



Original Research Paper

Information-Seeking Behaviour Across Academic Groups in College Libraries

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Abstract

Purpose – This study investigates information-seeking behaviour in academic libraries, examining how academic status influences preferences, search methods, and resource utilisation.

Design/methodology/approach – A survey of 523 participants was conducted across five user groups: faculty, postgraduate students, research scholars, staff, and undergraduates. Data were analysed using Chi-Square tests to identify significant variations in behaviours, including using digital resources, search strategies, and purposes of library visits.

Findings – Results revealed notable differences across academic groups. Studying was the primary purpose of library visits (64.6% overall; 46.1% among undergraduates). Faculty and postgraduate students relied heavily on digital resources, while undergraduates were more likely to browse shelves (5.9%) or seek librarian assistance (12.0%). Library catalogues (37.9%) and database searches (20.3%) were the most common search methods, with online search engines (15.7%) playing an important complementary role. Significant variation was found in resource preferences, search behaviours, and purposes of use ($p < 0.05$), underscoring the need for tailored library services.

Research limitations/implications – The study is limited to one institution, which may affect generalizability. Nevertheless, findings offer practical insights for improving library services.

Originality/value – This study provides evidence-based recommendations to optimise academic library services, enhance resource utilisation, and foster user engagement by quantifying differences in information-seeking behaviours across academic groups.

Keywords – Academic Libraries; Information-Seeking Behavior; Digital Resources; User Preferences; Chi-Square Analysis

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Introduction

The information-seeking behaviour (ISB) of individuals in academic contexts has long been a central concern of library and information science research. Libraries, as primary gateways to knowledge, play a pivotal role in shaping how different categories of users access, evaluate, and utilise information. Over the past two decades, rapid advances in digital technologies have reconfigured the traditional landscape of academic information use, introducing new engagement patterns with resources such as e-books, online databases, institutional repositories, and search engines. However, this shift has not affected all academic groups similarly. Faculty, postgraduate students, research scholars, administrative staff, and undergraduates differ in information needs, resource preferences, and retrieval methods. Understanding these differences is essential for designing library services that are equitable, effective, and responsive to evolving user expectations.

Information-seeking behaviour is generally understood as the purposive search for information to meet a specific need (Wilson, 1999). Classic models such as Ellis's behavioural model (1989) and Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (ISP) model (1991) emphasise that ISB is both cognitive and affective, shaped by the user's goals, prior knowledge, and situational context. Within the academic environment, status is crucial in defining these factors. Faculty members, for example, often prioritise research productivity and require access to advanced digital databases. While similarly focused on specialised resources, research scholars may rely more heavily on interlibrary loans and guidance from librarians to support dissertation work. Undergraduates, in contrast, are frequently at the early stages of academic inquiry, requiring support for basic information literacy skills, access to physical study spaces, and structured guidance in navigating catalogues and online tools. Staff members may use the library sporadically, often for administrative or personal development purposes, rather than sustained academic research. By comparing these groups systematically, this study aims to contribute new empirical insights into how academic status shapes ISB within the same institutional context. Recent research underscores the complexity of these differences. Veeraramu and Sivankalai (2022) found that faculty and postgraduate students in medical colleges relied extensively on e-journals and digital databases, reporting higher satisfaction with online access than undergraduates. Similarly, Onyancha (2024) highlighted the rising dominance of online search engines such as Google Scholar in academic research, noting that faculty and postgraduates increasingly bypass traditional catalogues in favour of broader, faster, and often more intuitive search

tools. Conversely, Pettersson et al. (2024) observed that undergraduates continued to value physical study spaces and printed resources as integral to their academic routines. This dual reliance on digital and physical environments suggests that libraries must balance expanding technological infrastructure and maintaining traditional forms of support.

In the current study, descriptive statistics reveal these dynamics with clarity. Among the 523 respondents surveyed, *64.6% reported using the library primarily for studying*, with undergraduates representing nearly half of this proportion (46.1%). Faculty and postgraduate students, by contrast, reported higher engagement with digital resources, including databases and e-books, consistent with their research-oriented roles. When examining search methods, *37.9% of all users relied on library catalogues, 20.3% on database searches, and 15.7% on online search engines*. Browsing physical shelves, while less common overall (9.9%), remained important for undergraduates.

