E-Resources Practice at Some Leading Private University Libraries in Bangladesh: User Attitude Survey Towards Digital Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

Traditional approach is not able to affirm by large in context of attracting users towards libraries of Bangladesh. As a consequence, large number of users are decreasing day by day from the academic libraries of Bangladesh. Academic libraries play an important role in establishing a research- and knowledge-based society by improving the quality of education. Electronic resources and services are becoming more integral parts of the collection, certainly in academic libraries. But unfortunately, the migrations of hardcopies to e-resources are going very slowly in most of the university libraries of Bangladesh. As of today, Bangladesh has 78 Private University Libraries (UGC 2012). These are not able to act as an exact academic and research library. So the question that arises is: why are these libraries in Bangladesh not able to perform their noble roles? The main objective of the study is to conduct a user survey to assess their awareness on e-resources in some potential private university libraries of Bangladesh. It will also extricate the cause of decrease in the number of users. The learning outcomes of the survey will encourage the authorities of the private universities and other relevant policy-makers in Bangladesh to formulate a strategic plan for collecting and using e-resources to implement the government vision 2021 to make Digital Bangladesh.

Keywords: E-resources, Private University Libraries, E-journal, ICT in Academic Libraries, Digital Bangladesh

1. Introduction

Generally e-resources means electronic resources that may take the form of electronic journals (e-journals), electronic books (e-books), online databases, websites, CD-ROMs, audio cassettes, video cassettes, and so on. E-resources practices in libraries of Bangladesh are almost new, and special libraries are the pioneers for evolving it. In the early 2000s, some of the research libraries accessed abstracting and indexing (A&I) databases electronically using dial-up access to remote computers. These resources have moved from CD-ROMs in mid-2005 with the help of Internet. Thus, many A&I databases of the research libraries shifted to remote servers using Web technologies (Paoshan W Yue, 2004). At that time, a few reputed private university libraries had a mix of CD-ROM and Web-based A&I resources. Thus, e-resource packages became popular for students and faculty around 2010 and in 2012, the migration of databases to the Web was started on a large scale at those private university libraries. At present, in Bangladesh, a number of private university libraries have initiated e-resource facilities for the free flow of information towards their user community. E-resources have been playing a significant role in strengthening and enhancing their teaching, studying, and research efficiencies (Mutshewa, 2000). Electronic resources provide easy access to the desired information; that is why private university libraries have now been adopting these instead of printed materials.

This study intends to explore the latest situation of e-resource practices, services, and the potential of private university libraries in Bangladesh based on the user survey. It will also examine the user's awareness on e-resources and offer some suggestions to overcome the existing problems. Besides the above, the Government has a vision to make Bangladesh digital by 2021; that is why it is encouraging production and collection of e-resources in all the libraries and information centres. The learning outcomes of the study will try to attract the government and other policy-makers to draw up a proper policy for e-resources.

2. Methodology

The study followed mixed methods (both qualitative and quantitative) but emphasis was given to quantitative survey through a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 questions. Each private university was provided with 50 questionnaires. A total of 250 questionnaires were distributed among the users of five private university libraries, of which a total of 210 were responded to. The gathered data of the study has been analysed through the proper tabular and percentage representation. The questionnaire has been designed to consider the different relevant variables like user awareness on e-resources, types, source, places, frequency of using e-resources, time spent, problems faced in using e-resources, possible solutions, etc. It has utilized personal observation, discussion, and direct personal interviews of the library staff as a part of the qualitative method. Besides the above, related secondary sources on Bangladesh upto December 2012 have been considered for getting the latest data on this issue.

2.1 Sample

This study has been carried out on five selected private university libraries in Dhaka city of Bangladesh, chosen out of a total of eighty, as per statistics of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in 2012. These are BRAC University Library (BRACUL), East West University Library (EWUL), North South University Library (NSUL), Independent University Bangladesh Library (IUBL), and American International University Bangladesh Library (AIUBL). The sample size has been chosen based on better ranking portfolios amongst the private universities of Bangladesh and the availability of e-resources. These represent the scenario of e-resources use in the total private university libraries of Bangladesh.

