

Information requirements of career seekers: an analysis of the levels of requirement on the basis of qualifications

Dineshan Koovakkai and V Jalaja
University of Calicut, Kerala - 673 635

E-mail: dineshkoovakkai@yahoo.co.in, jalajadlis@yahoo.com

Career seekers need information at various stages of their career search. The present study aims at understanding whether career seekers having different levels of qualifications differ significantly in the levels of requirement for information resources and services. The study was conducted on a sample of 1039 career seekers in Kerala who make use of different types of libraries. The data were collected using questionnaire method. To find out the level of significance p-value is calculated. The result of the study shows that the career seekers with different levels of qualifications differ in the levels of requirement in half of the cases taken for the study. The requirement level is higher among those who have postgraduate degree.

Introduction

Information is an indispensable resource for all human activities. As information is a valuable input for social development, only those who utilize information effectively will ultimately be in the lead¹. In a library or information centre, the users are the last link or the recipients of information in the communication cycle. Hence, understanding the user requirements is a fundamental pre-requisite for libraries which aim at satisfying the information needs of the users which vary from user to user².

Each society has its vocational tradition. The caste based Indian social structure was in turn based on vocation. The society was divided according to the vocation as: Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. After the advent of democracy the number and types of profession increased. This coupled with increasing population, created the problem of choice and competition³.

In a state like Kerala where the educated unemployment problem is acute, choice and competition are of utmost importance. In such a state, it can be expected that there will be large demand for information about careers from the public at large⁴. There is very little doubt that careers and related information will become an increasingly important resource⁵.

Career seekers need information at various stages of their career search. They need information to know about the proper education and training for getting a job, to know about the job market, to find suitable employers, to know vacancy positions, to gain knowledge about preparing application forms and resumes, to prepare for various competitive examinations and to acquire interview / group discussion skills.

The employment opportunities are very limited compared to the bulk of potential candidates in Kerala. As a result, the unemployed as well as the underemployed have to prove their mettle by competing with their counterparts having equal or even higher qualifications and capability. Hence, it can be assumed that they are dependent on libraries more than any other group of users who have different information requirements.

Review of related literature

Adequate familiarity with the studies which have already been conducted, is a fundamental pre-requisite for pursuing any research work. It is necessary to understand how the researchers had approached the concept and what results they had obtained. Here, an attempt has been made to review some of the relevant studies in the area of career information.

Hodkinson⁶ conducted a study on how career decisions are made by young people. An interview of 115 school

students was conducted to get the relevant data. Most of the students were influenced by close relatives or neighbours in career decisions. Enjoyment of the job, promotion possibilities etc., were the other considerations.

Julien⁷ in her survey on Canadian adolescents tried to investigate the helpfulness of various information sources and the barriers faced by them in information seeking for career decision making. The data were collected from 399 adolescents using open ended questionnaire and interview. The study revealed that parents, siblings, other family members, family friends, peers, guidance counsellors, teachers, school and public library resources, mass media and government career centres were helpful in career decision making. The most important barrier faced by them for information seeking was information scatter. Availability of sources, lack of knowledge about the sources and lack of confidence also hindered the adolescent career decision making.

Verma⁸ in a study on a sample of 230 pre-employment candidates of public sector banks found that the most popular information sources were competition books and magazines. According to the majority of the candidates, there was no library/information centre/information service/information system for pre-employment candidates. The majority of the pre-employment candidates expected circulation service, reference service, advisory service and reprographic service from the library/information centre. The data were collected using structured questionnaire method from the sample selected using simple random sampling method.

The pattern of career decision making difficulties encountered by young adults was examined by Gati et al⁹. A sample of 417 young adults who used one or more of the computer assisted career guidance systems available at one of the Israeli Veteran Administration's counselling centres were taken for the study. Career decision making difficulties were found to be highest for individuals who were prior to the pre-screening stage of the career decision making process and lowest for those who were at the choice stage. The reduction in difficulties after using the career guiding system was statistically significant in seven of the ten difficulty categories examined. An especially marked reduction was found for difficulties related to lack of information.

The findings of the research incorporating a variety of further education institutions within the North West of England whose pupils were planning on entering higher education within the next 12 months were reported by Moogan and Baron¹⁰. The institutions were selected using a convenience based sampling method so that a variety of pupil characteristics were captured. Result of the survey revealed that in the problem recognition phase, boys were more likely to be introduced to higher education by their parents than were girls, and those pupils who made their minds up earlier to enter higher education were less likely to rely upon teachers but more upon parents. In the information search phase, the prospectus was the most important source of information and the majority spent at least three months searching, although females took longer to gather their data than males did. With the evaluation of alternatives phase, course content was more important to females, whereas reputation was more important to males and the most critical factor in causing apprehension was that of grade expectations, with females being less confident than males in achieving the necessary entry qualifications. Another reason to cause one to change one's mind was the social atmosphere, as obtained on an open day visit. Also, females were more anxious about moving away from home than were males.