In comparison, consultations with librarians accounted for 15.7% of all retrieval methods, reflecting the ongoing relevance of professional mediation in information access. These quantitative findings provide empirical grounding for a discussion of broader trends in ISB, situating this study within the growing body of comparative research on academic user behaviour. The literature consistently demonstrates that digital transformation has reshaped the information landscape, but its adoption varies across groups. Sivankalai (2014, 2021) observed that postgraduate students and faculty showed strong preferences for digital resources, citing the convenience of advanced search capabilities and the ability to access scholarly articles remotely. Faculty members, in particular, valued the reliability of subscription databases, which provided access to peer-reviewed materials essential for teaching and research. Undergraduates, however, often relied more on general search engines and physical collections, suggesting a need for more targeted instruction in navigating specialised databases. The contrast between these groups reflects broader themes in ISB research, including the importance of digital literacy and the persistence of traditional practices.

Training and workshops represent another important dimension of library engagement. Several studies (Sivankalai, 2017; Bury, 2024) emphasise that information literacy instruction can significantly improve students' ability to effectively evaluate and use digital resources. However, participation in such programs remains limited. Miller et al. (2010) noted that undergraduates often fail to attend workshops due to a lack of awareness, competing academic priorities, or the perception that independent searching is sufficient. In the present study, no statistically significant differences in workshop attendance were observed across academic groups (p

> 0.05). This finding suggests that libraries face systemic challenges in promoting such initiatives, regardless of academic status, and raises important questions about how best to design and market literacy programs for maximum impact. Beyond digital access and training, libraries' physical and social environments continue to matter. Haberl and Wortman (2012) argued that study spaces function as places for individual concentration and as sites of collaborative learning. Pratt (2010) extended this argument by linking library spaces to social learning theory, demonstrating how group study areas foster peer-to-peer engagement. In the present study, *50.5% of respondents identified study spaces as the most helpful service*, particularly undergraduates, who also accounted for the most significant proportion of daily visitors. This finding aligns with Pettersson et al. (2024), who observed that undergraduates consistently valued libraries as conducive learning environments. By contrast, research scholars and faculty placed higher value on reference services and digital access, reflecting their more specialised academic needs. These differences underscore the importance of tailoring library design and services to libraries' diverse functions across academic groups.

The role of librarians and staff also deserves attention. Xu and Du (2018) highlighted the significance of user satisfaction and loyalty in digital libraries, showing that responsive support services contribute strongly to positive perceptions. Niu et al. (2010) similarly found that academic researchers relied on librarians for assistance with advanced search strategies, particularly when navigating unfamiliar databases. In the current study, undergraduates were the group most likely to seek librarian assistance, with 22.6% reporting that they "always" consulted staff, compared to just 3.6% of faculty. This reliance may reflect undergraduates' relative inexperience in navigating academic information systems. For librarians, these findings highlight the dual responsibility of providing basic orientation for novice users while offering specialised support for advanced researchers. User satisfaction remains a critical outcome of ISB studies. Adeniran (2011) and Maina et al. (2017) found that satisfaction is closely tied to the accessibility and reliability of library services, including digital access, physical resources, and support staff. In the present study, satisfaction patterns were implicit in users' identification of "most useful services," with undergraduates prioritising study spaces and faculty valuing reference services. However, dissatisfaction was also evident, particularly in the form of unmet needs such as extended opening hours and broader resource availability. These findings reinforce the importance of continuously assessing user expectations, particularly as digital resources

expand but not entirely replace physical collections and services.

Research Gap

While previous studies have extensively examined information-seeking behaviour in academic contexts, several limitations remain unaddressed:

- Much of the literature examines undergraduates or faculty in isolation (e.g., Sivankalai, 2014; Veeraramu & Sivankalai, 2022), without systematically comparing multiple academic groups within the same institutional setting. This approach overlooks the nuanced differences between groups such as postgraduates, research scholars, and staff.
- Existing studies frequently highlight the growing dominance of digital resources and search engines (Onyancha, 2024; Al-Marroof et al., 2024). However, they give less attention to the continuing importance of physical spaces, printed collections, and librarian-mediated support. A holistic view of hybrid (digital + physical) information-seeking practices is needed.
- Many studies are multi-institutional surveys with broad findings but limited depth, while others are case studies focused narrowly on specific faculties or disciplines. Few have provided a comprehensive, status-wise comparison across all major academic groups in one institution.
- Although scholars have emphasised the value of information literacy training (Sivankalai, 2017; Bury, 2024), little research has evaluated why participation remains low across groups or whether academic status influences perceptions of such initiatives.
- Prior research often reports descriptive trends without systematically testing for significant differences across academic categories. This limits the ability to draw reliable conclusions about whether observed variations are meaningful.