2.2 Limitation

This study has been conducted only on five selected private university libraries of Bangladesh. It would be more meaningful if all university libraries were covered. Hence, this study does not present a comprehensive picture on the e-resources practices and services in Bangladesh. In spite of having this limitation, it is believed that the study will provide a bird's eye view on this issue.

3. Value

Academic libraries constitute important components in the infrastructure of knowledge in universities in terms of teaching, learning, and research. Print and electronic resources are both commonly acquired by university libraries (Agboola, 2010). This is the reason why each and every public or private university library should be equipped with e-resources for the enhancement of the teaching and learning environment. The study has shown that private university libraries need to use e-resources for the sake of expanding and increasing research and quality education for their students that lead them to fulfill the government's vision for 2021 by making Digital Bangladesh.

4. Findings

Table 1 focusses on the sample area, where 210 (84%) of the 250 questionnaires distributed have been responded to while 40 (16%) have not. In particular, the response of BRACUL and EWUL library users was much better than the other private university libraries surveyed. Users were asked about their awareness of the availability of e-resources provided by the concerned libraries.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of the users' responses in the total sample area

Surveyed Libraries	Responded	Didn't Respond	Total
BRACUL	50 (20%)	0	50 (20%)
EWUL	50 (20%)	0	50 (20%)
NSUL	40 (16%)	10 (4%)	50 (20%)
IUBL	30 (12%)	20 (8%)	50 (20%)
AIUBL	40 (16%)	10 (4%)	50 (20%)
Total	**210 (84%)**	**40 (16%)**	**250 (100%)**

Figure 1: User awareness about e-resources subscribed by libraries surveyed
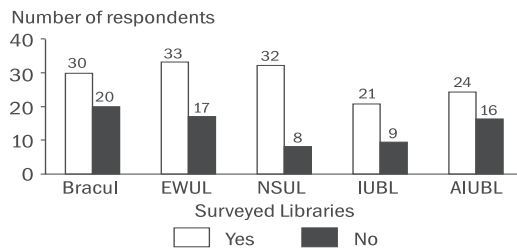

Number of respondents

Figure 1 reflects that 66.67% respondents are fully aware of the availability of the e-resources that their library subscribes to, while 33.33 per cent respondents are not aware at all. Individually, the users of EWUL (15.71%) are much more aware while the users of NSUL (3.81%) are less concerned about it.
Table 2 depicts that in total, the largest number of respondents (143, 25.27%) use e-journals, followed by online databases (113, 19.96%),

CD-ROM (87, 15.37%), e-book (86, 15.19%), website (81, 14.31%) and audio cassette (42, 7.42%). The lowest number, i.e., 14 or 2.47% of total respondents use video cassette. But if we see the individual library usage, we can see that 6.18% of NSUL users prefer e-journals, i.e., in bigger proportion compared to the other surveyed libraries, mainly to quench their thirst for knowledge, and the least number, i.e., 0.18% of users of AIUBL use video cassette for the same.

5. Sources of information about e-resources

Sources are the places from where the information required can be gathered. Table 3 indicates that the maximum number of respondents (119, 31.15%) are informed about e-resources mainly through their libraries. Respondents getting information on e-resources from their respective teachers are 94 (24.61%).

Table 2: User preferences on types of e-resources

Category	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
E-journal	32 (5.65%)	28 (4.96%)	35 (6.18%)	25 (4.42%)	23 (4.06%)	143 (25.27%)
E-book	22 (3.89%)	18 (3.18%)	14 (2.47%)	17 (3.00%)	15 (2.65%)	86 (15.19%)
Website	19 (3.36%)	20 (3.53%)	15 (2.65%)	14 (2.47%)	13 (2.30%)	81 (14.31%)
Online Database	24 (4.24%)	23 (4.06%)	22 (3.89%)	21 (3.71%)	23 (4.06%)	113 (19.96%)
CD-ROM	20 (3.53%)	19 (3.36%)	17 (3.00%)	15 (2.65%)	16 (2.83%)	87 (15.37%)
Audio Cassette	12 (2.12%)	10 (1.77%)	8 (1.41%)	5 (0.88%)	7 (1.27%)	42 (7.42%)
Video Cassette	3 (0.53%)	4 (0.71%)	3 (.53%)	3 (0.53%)	1 (0.18%)	14 (2.47%)
Total	**132 (23.32%)**	**122 (21.55%**	**114 (20.13%)**	**100 (17.66%)**	**98 (17.35%)**	**566 (100%)**

