as 32.8% and 34.5% of them have rated

their awareness level on 4 and 5 respectively. 19% of them are moderately aware (level 3) and 13.8% of them have low awareness level i.e. 1 and 2 with each 6.9% respondents.

To utilize the e-resources to their fullest and to satisfy one's needs in digital environment, one must be aware of different forms of e-resources such as e-databases, e-periodicals, repositories, etc. To make the students aware, they can be given orientation training and make them comfortable with the use of such resources effectively.

2. Frequency of using e-resources:

Table 2: Frequency of using e-resources

Frequency	No. of Respondents (Percentage)
Always	34.5%
Often	25.9%
Sometimes	37.9%
Rarely	1.7%
Never	0%
Total	100

In above **Table 2**, frequency of using e-resources by the students is represented. It is a good thing that majority of the students make use of e-resources to acquire information suitable to a particular task as it can be seen in the table that 34.5% of the students always use e-resources, 25.9% often use e-resources and 37.9% use them sometimes. The remaining 1.7% students rarely use such resources. Despite of the usage frequency where students are making more or less frequent use of e-resources according to their requirements, it is pleasing that all of them make use of electronic resources in this e-learning environment.

3. Reasons behind usage of e-resources:

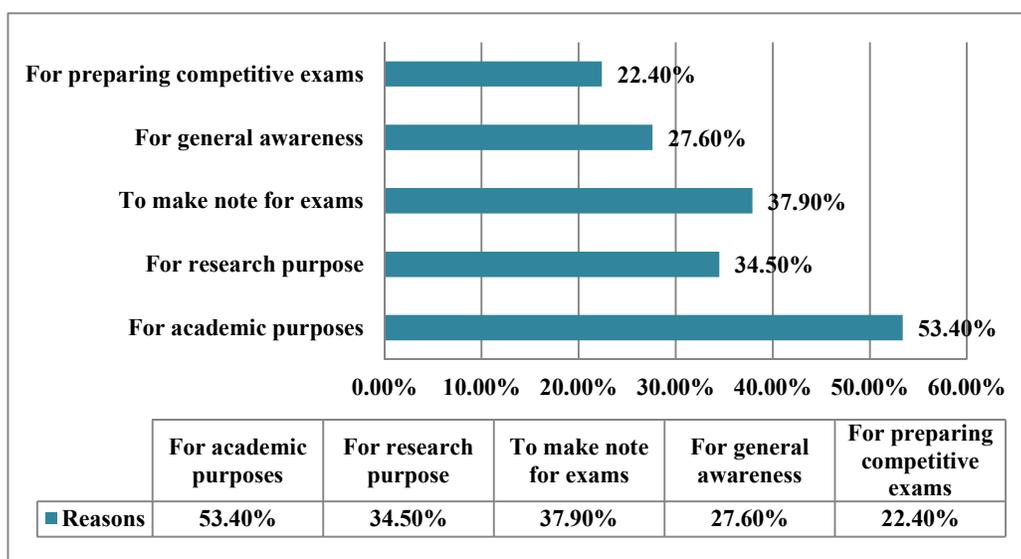|	For academic purposes	For research purpose	To make note for exams	For general awareness	For preparing competitive exams
■ Reasons	53.40%	34.50%	37.90%	27.60%	22.40%

Figure 2: shows reasons behind usage of e-resources

In above **Figure 2**, the several reasons for which the students use e-resources are depicted. They were permitted to select multiple reasons as there could be different

reasons to use such resources at different time depending upon the need of the hour. The major reason is to support academics (53.4%). To make notes for exams (37.9%), to support research work (34.5%), for general awareness (27.6%) and to prepare for competitive exams (22.4%) are the other reasons behind the usage of e-resources by the students.

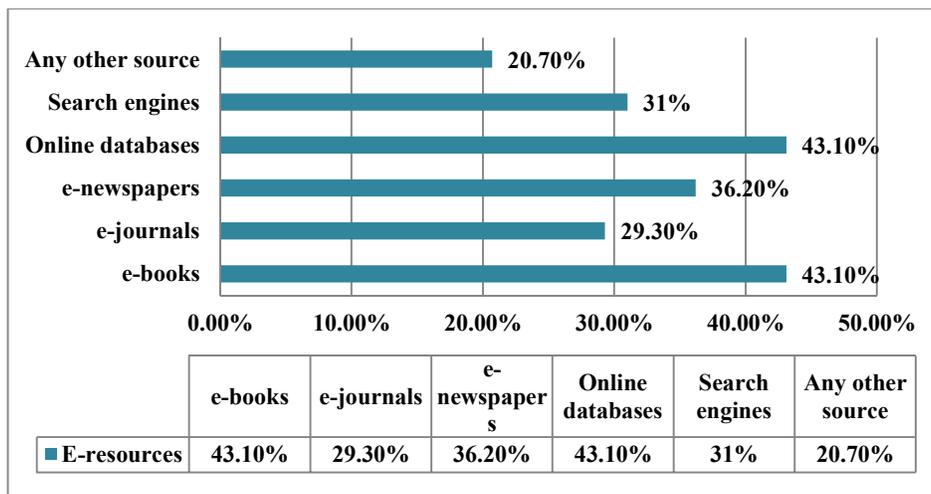## 4. E-resources used to satisfy information needs:

	e-books	e-journals	e-newspapers	Online databases	Search engines	Any other source
■ E-resources	43.10%	29.30%	36.20%	43.10%	31%	20.70%