Addressing these gaps, the present study offers a comparative, statistically validated analysis of information-seeking behaviour across five academic groups—faculty, postgraduate students, research scholars, staff, and undergraduates—within a single institution. By integrating digital and physical dimensions of library use, evaluating training participation, and employing Chi-Square tests to establish significance, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how academic status shapes ISB. The findings extend theoretical models of information behaviour and provide actionable insights for improving library services in diverse academic environments.

Objectives

Building on the gaps identified above, this study was designed with the following objectives:

- To examine variations in information-seeking behaviour across academic status groups—faculty, postgraduate students, research scholars, staff, and undergraduates—focusing on library visits, resource usage, and retrieval methods.
- To analyse library visits' frequency and primary purposes, such as studying, research, borrowing books, group study, and accessing digital resources.
- To evaluate the perceived usefulness of library services—including digital resources, study spaces, reference services, workshops, printing/photocopying, and interlibrary loans—across different user categories.
- To investigate preferred information retrieval methods, such as browsing shelves, consulting librarians, using catalogues, conducting database searches, or relying on online search engines.
- To determine statistically significant differences in behaviour and preferences across groups using Chi-Square tests, and identify which aspects of ISB are shaped most strongly by academic status.
- To generate practical insights for academic libraries, offering recommendations on how services, training, and resources can be tailored to meet the distinct needs of diverse user groups.

Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative survey design to examine the information-seeking behaviour of users in an academic library context. The survey approach was selected because it allows the collection of standardised data from diverse user groups and enables the comparison of patterns across different academic statuses. The study used a structured questionnaire to capture variations in library visits, resource usage, retrieval methods, and perceived usefulness of services. This design provided a systematic and reliable means of identifying statistically significant differences in behaviour across groups while ensuring that results could be generalised within the institutional setting.

Participants

The study population comprised five distinct academic user groups within a single college: faculty members, postgraduate students, research scholars, administrative staff, and undergraduates. A total of 523 valid responses were collected. Of these, 54 (10.3%) were faculty members, 71 (13.6%) were postgraduates, 16 (3.1%) were research scholars, 17 (3.3%) were staff, and 365 (69.8%) were undergraduates. This distribution reflected the institution's reality, where

undergraduates formed most of the library's user base. Including all groups ensured that the analysis captured the diversity of information-seeking behaviours and allowed meaningful comparisons across academic statuses.

Sampling Procedure

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to obtain a representative sample. The population was first divided into strata based on academic status, and respondents were then randomly selected from each stratum. This method minimised sampling bias by ensuring that all groups, even those with relatively smaller populations such as staff and research scholars, were proportionally represented. The approach was critical in a context where undergraduates significantly outnumbered other categories, as it prevented their responses from overwhelming the analysis and allowed fairer cross-group comparison.

Instruments

Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire developed in Google Forms, which provided an efficient and accessible platform for both distribution and data entry. The questionnaire contained a combination of multiple-choice items and five-point Likert-scale questions. Items were organised into five sections: demographic details (gender, academic status, discipline); frequency and purpose of library visits; perceived usefulness of services such as digital resources, study spaces, reference services, printing, and interlibrary loans; preferred methods of information retrieval, including catalogues, databases, online search engines, browsing shelves, and consulting librarians; and participation in workshops or training sessions. To ensure clarity and reliability, the instrument was pilot-tested with 20 respondents prior to full deployment, and feedback was used to refine the wording of questions and response options.

Data Collection

The survey was disseminated electronically via institutional mailing lists, library announcements, and faculty coordinators. This ensured broad coverage across all user categories and minimised barriers to participation. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and advised that their participation was voluntary. No personal identifiers were collected to protect anonymity, and all responses were recorded in aggregate form. Data collection was carried out for six weeks, during which multiple reminders were issued to encourage participation from less responsive groups, such as staff and research scholars.