Table 3: Sources of information about e-resources

Source	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
Friends	18 (4.71%)	19 (4.97%)	22 (5.76%)	17 (4.45%)	12 (3.14%)	88 (23.04%)
Colleagues	10 (2.62%)	8 (2.09%)	11 (2.88%)	8 (2.09%)	7 (1.83%)	44 (11.52%)
Parents	4 (1.05%)	4 (1.05%)	4 (1.05%)	3 (0.79%)	3 (0.79%)	18 4.71%
Teachers	20 (5.24%)	22 (5.76%)	24 (6.28%)	15 (3.93%)	13 (3.40%)	94 (24.61%)
Libraries	25 (6.54%)	27 (7.07%)	26 (6.81%)	25 (6.54%)	16 (4.19%)	119 (31.15%0
Others	6 (1.57%)	4 (1.05%)	4 (1.05%)	2 (0.52%)	3 (0.79%)	19 (4.97%)
Total	**83 (21.73%)**	**84 (21.99%)**	**91 (23.83%)**	**70 (18.32%)**	**54 (14.14%)**	**382 (100%)**

Teachers, during their teaching, provide e-resource references to the students from where they can get help to prepare their notes. 88 (23.04%) respondents said that they get information on e-resources from their friends, while 44 (11.52%) respondents gather the location of e-resources by consulting with their colleagues.

6. Places of using e-resources

Table 4 reveals that the highest number of respondents (126, 43.75%) avail of electronic resources using their respective university library, followed by home (79, 27.43%), department (35, 12.15%), office (27, 9.38%), cybercafé (17, 5.90%) and other places (4, 1.39%). Moreover, independently, BRACUL users (10.42%) use mainly their library as a place to use and access e-resources.

Table 4: Places of using e-resources

Places	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
Home	21 (7.29%)	17 (5.90%)	16 (5.56%)	13 (4.51%)	12 (4.17%)	79 (27.43%)
Office	3 (1.04%)	2 (0.69%)	5 (1.74%)	4 (1.39%)	13 (4.51%)	27 (9.38%)
Department	10 (3.47%)	8 (2.78%)	5 (1.74%)	7 (2.43%)	5 (1.74%)	35 (12.15%)
Library	30 (10.42%)	25 (8.68%)	27 (9.38%)	25 (8.68%)	19 (6.60%)	126 (43.75%)
Cybercafé	4 (1.39%)	3 (1.04%)	3 (1.04%)	5 (1.74%)	2 (0.69%)	17 (5.90%)
Other	0	1 (0.35%)	0	3 (1.04%)	0	4 (1.39%)
Total	68 (23.61%)	56 (19.45%)	56 (19.45%)	57 (19.79%)	51 (17.70%)	288 (100%)

Table 5: Frequency of accessing and using e-resources

Frequency of Use	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
Daily	21 (10%)	24 (11.43%)	18 (8.57%)	15 (7.14%)	24 (11.43%)	102 (48.57%)
Once a week	3 (1.43%)	6 (2.86%)	2 (0.95%)	0	0	11 (5.24%)
Twice a week	9 (4.28%)	3 (1.43%)	14 (6.66%)	6 (2.86%)	5 (2.38%)	37 (17.62%)
Once a month	0	2 (0.95%)	0	0	0	2 (0.95%)
When feel like	17 (8.09%)	15 (7.14%)	6 (2.86%)	9 (4.28%)	11 (5.24%)	58 (27.62%)
Total	50 (23.81%)	50 (23.81%)	40 (19.05%)	30 (14.28%)	40 (19.05%)	210 (100%)

Table 5 expresses that the majority of respondents (102, 48.57%) access and use e-resources on a daily basis whereas the lowest numbers of respondents (2, 0.95%) use electronic resources once a month.