Figure 3: shows types of e-resources used by the students to satisfy their needs

In above **Figure 3**, different types of e-resources used by the students to satisfy their needs are depicted. The students mostly rely on e-books and online databases (each 43.1%). They also make use of e-newspapers (36.2%), search engines (31%) and e-journals (29.3%). 20.7% of the students also make use of some other resources apart from these listed resources.

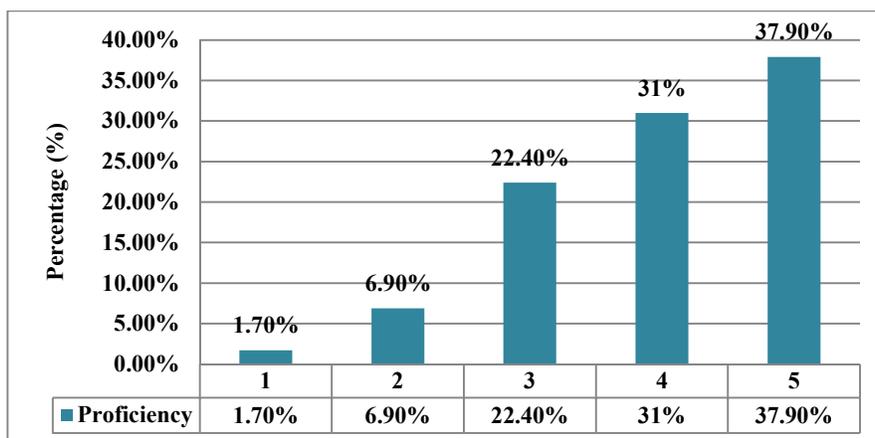## 5. Proficiency in using e-resources for collecting information:

	1	2	3	4	5
■ Proficiency	1.70%	6.90%	22.40%	31%	37.90%

Figure 4: shows proficiency of students in using e-resources

In above **Figure 4**, proficiency of the students in using e-resources for collecting information is depicted on a scale where 1 is lowest, 5 is highest and 3 is moderate/neutral. To access

information from the various available e-resources effectively, it often requires prior knowledge of subject matter, search queries, handling of digital platforms, etc. The students under consideration are highly proficient in using e-resources as 31% and 37.9% of them have rated themselves on 4 and 5 respectively. 22. 4% have moderate proficiency and 8.6% have low proficiency i.e. level 1 and 2 with 1.7% and 6.9% students respectively.

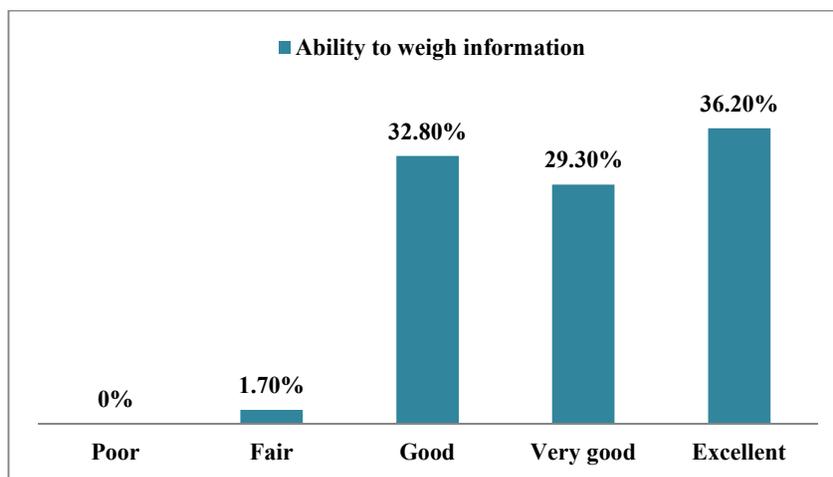## 6. Ability to weigh up information suitable to the intended task:

Figure 5: shows ability of the students to weigh information

The information once accessed and retrieved needs to be analyzed to account for its suitability and usability to the task it was intended for. The above **Figure 5** depicts the ability of the students to weigh up information suitable to the intended task. In today's e-learning environment, it is very important to locate and retrieve quality information and most importantly its evaluation due to the exponential production and availability of information across different sources. It is found in this study that 1.7% students are fair. 32.8% are good, 29.3% are very good and 36.2% are excellent in evaluating or weighing up the information for the intended task.