Data Analysis

The completed responses were compiled in Google Sheets and exported to statistical software (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were first generated to

summarise demographic characteristics and basic library use patterns. To examine associations between academic status and variables such as purpose of visits, service usefulness, and search methods, Chi-Square (χ^2) tests of independence were employed. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used to determine whether observed differences were statistically meaningful. In addition to significance testing, Cramer's V was calculated where relevant to measure the strength of associations. Presenting statistical significance and effect size allowed the study to go beyond mere detection of differences, providing insights into their practical importance. Results are presented in tabular and graphical formats in the subsequent section.

Table 1 Gender-wise academic status

Gender	Engineering	Humanities	Medicine	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Other	Total
Female	11	43	19	44	30	349	496
	2.10%	8.20%	3.70%	8.40%	5.70%	.70%	94.80%
Male	10	0	1	3	1	12	27
	1.90%	0.00%	0.20%	0.60%	0.20%	2.30%	5.20%
Total	21	43	17	47	31	361	523
	4.00%	8.20%	3.90%	9.00%	5.90%	.00%	10.00%

Table 1.1. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Significant
Pearson Chi-Square	88.317 ^a	6	.000	Significant
Likelihood Ratio	43.299	6	.000	
N of Valid Cases	523			

The demographic distribution of respondents is presented in Table 1. Undergraduates constituted the largest user group, representing 69.8% ($n = 365$) of the sample, followed by postgraduates (13.6%, $n = 71$), faculty members (10.3%, $n = 54$), staff (3.3%, $n = 17$), and research scholars (3.1%, $n = 16$). Female respondents were more numerous across most fields of study, particularly in the humanities and natural sciences. A Chi-Square analysis (Table 1.1) confirmed a statistically significant association between gender and discipline ($\chi^2(6, N = 523) = 88.32, p < .001$, Cramer's $V = .41$), suggesting gendered patterns in academic specialisation. However, the relatively high proportion of cells with expected counts below five indicates caution in generalising these results.

Table 2. Academic Status Wise Field of Study or Department

Category	Engineering	Humanities	Medicine	Natural Sciences	Social Sciences	Other	Total
Faculty	5	9	0	6	6	28	54
	1.00%	1.70%	0.00%	1.10%	1.10%	5.40%	10.30%
Postgraduate	3	5	2	2	7	52	71
	0.60%	1.00%	0.40%	0.40%	1.30%	9.90%	13.60%
Research Scholar	0	2	1	2	1	10	16
	0.00%	0.40%	0.20%	0.40%	0.20%	1.90%	3.10%
Staff	0	1	0	1	0	15	17
	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	2.90%	3.30%
Undergraduate	13	26	17	36	17	256	365
	2.50%	5.00%	3.30%	6.90%	3.30%	48.90%	69.80%
Total	21	43	17	47	31	361	523
	4.00%	8.20%	3.90%	9.00%	5.90%	.00%	10.00%

Table 3. Primary Purpose for Visiting the Library

Cate gory	Stu dyi ng	Ac ces sin g dig ital res our ces	Bor row ing boo ks	Re sea rch	G ro up Stu dy	Other	To tal
Facul ty	33	3	7	7	3	1	54
	6.3 0%	0.6 0%	1.30 %	1.3 0%	0.60 %	0.2 0%	10.30 %
Postg radua te	49	3	10	6	2	1	71
	9.4 0%	0.6 0%	1.90 %	1.1 0%	0.40 %	0.2 0%	13.60 %
Rese arch Schol ar	5	2	0	8	1	0	16
	1.0 0%	0.4 0%	0.00 %	1.5 0%	0.20 %	0.0 %	3.10 %
Staff	10	0	2	2	1	2	17
	1.9 0%	0.0 0%	0.40 %	0.4 0%	0.20 %	0.4 0%	3.30 %
Unde rgrad uate	241	7	35	34	27	2	365
	46.10 %	1.3 0%	6.70 %	6.5 0%	5.20 %	4.0 0%	69.80 %
Tota l	338	15	54	57	34	25	523
	64.60 %	2.9 0%	10.3 0%	10.90 %	6.50 %	4.8 0%	100.00 %

The distribution of respondents across academic status and field of study is reported in Table 2. Undergraduates accounted for the majority in every field, with the largest concentration in the "Other" category (48.9%), followed by natural sciences (6.9%) and humanities (5.0%). Faculty were spread more evenly across disciplines, including engineering, humanities, and social sciences, while postgraduates showed a slightly higher presence in humanities and the "Other" category. Research scholars and staff were the least represented, comprising only 3.1% and 3.3% of the sample. This distribution indicates undergraduates are the primary users across disciplines, while faculty and postgraduates contribute smaller but more evenly distributed shares. These findings confirm the

centrality of undergraduates in shaping overall library use patterns, while highlighting the disciplinary diversity of faculty and postgraduate users.