Table 6: Time spent using and accessing e-resources

Duration	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
Less than 3 h/w	9 (4.29%)	7 (3.33%)	3 (1.43%)	3 (1.43%)	4 (1.90%)	26 (12.38%)
04 to 06 h/w	10 (4.77%)	10 (4.77%)	10 (4.77%)	6 (2.87%)	7 (3.33%)	43 (20.47%)
07 to 09 h/w	7 (3.33%)	11 (5.24%)	11 (5.24%)	7 (3.33%)	8 (3.80%)	44 (20.94%)
10 to 12 h/w	15 (7.14%)	15 (7.14%)	10 (4.77%)	9 (4.28%)	15 (7.14%)	64 (30.47%)
13 to 15 h/w	2 (0.95%)	4 (1.90%)	3 (1.43%)	2 (0.95%)	4 (1.90%)	15 (7.13%)
More than 15 h/w	7 (3.33%)	3 (1.43%)	3 (1.43%)	3 (1.43%)	2 (0.95%)	18 (8.57%)
Total	**50 (23.81%)**	**50 (23.81%)**	**40 (19.05%)**	**30 (14.28%)**	**40 (19.05%)**	**210 (100%)**

Table 6 demonstrates that the maximum number of respondent (64, 30.47%) consume 10 to 12 hours per week accessing e-resources. On the other hand, the lowest number of respondents (15, 7.13%) indicates that they spend 13 to 15 hours a week using and accessing electronic resources. Generally, students, teachers, and researchers use electronic resources for the purpose of meeting the demand for knowledge in their respective fields.

Table 7: Purpose of using e-resources

Purpose	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
Education	35 (14.34%)	35 (14.34%)	36 (14.75%)	23 (9.43%)	30 (12.30%)	159 (65.16%)
Research	9 (3.69%)	9 (3.69%)	12 (4.92%)	6 (2.46%)	15 (6.15%)	51 (20.90%)
Updating knowledge	3 (1.23%)	1 (0.41%)	0	6 (2.46%)	5 (2.05%)	15 (6.15%)
Business	2 (0.82%)	0	0	3 (1.23%)	0	5 (2.05%)
Entertain-ment	1 (0.41%)	5 (2.05%)	2 (0.82%)	3 (1.23%)	0	11 (4.51%)
Others	0	0	0	3 1.23%	0	3 (1.23%)
Total	**50 (20.49%)**	**50 (20.49%)**	**50 (20.49%)**	**44 (18.04%)**	**50 (20.49%)**	**244 (100%)**

Table 7 illustrates that the maximum number of respondents (159, 65.16%) use e-resources for the purpose of education whereas 20.90% respondents use e-resource for research, 6.15% for updating knowledge, 4.51% for entertainment, 2.05% for business, and the least number, i.e., 1.23% of respondents, use them for other purposes.

The respondents were asked to point out the extent of using e-resources as the sources of academic improvement. They had been given five options, out of which the largest portion of respondents (137, 65.23%) reckoned that they relied on e-resources to a high extent whereas only 16 respondents (7.61%) used e-resources to a limited extent.

Table 8: Extent of using e-resources as a means of academic improvement

Extent of Use	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
Extremely High	5 (2.38%)	3 (1.43%)	2 (0.95%)	1 (0.48%)	1 (0.48%)	12 (5.72%)
High	29 (13.80%)	32 (15.24%)	29 (13.80%)	23 (10.96%)	24 (11.43%)	137 (65.23%)
Moderate	12 (5.72%)	10 (4.76%)	7 (3.34%)	4 (1.90%)	12 (5.72%)	45 (21.44%)
Limited	4 (1.90%)	5 (2.38%)	2 (0.95%)	2 (0.95%)	3 (1.43%)	16 (7.61%)
None	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	50 (23.81%)	50 (23.81%)	40 (19.05%)	30 (14.28%)	40 (19.05%)	210 (100%)

6.1 Users' perceptions on e-resource services provided by the libraries

Figure 2 shows users' consciousness in getting e-resource services provided by their concerned libraries. 17 (8.10%) of the total respondents said their libraries do not provide e-resource services whereas the maximum number of respondents (92%) provided positive answers.