7. Level of familiarity with e-learning platforms:

Table 3: Level of familiarity with e-learning platforms

Familiarity	No. of Respondents (Percentage)
Extremely familiar	31%
Moderately familiar	37.9%
Somewhat familiar	20.7%
Slightly familiar	10.3%
Not at all familiar	0%
Total	99.9~100

The above **Table 3** represents the level of familiarity of the students with e-learning platforms/applications to support their education in present scenario of online learning. It is found that 31% students are extremely familiar, 37.9% are moderately

familiar, 20.7% are somewhat familiar and
10.3% are slightly familiar with e-leaning

platforms.

8. Platforms preferred for online learning:

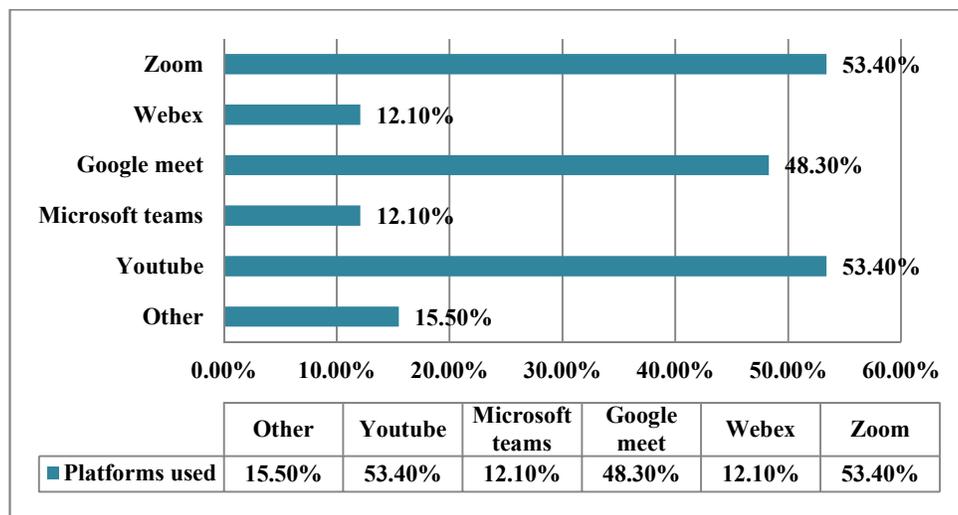|	Other	Youtube	Microsoft teams	Google meet	Webex	Zoom
■ **Platforms used**	15.50%	53.40%	12.10%	48.30%	12.10%	53.40%

Figure 6: shows the platforms preferred by the students to learn online

In above **Figure 6**, platforms preferred by the
students to learn online with which they are
most comfortable are depicted. Zoom and
YouTube are the most preferred (53.4% each),
followed by Google meet (48.3%), WebEx and

Microsoft Teams (each 12.1%). Apart from
these popular and preferred platforms, 15.5%
students are comfortable with other platforms
also.

9. Problems encountered while e-learning:

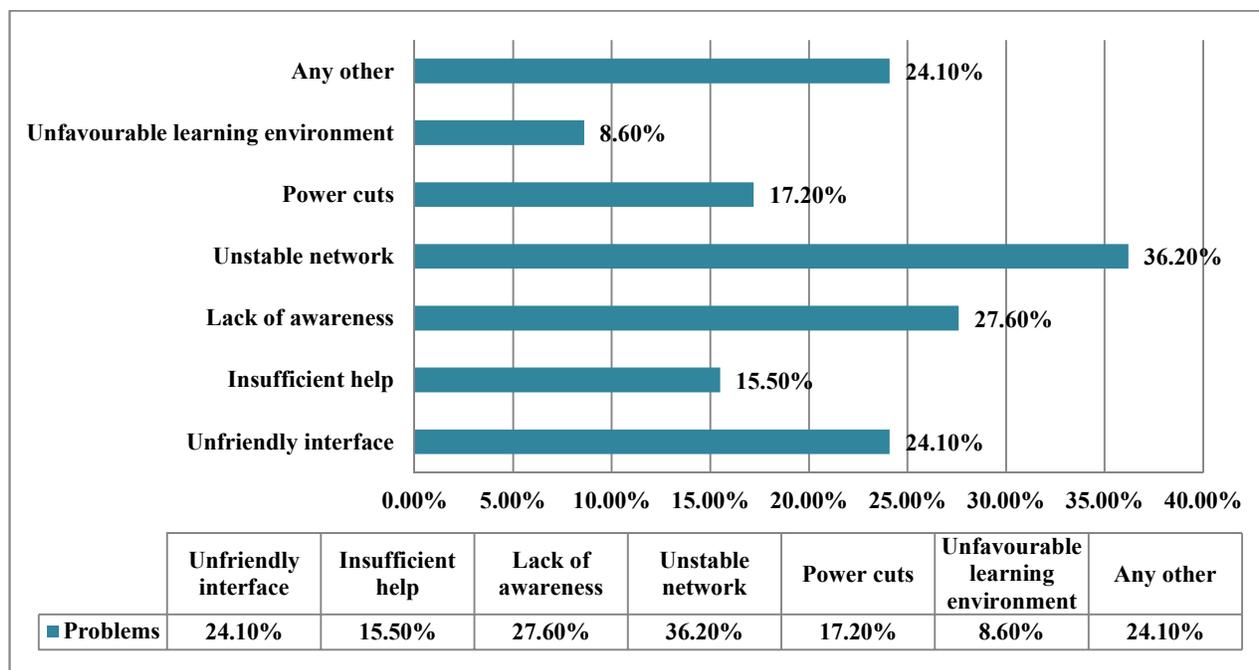|	Unfriendly interface	Insufficient help	Lack of awareness	Unstable network	Power cuts	Unfavourable learning environment	Any other
■ **Problems**	24.10%	15.50%	27.60%	36.20%	17.20%	8.60%	24.10%