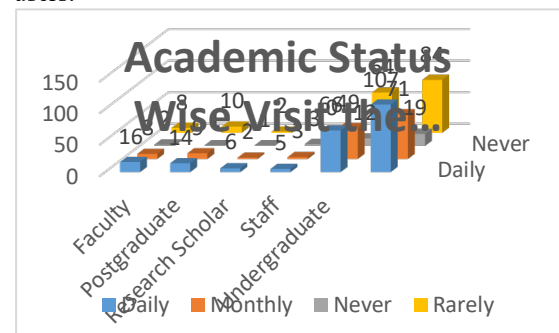


Fig 1. Academic Status Wise Visit the Academic Library

The primary purposes of library visits are summarised in Table 3. Most users reported visiting the library to study (64.6%), with undergraduates contributing nearly half of this proportion (46.1%). Research-related purposes accounted for 10.9%, borrowing books for 10.3%, group study for 6.5%, and accessing digital resources for 2.9%. Faculty and postgraduates were more likely to cite research and digital access, while undergraduates emphasised studying and group work. A Chi-Square test confirmed a significant association between academic status and primary purpose ($\chi^2(20, N = 523) = 46.91, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .21$). These findings indicate that motivations for library use differ substantially across academic groups.

The frequency of library visits is depicted in Figure 1. Undergraduates emerged as the most frequent daily users, with 12.6% reporting daily visits, compared to 3.1% of faculty and 2.7% of postgraduates. Staff members showed the lowest engagement, with some indicating that they "rarely" or "never" visited. Overall, daily visits represented 20.5% of the sample, while 16.1% reported visiting rarely. This distribution demonstrates that undergraduates rely heavily on the library as a routine study environment, whereas faculty, postgraduates, and staff use it more intermittently and purposefully.

Table 4. Seek Help from Librarians or Library Staff

Cate gory	Al wa ys	Ne ve r	Of ten	Ra rel y	Some times	Tot al
Faculty	19	3	5	9	18	54
	3.6 0%	0.6 0%	1.0 0%	1.7 0%	3.40 %	10.3 0%
Postgra duate	15	3	4	11	38	71
	2.9 0%	0.6 0%	0.8 0%	2.1 0%	7.30 %	13.6 0%
	5	1	1	2	7	16

Research Scholar	1.0 0%	0.2 0%	0.2 0%	0.4 0%	1.30 %	3.10 %
Staff	6	1	1	1	8	17
	1.1 0%	0.2 0%	0.2 0%	0.2 0%	1.50 %	3.30 %
Undergraduate	118	24	20	44	159	365
	22.6 %	4.6 0%	3.8 0%	8.4 0%	30.40 %	69.8 0%
Total	162	32	31	67	230	523
	31.2 %	6.1 0%	5.9 0%	12.8 %	44.00 %	100.00 %

Patterns of seeking assistance from librarians or library staff are presented in Table 4. Undergraduates were again the most prominent group, with 22.6% reporting that they “always” sought help and an additional 30.4% indicating “sometimes.” Faculty and postgraduates, in contrast, were less reliant on professional support, with only 3.6% and 2.9% respectively stating that they “always” sought help. The Chi-Square analysis confirmed that the likelihood of seeking help was significantly related to academic status ($\chi^2(20, N = 523) = 44.92, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .19$). This suggests that undergraduates are more dependent on librarian assistance than advanced academic groups.

Respondents' perceptions of the most useful library services are shown in Table 5. Study spaces were the most valued service overall (50.5%), particularly among undergraduates, who relied on them as essential environments for academic work. Reference services ranked second (24.3%), especially valued by faculty and postgraduates. Digital resources were also important for advanced users but were less frequently cited explicitly, possibly reflecting their integration into daily academic practice. Services such as workshops, printing, and interlibrary loans were chosen less often but held importance for specific groups, notably research scholars and faculty. A Chi-Square test revealed significant differences across academic statuses ($\chi^2(100, N = 523) = 172.50, p < .001, \text{Cramer's } V = .28$), indicating diverse service priorities among user groups.