6.2 Initiatives for the enhancement of e-resources in libraries

Proper steps and initiatives are vital for the accomplishment of any task. Nowadays, various private university libraries and information centres have been initiating the proper steps for enhancing the usage of e-resources.
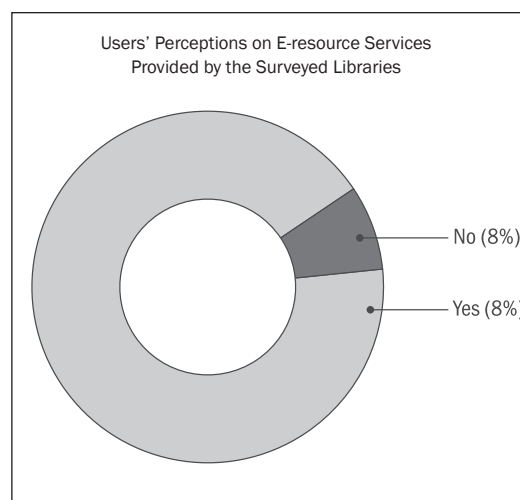

Users' Perceptions on E-resource Services Provided by the Surveyed Libraries

No (8%)

Yes (8%)

Table 10: Initiatives for the enhancement of e-resources in libraries

Libraries Surveyed	Yes	No	Total
BRACUL	48 (22.86%)	2 (0.95%)	50 (23.81%)
EWUL	45 (21.43%)	5 (2.38%)	50 (23.81%)
NSUL	38 (18.09%)	2 (0.95%)	40 (19.05%)
IUBL	28 (13.33%)	2 (0.95%)	30 (14.28%)
AIUBL	36 (17.14%)	4 (1.90%)	40 (19.05%)
Total	195 (92.86%)	15 (7.14%)	210 100%)

According to Table 10, the largest number of respondents (195, 92.86%) have said that their libraries have initiated different steps for the purpose of enhancing e-resource usage among their user community whereas only a partial number of respondents (15, 7.14%) have complained that their library did not take any initiatives for strengthening e-resource services.

Table 11 shows that the majority of respondents (88, 41.9%) are satisfied with the e-resources facility options and services of the libraries, which is followed by those who are very satisfied (62, 29.52%), and slightly satisfied (53, 25.24%). Furthermore, the lowest number of users (7, 3.33%) are dissatisfied with the existing status of e-resource accessibility and services.

Table 11: Satisfaction level of users

Satisfaction Level	BRACUL	EWUL	IUBL	AIUBL	NSUL	Total
Very Satisfied	12 (5.71%)	5 (2.38%)	10 (4.76%)	15 (7.14%)	20 (9.52%)	62 (29.52%)
Satisfied	12 (5.71%)	26 (12.38%)	15 (7.14%)	20 (9.52%)	15 (7.14%)	88 (41.90%)
Slightly Satisfied	23 (10.95%)	15 (7.14%)	5 (2.38%)	5 (2.38%)	5 (2.38%)	53 (25.24%)
Dissatisfied	3 (1.43%)	4 (1.90%)	0	0	0	7 (3.33%)
Total	50 (23.81%)	50 (23.81%)	40 (19.05%)	30 (14.28%)	40 (19.05%)	210 (100%)

Table 12: Necessity of e-resources for the library

Rating	BRACUL	EWUL	NSUL	IUBL	AIUBL	Total
Most essential	30 (14.29%)	32 (15.24%)	25 (11.90%)	20 (9.52%)	15 (7.14%)	122 (58.09%)
Essential	15 (7.14%)	10 (4.76%)	10 (4.76%)	5 (2.38%)	20 (9.52%)	60 (28.57%)
Least essential	5 (2.38%)	3 (1.43%)	1 (.48%)	5 (2.38%)	5 (2.38%)	19 (9.05%)
Not essential	0	5 (2.38%)	4 (1.90%)	0	0	9 (4.29%)
Total	50 (23.81%)	50 (23.81%)	40 (19.05%)	30 (14.28%)	40 (19.05%)	210 (100%)

This table reveals that the maximum numbers of users under survey (122, 58.09%) think that e-resources are the most essential for strengthening the systems and services of the library whereas 4.29 per cent of the total respondents think that it is not so essential in regular library activities and services.