Figure 7: shows problems encountered while e-learning

In above **Figure 7**, various problems associated with e-learning that have been encountered by the students during the learning process are depicted. The students have come across problems or difficulties like unfriendly interface (24.1%), insufficient help during the process of e-learning (15.5%), lack of awareness among them about e-learning concept and supporting applications and platforms (27.6%), unstable network (36.2), power cuts (17.2%), unfavourable learning environment (8.6%) and some other problems (24.1%) apart from these mentioned problems have also been faced by them.

10. Importance of e-resources in educational pursuits:

Table 4: Importance of e-resources in educational pursuits

Importance	No. of Respondents (Percentage)
Extremely important	39.7%
Very important	43.1%
Moderately important	8.6%
Neutral	6.9%
Slightly important	1.7%
Not at all important	0%
Total	100

The above **Table 4** represents what the students feel about the importance of e-resources in their educational pursuits. It is found that majority of the students consider e-resources to be very important (43.1%) and extremely important (39.7%) to fulfil their educational pursuits in current scenario of online learning. 8.6% students feel that e-resources are moderately important, 6.9% are neutral regarding their importance and 1.7% consider such resources to be slightly important.

11. Satisfaction level with e-resources and e-learning platforms:

Table 5: Satisfaction level with e-resources and e-learning platforms

Satisfaction level	No. of Respondents (Percentage)
Mostly satisfied	44.8
Somewhat satisfied	41.4
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12.1
Somewhat dissatisfied	1.7%
Mostly dissatisfied	0%
Total	100

The above **Table 5** represents students' overall satisfaction level with e-resources and e-learning platforms. 44.8% students are mostly satisfied, 41.4% are somewhat satisfied and 12.1% are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. A little percentage of 1.7% students are somewhat dissatisfied with e-resources and e-learning platforms.

Major findings:

- Most of the students have moderate to high level of awareness regarding the awareness of e-resources.

- The main reasons of using e-resources are found to be academic purpose (53.4%)

followed by notes making for exams (37.9%) and research purpose (34.50%).

- The mostly used information sources by the students are e-books, online databases and search engines.

- Most of the students have rated themselves on level 4 (31%) and level 5 (37.9%) in their proficiency of using e-resources.

- Most of the students are good to excellent in evaluating the information for further use.

- Majority of students are extremely familiar to moderately familiar with e-learning platforms (31% and 37.9% respectively).

- The most preferred platforms for online learning are found to be Zoom, YouTube and Google meet.

- Problems faced by majority students while e-learning are unstable network, lack of awareness and unfriendly interface.

- Most of the students are satisfied with e-resources and e-learning platforms.

CONCLUSION:

In this present age, electronic information resources have become a necessity so that everyone has access to exponentially growing information and to satisfy the new generation of users. For assessing the usability pattern of electronic resources among the post graduate students of Jammu University, this survey study was performed. In today's e-learning environment, students are being highly benefitted from such resources and they often make use of them in their educational needs. E-books, online databases and search engines are the mostly used sources. The students are competent enough to evaluate the information collected from various e-resources for learning purpose. Google meet and Zoom applications have come out to be most popular among the students for online learning. It is also revealed from this study that most of the students are satisfied with e-resources and e-learning platforms. However, problems faced by majority students while e-learning are unstable network, lack of awareness and insufficient help.

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