Table 5. Library Services Are Found Most Useful

Category	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Digital resources access	1.30%	1.50%	0.40%	0.20%	4.00%	7.50%
Digital resources access; Printing and photocopying	0.00%	0.00%	0.40%	0.00%	0.00%	0.40%
Digital resources access; Printing and photocopying; Workshops and training	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.20%
Interlibrary loans	0.20%	0.40%	0.20%	0.20%	0.60%	1.50%
Interlibrary loans; Study spaces; Workshops and training	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.20%
Printing and photocopying	0.40%	0.60%	0.00%	0.00%	2.70%	3.60%
Printing and photocopying; Workshops and training	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%
Reference services	3.60%	3.80%	0.80%	0.40%	15.70%	24.30%
Reference services; Digital resources access	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%
Reference services; Interlibrary loans	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%
Reference services; Interlibrary loans; Study spaces; Digital resources access; Printing and photocopying	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.20%
Reference services;	0.00%	0.20%	0.20%	0.00%	0.40%	0.80%

Interlibrary loans; Study spaces; Digital resources access; Printing and photocopying; Workshops and training sessions						
Reference services; Printing and photocopying	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.40%	0.40%
Reference services; Study spaces	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	2.10%	2.30%
Reference services; Study spaces; Digital resources access	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.80%	1.00%
Reference services; Study spaces; Digital resources access; Printing and photocopying	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.20%
Reference services; Study spaces; Digital resources access; Workshops and training	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.20%
Reference services; Study spaces; Printing and photocopying	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.60%	0.80%
Study spaces	3.80%	5.90%	1.00%	2.30%	37.50%	50.50%
Study spaces; Digital resources access	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.10%	1.30%
Study spaces; Digital resources access; Printing and photocopying	0.00%	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%

Study spaces; Digital resources access; Printing and photocopying; Workshops and training	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%	0.20%
Study spaces; Digital resources access; Workshops and training	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.20%
Study spaces; Printing and photocopying	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.80%	0.80%
Workshops and training sessions	0.40%	0.20%	0.00%	0.20%	2.10%	2.90%
Total	10.30%	13.60%	3.10%	3.30%	69.80%	100.00%

1-Faculty, 2-Postgraduate, 3-Research Scholar, 4-Staff, 5-Undergraduate

The distribution of information retrieval methods is detailed in Table 6. The library catalogue was the most widely used method (37.9%), followed by database searches (20.3%) and online search engines (15.7%). Browsing shelves accounted for 9.9%, while librarian consultations represented 15.7% of responses. Undergraduates dominated catalogue use (29.1%) and relied more on browsing and librarian support, whereas faculty and research scholars leaned more heavily on databases and search engines. The Chi-Square analysis again confirmed significant differences ($\chi^2(20, N = 523) = 44.92, p < .001$, *Cramer's V* = .20), demonstrating that retrieval strategies vary meaningfully with academic status.

Table 6. Usually, Search for Information in The Library

Category	Browsing the shelves	Consultation with librarians	Database search	Library catalogue	Online search engines	Total
Faculty	8	6	8	13	19	54
	1.50 %	1.10 %	1.50 %	2.50 %	3.60 %	10.30 %
Postgraduate	8	11	16	25	11	71
	1.50 %	2.10 %	3.10 %	4.80 %	2.10 %	13.60 %
Research Scholar	2	0	4	2	8	16
	0.40 %	0.00 %	0.80 %	0.40 %	1.50 %	3.10 %
Staff	3	2	4	6	2	17
	0.60 %	0.40 %	0.80 %	1.10 %	0.40 %	3.30 %
Undergraduate	31	63	77	152	42	365
	5.90 %	12.00 %	14.70 %	29.10 %	8.00 %	69.80 %
Total	50	82	106	198	82	523
	9.90 %	15.70 %	20.30 %	37.90 %	15.70 %	100.00 %