Table 13: Problems encountered while using e-resources

Problems	Options	Frequency	Percentage
Limited e-ttresources subscribed by libraries	Agree	135	8.04
	Disagree	75	4.46
Lack of adequate PC terminals in library to access e-resources	Agree	155	9.23
	Disagree	55	3.27
Information overload (or too much information)	Agree	80	4.76
	Disagree	130	7.74
Download delay	Agree	180	10.71
	Disagree	30	1.79
Failure to find information	Agree	40	2.38
	Disagree	170	10.12
Lack of search skills	Agree	95	5.65
	Disagree	115	6.85
Power outages	Agree	145	8.63
	Disagree	65	3.87
Lack of time	Agree	145	8.63
	Disagree	65	3.87
Total		1680	100%

Respondents were given a number of options of the ways in which they face problems in getting smooth e-resource services from the library. The majority of respondents (180) report download problems as the main hindrance in using e-resources whereas a remarkable number (135) point out limited e-resources subscribed by their libraries as the main problem. Only 40 (2.38%) of the total respondents believe that failure to find information is the obstacle to access and use e-resources.

6.3 Constraints

There are several constraints on using and accessing e-resources of private university libraries in Bangladesh. The researchers confirmed the problems of using and accessing e-resources by both structured questionnaire and interviews. Respondents mentioned different problems and constraints regarding using e-resources in the library. More than one-third of the total respondents are not aware of the e-resource facilities in the library. It is observed in the study that sometimes users of e-resources have a nonchalant attitude towards using e-resources. Moreover, the parent body of the library is not sometimes conscious about the importance and effectiveness of having e-resources in their library. Library professionals are not upto the mark in terms of using ICTs and sometimes express negative responses to providing ICT-based services to the students. Furthermore, financial constraints are one of the main obstacles in subscribing to e-journals for the library and information services. Besides, there is a lack of sufficient computers in the libraries which hamper users in gaining access and using e-resources in the library. Another reason behind the poor usage of e-resources in the library is low bandwidth of the internet. Using e-resources requires sound literacy of the computer and internet that some users do not have. Likewise, the conspicuous crisis of electricity deters the students from using e-resources smoothly.

6.4 Suggestions

The study demonstrated the present status of e-resources in major private universities in Bangladesh that are mainly located in Dhaka, the capital city. The utilization of e-resources is very common among the users of private university libraries and the majority of students are dependent on e-resources to get the desired relevant information from their libraries, mainly for their educational and research enrichment (Waldman, 2003). The study has showed that university libraries have taken different initiatives, namely training, workshops, counselling, e-mailing, and so on for the growth of the usage of e-resources among their student community. The university authority and library professionals should pay enormous attention towards their library systems and services. Additionally, library professionals should be proficient in using information and communication technologies for setting up an electronic library as this is a prerequisite for e-resource services. Moreover, budgeting is a vital factor for implementing any tasks. Sufficient budgets should be allocated for subscribing to varied e-resources to enrich the library, and for establishing an electronic library to attract users. Regular renewal of e-resource subscriptions should also be ensured. In order to increase e-resource usage among the students, a number of computers should be made available in the library. Furthermore, a high bandwidth internet connection should be available within the library and outside the library for smooth accessibility to e-resources. It should be taken into account that library professionals' competence and positive attitude towards providing e-resource services are important so that students feel comfortable using e-resources in the library, and so that the entire library environment is conducive to using e-resources. Various training sessions and workshops for the purpose of using e-resources

should also be provided by the respective library and uninterrupted electricity supply should be ensured for frequent accessibility to the e-resources. Digitalization of private university libraries in Bangladesh is a current and immediate demand because the process can avoid duplication in collection building. It also saves labour, time, and money for the information user and ultimately contributes to national development. Sustainability of library services are more important than starting a private university digital library system a fresh service (Nasiruddin, 2011). If we fail to manage sustainable private university digital libraries with our own resources, the dream of making Digital Bangladesh by 2021 will be harmful rather than beneficial to the country.

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