From the review of literature, it can be seen that no major work has been carried out to find out if the requirement levels of the career seekers for information resources and services differ according to qualifications.

Objective of the study

The main objective of the present study is to find out whether the requirement levels of the career seekers for information resources and services differ according to qualifications.

Methodology

The study was conducted by distributing questionnaires among 1180 career seekers who make use of different libraries in Kerala out of which 1039 responded. The sample of career seekers for the study was taken from five university libraries, twelve college libraries (three each from four affiliating university areas out of which one is a professional college) and six public libraries (two each from North Kerala, Central Kerala and South Kerala). The resources/ services required by the career

Table 1 - Levels of requirement for documents for career selection

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	654	92.77	51	7.23	705	100	
Post graduation	322	96.41	12	3.59	334	100	0.021635
Total	976	93.94	63	6.06	1039	100	

Table 2 - Levels of requirement for materials providing information about training and education opportunities

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	664	94.18	41	5.82	705	100	
Post graduation	310	92.81	24	7.19	334	100	0.394407
Total	974	93.74	65	6.26	1039	100	

seekers were identified by informal interviews with career seekers and experts in the field of career guidance. The resources/ services thus identified were grouped as documents for career selection, materials providing information about training and education opportunities, resources giving information about employment opportunities, documents publishing formats of application forms, materials which help to prepare application/ resume, materials for preparing for competitive examinations, resources for preparing for interviews/ group discussions, alerting service, career guidance, career related information resources at one place in the library, photocopying service and internet/ electronic resources. Career seekers were grouped according to their qualifications as those who have only a Bachelor's Degree (Graduates) and those who have a Postgraduate Degree (Postgraduates).

Analysis

To find out whether there exists any significant difference in the levels of requirement of the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the information resources and services, Chi-square test was applied. The p-value was obtained to find out the level of significance of the difference.

It is clear from Table 1 that the p-value (0.021635) is not significant at one percent level but is significant at five percent level. This indicates that at five percent

level, there is significant association between qualifications and level of requirement for documents for career selection. This reveals that significant difference exists between the levels of requirement for documents for career selection of the graduate and postgraduate career seekers. The percentages show that the requirement level is higher among the postgraduate career seekers when compared to that of the graduate career seekers.

The p-value (0.394407) in Table 2 indicates that there is no significant association between qualification and level of requirement for materials providing information about training and education opportunities. This reveals that there is no significant difference between the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the levels of requirement for such materials.

In the case of the resources giving information about employment opportunities no significant association between qualification and level of requirement can be observed as indicated by the p-value (0.625848). This reveals that no significant difference exists between the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the levels of requirement for such resources (Table 3).

A comparison of the levels of requirements for documents publishing formats of application forms in Table 4 shows that there is significant association between qualifications

Table 3 - Levels of requirement for resources giving information about employment opportunities

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	666	94.47	39	5.53	705	100	0.625848
Post graduation	313	93.71	21	6.29	334	100	
Total	979	94.23	60	5.77	1039	100	

Table 4 - Levels of requirement for documents publishing formats of application forms

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	547	77.59	158	22.41	705	100	0.000173
Post graduation	292	87.43	42	12.57	334	100	
Total	839	80.75	200	19.25	1039	100	

Table 5 - Levels of requirement for materials which help to prepare application/resume

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	530	75.18	175	24.82	705	100	0.000079
Post graduation	287	85.93	47	14.07	334	100	
Total	817	78.63	222	21.37	1039	100	

Table 6 - Levels of requirement for materials for preparing for competitive examinations

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	642	91.06	63	8.94	705	100	0.046422
Post graduation	316	94.61	18	5.39	334	100	
Total	958	92.20	81	7.80	1039	100	

and level of requirement for such documents. The p-value (0.000173) confirms this. This shows that there is significant difference between the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the levels of requirements for such documents. The requirement percentages show that the requirement level is higher among the postgraduate career seekers as compared to that of the graduate career seekers.

The p-value (0.000079) derived in Table 5 shows that there is significant association between qualification and level of requirement for materials which help to prepare application / resume. This reveals that there is significant difference between the levels of requirement of the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers for such materials. The percentages of requirement show that the requirement level is higher among the postgraduate

Table 7 - levels of requirement for resources for preparing for interviews / group discussions

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	606	85.96	99	14.04	705	100	
Post graduation	289	86.53	45	13.47	334	100	0.804037
Total	895	86.14	144	13.86	1039	100	

Table 8 - Levels of requirement for alerting service

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	567	80.43	138	19.57	705	100	
Post graduation	283	84.73	51	15.27	334	100	0.092967
Total	850	81.81	189	18.19	1039	100	

career seekers compared to that of the graduate career seekers.