Table 7 presents the results of Chi-Square tests across major categories of information-seeking behaviour. Statistically significant differences were observed for “Digital resources found most helpful for academic work” ($\chi^2(124, N = 523) = 176.35, p < .001$, *Cramer's V* = .23), “Most common types of information sought” ($\chi^2(88, N = 523) = 147.38, p < .001$), “Library services found most useful” ($\chi^2(100,$

$N = 523) = 172.50, p < .001$), “Usual search methods” ($\chi^2(20, N = 523) = 44.92, p < .001$), and “Primary purpose of visiting the library” ($\chi^2(20, N = 523) = 46.91, p < .001$). By contrast, no significant differences were found in either the use of digital resources ($\chi^2(16, N = 523) = 8.98, p = .91$) or attendance at workshops ($\chi^2(4, N = 523) = 2.83, p = .59$). These results suggest that while most aspects of library use differ by academic status, some practices—such as accessing digital resources and attending workshops—are relatively uniform across groups.

Table 7 Chi-Square Tests: Academic Status-Wise Information-Seeking Behaviour in Academic Libraries

Category	Chi-Square Value	DF	P-Value	S/NS
Digital Resources Found Most Helpful for Academic Work	176.35	124	0.001	S
Use of Library's Digital Resources (e.g., Databases, E-Books)	8.981	16	0.914	NS
Attended Library Workshops or Training Sessions on Information Literacy	2.826	4	0.587	NS
Most Common Types of Information Sought in the Library	147.379	88	0	S
Study Category of Years	412.799	20	0	S
Library Services Found Most Useful	172.501	100	0	S
Usual Search Methods in the Library	44.923	20	0.001	S
Primary Purpose for	46.912	20	0.001	S

Visiting the Library				
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DF-Degrees of Freedom, (S/NS) -Significant/Not Significant

Discussion

This study demonstrates that academic status significantly influences information-seeking behavior in academic libraries, with apparent differences in visit frequency, service use, and retrieval methods (Tables 1–7; Fig. 1). These findings support Wilson's (1999) model, which highlights the role of contextual factors in shaping information practices, and Kuhlthau's (1991) assertion that user experience determines the degree of guidance required. Undergraduates emerged as the most frequent visitors (Fig. 1), relying heavily on study spaces (Table 5), catalogues, and librarian assistance (Table 6). Their dependence on mediation aligns with Kuhlthau's Information Search Process, where novice users often require structured support to overcome uncertainty. Faculty and postgraduates, in contrast, emphasised digital resources and research purposes (Tables 3, 7), reflecting Ellis's (1989) behavioural model of targeted, independent searching among experienced users. Research scholars and staff, though in smaller groups, displayed distinctive patterns. Research scholars valued interlibrary loans and reference services (Table 5), while staff reported minimal use, primarily for basic functions such as printing or quiet space. These results suggest that smaller user groups should not be overlooked, as they reflect unique service needs. A notable finding is the uniformly low workshop attendance (Table 7), consistent with Miller et al. (2010) and Bury (2024), who observed persistent challenges in attracting users to information literacy programs. Libraries may need to integrate such training into coursework or research workflows to increase uptake. Overall, the results confirm that libraries must maintain a hybrid approach, balancing investment in digital resources for advanced users with physical spaces and strong reference services for undergraduates. These findings reinforce the importance of tailoring services by academic status, ensuring equity and effectiveness across diverse user groups.

Conclusion

This study highlights that information-seeking behaviour in academic libraries is strongly influenced by academic status. Undergraduates rely heavily on study spaces, catalogues, and librarian assistance, while postgraduates and faculty demonstrate more autonomous, digital-first behaviours, focusing on databases and research purposes. Research scholars emphasise specialised resources such as interlibrary loans, whereas staff engage only minimally with library services. These patterns validate classic models of information behaviour—such as Wilson's contextual framework, Kuhlthau's uncertainty-focused ISP model, and Ellis's behavioural approach—while

providing updated evidence in a hybrid digital-physical library environment. The findings underscore the importance of tailoring library services to user groups. Libraries should prioritise accessible study environments and reference support for undergraduates, expand advanced digital resources and training for faculty and postgraduates, and strengthen specialised services for research scholars. At the same time, uniformly low participation in workshops points to the need to rethink how information literacy is delivered and embed it within teaching and research practices. Although limited to one institution, this study offers actionable insights for academic libraries seeking to design user-centred, status-sensitive, and hybrid service models that enhance resource utilisation and user engagement.

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