In the case of the materials for preparing for competitive examinations as shown in Table 6 the p-value (0.046422) is not significant at one percent level but significant at five percent level. This indicates that there is significant association between qualifications and level of requirement for such materials at five percent level of significance. This reveals that there is significant difference between the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the level of requirement for such materials. The percentages of requirement show that the level of requirement for such materials is comparatively higher among the postgraduate career seekers.

As per the p-value (0.804037) indicated in Table 7 no significant association can be observed between qualifications and level of requirement for resources for preparing for interviews/group discussions. This shows that there is no significant difference between the levels of requirement of the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers.

As indicated by the p-value (0.092967) in Table 8, there is no significant association between qualifications and

level of requirement for alerting service. This shows that there is no significant difference between the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the level of requirement for alerting service.

Table 9 shows that there is no significant association between qualifications and level of requirement for career guidance (p-value 0.125064). This reveals that there is no significant difference between the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the level of requirement for career guidance.

The p-value (0.557712) shown in Table 10 that there is no significant association between qualifications and level of requirement for career related information resources at one place. Thus it can be observed that there is no significant difference between the levels of requirement of the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers for such facility.

The p-value (0.030202) derived in Table 11 is not significant at one percent level but significant at five percent level which shows that there is significant association between qualifications and level of requirement for photocopying service at five percent level of significance. This indicates that significant difference exists between the graduate and the

Table 9 - Levels of requirement for career guidance

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	629	89.22	76	10.78	705	100	
Post graduation	287	85.93	47	14.07	334	100	0.125064
Total	916	88.16	123	11.84	1039	100	

Table 10 - Levels of requirement for career related information resources at one place in the library

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	560	79.43	145	20.57	705	100	
Post graduation	260	77.84	74	22.16	334	100	0.557712
Total	820	78.92	219	21.08	1039	100	

Table 11 - Levels of requirement for photocopying service

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	548	77.73	157	22.27	705	100	
Post graduation	279	83.53	55	16.47	334	100	0.030202
Total	827	79.60	212	20.40	1039	100	

Table 12 - Levels of requirement for internet/electronic resources

Educational Qualifications	Required		Not Required		Total		p-value
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Graduation	582	82.55	123	17.45	705	100	
Post graduation	292	87.43	42	12.57	334	100	0.044791
Total	874	84.12	165	15.88	1039	100	

postgraduate career seekers in the level of requirement for this service. The requirement percentages show that the requirement level is higher among the postgraduate career seekers as compared to that of the graduate career seekers.

The p-value (0.0447491) which is not significant at one percent level but significant at five percent level indicates that there is significant association between qualification and level of requirement for internet/electronic resources at five percent level of significance (Table 12). This reveals that there is significant difference between the

graduate and the postgraduate career seekers in the level of requirement for internet/electronic resources. The requirement percentages show that the level of requirement is higher among the postgraduate career seekers than that among the graduate career seekers.

Conclusion

The analysis reveals that the graduate and the postgraduate career seekers do not differ much in the level of requirement for materials providing information about training and education opportunities, resources giving information about employment opportunities,

resources for preparing for interviews/ group discussions, alerting service, career guidance and career related information resources at one place. However, in the case of the level of requirement of documents for career selection, documents publishing formats of application forms, materials which help to prepare application/ résumé, materials for preparing for competitive examinations, photocopying service and internet/ electronic resources considerable difference can be observed. Higher level of requirement can be observed among the postgraduate career seekers in these cases. This reveals that postgraduate career seekers are more serious in the search for a career and for the preparation for getting a job. It can also be observed that as postgraduates have more options and possibilities for employment, they need more information than the graduates.

References

1. Anderson B, Delivering career and job information: a place for libraries, *Reference Librarian*, 36 (1992) 17-32.
2. Durrance J C et al.. Serving job seekers and career changers: a planning manual for public libraries: part of public library development program. 1993. American Library Association; Chicago.
3. Thomas B and Madigan C, Unemployment and the unemployed-what type of people, what kind of problem?: A research note, *Journal of Management Studies*, 13 (1) (1976) 76-83.
4. Jalaja V and Koovakkai D, Career awareness service in libraries: a proposal, *Kelpro Bulletin*, 1 (1) (1997) 17-19.
5. Turner R, Career information: a forgotten resource, *Assistant Librarian*, 72 (7/8) (1979) 10-103.
6. Hodkinson P, How young people make career decisions, *Education + Training*. 37 (8) (1995) 3-8.
7. Julien H E, Barriers to adolescents' information seeking for career decision making, *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 50 (1) (1999) 38-48.
8. Verma N, Information needs of pre-employment candidates of public sector banks of Greater Gwalior, *Library Herald*, 37 (4) (2000) 274-289.
9. Gati H et al. Should I use a computer-assisted career guidance system? It depends on where your career decision-making difficulties lie, *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 29 (3) (2001) 301-321.
10. Moogan Y J and Baron S, An analysis of student characteristics within the student decision making process, *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 27 (3) (2003) 271-287.