

## Usage of JSTOR Database Among Research Scholars in the Faculty of Social Science, Aligarh Muslim University

Nahav Alam Ansari\* and M. Masoom Raza

*Department of Library & Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh - 202 001, India*

*\*E-mail: nahav.rs@amu.ac.in*

### ABSTRACT

The study set out to examine the researchers' perception towards the use JSTOR database and to explore the reasons not to use JSTOR database. The present study carried out using simple random sampling technique. The major purpose of researchers to use JSTOR was research work and article title was the most common searching techniques in simple search category. In advanced search technique field search was most common search technique followed by phrase search. Almost, all respondents found satisfied with the service of JSTOR and none was found dissatisfied/partially satisfied. On the basis of findings, it is recommended that the use of JSTOR database can be maximised, if researchers have frequent literacy programs.

**Keywords:** JSTOR; Database; Electronic resources; Researchers; Scholars

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Wu and Chen<sup>1</sup> states that compared to available traditionally printed sources, e-resources provide more convenient access, easy to locate and also downloadable feature make them more familiar among research/academic community. In the present era of digital information, electronic journals witnessed a well-established means of information transmission among scientists, researchers, students etc. Now days, libraries of higher educational institutes and research organisations are providing various electronic sources to their users such as e-books, e-magazines, e-newspapers, databases, repositories and so on. In fact, electronic journals dominate and preferred to all these e-resources. For any researcher, e-journals one considered as a prime/core sources of information. According to Association of College and Research Libraries<sup>2</sup>, it was estimated that there are about more than 20,000 double peer reviewed journals published across the globe and over 7,000 are published in electronic form. As Erdamar and Demirel<sup>3</sup> describes, in the recent past, there has been a drastic shift in the information seeking patterns of researchers/scholars. He further points out that today electronic journal and other digital information sources increasingly constitute a research tool for researchers and scientists.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Today, the trend of using information source has been drastically shifted from print sources to electronic sources. With the advent of internet, these sources have recently become very popular among academic and research communities.

Smith<sup>4</sup> noted that with the variation and increasing number of electronic sources of information, libraries are tending to allot more amounts to subscribe these sources. The Maulana Azad Library of Aligarh Muslim University also subscribes a long list of e-resources. Among all e-resources, JSTOR Database has been selected for the present study, because the other related databases had already been covered including their various aspects but no study has been taken so far to assess users' perception towards using JSTOR.

Under the direction of the University of Michigan, a project was launched in 1995, this project ended with the establishment of JSTOR as an independent not-for-profit organisation. In 2009, JSTOR merged with and became a service of ITHAKA. Presently, the JSTOR listed a total of 3709 journals title and among all titles about 416 journals title belongs to various branches studies.

The Faculty of Social Science was set up in 1969 with nine departments. Today, the faculty comprises of fourteen Departments/Centers and Interdisciplinary Centre for Development Studies. The faculty is offering 8 undergraduate and 20 post graduate programs apart from various Diploma and Certificate Courses.

### 3. OBJECTIVES

- To examine the users' perception of JSTOR database among research scholars
- To determine the reasons for not using JSTOR database
- To bring out the preferred searching technique by research scholars
- To know weekly spent time by the researchers
- To ascertain the satisfaction level of research scholars towards JSTOR database.

#### 4. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Maulana Azad Library subscribes a variety of electronic sources to facilitate its user. Present study confined to the users' perception toward the JSTOR database. The present study is further limited to research scholars of Faculty of Social Science, AMU.

#### 5. METHODOLOGY

The present study is survey based study. For this purpose, simple random sampling technique was used. A total of 165 questionnaire were distributed among the research scholars. However, 131 questionnaire were received from the researchers. Thus, 79.39 per cent response rate was achieved. Then, the collected data was manually counted and fitted in MS Excel sheet for further calculations and preparation of graphs and tables. Finally, the tabulated data was copied to MS Word, where the data was interpreted and findings of the study presented.

#### 6. LITERATURE REVIEW

Arshad and Ameen<sup>5</sup> employed a survey on academics of Punjab University (Lahore) to explore the pattern of use of e-journals. The researcher observed that academicians frequently use e-journals, online reference sources, reading abstracts etc. to fill their research activity and teaching tasks. They basically obtained research articles from open access sources and rarely consulted subscribed sources of information. It was found that electronic journals were dominant among all types of online sources of information. A similar study was also taken by Bhat and Ganaie<sup>6</sup> to determine some segments while using electronic information resources (EIRs) by scientists, research scholar and PG students. The results showed that their most common place of using EIRs were department/office, hostels, home etc. The study reported that almost all participants searched information through their own laptops followed by desktops. In case of simple search, they used title search followed by keywords and in case of advanced search they used Boolean operator followed by quotation mark, wild card and truncation search.

Leduce and Schapfel<sup>7</sup> compared the usage of e-resources among top ranked French Business Schools such as HEC, ESSEC, INSEAD. The study pointed out that the usage appears to be comparatively intensive, especially when compared to usage statistic from universities in the same field. The authors recommended that business schools should increase usage and efficiency of subscribed digital resources. Another study carried out by Wu and Chen<sup>7</sup> on electronic resources. They explored graduate students perception towards e-resources and their usage pattern. They found that student were using e-resources frequently especially during the time of thesis writing. The students of science and technology perceived that e-resources are more important to their research work, than students of other discipline do.

Kumar<sup>8</sup> conducted a study on the usage of e-resources by the students of medical science, engineering and management in Bangalore city. They all were found to be aware of e-resources and internet. Their major purpose to use e-resources was academic related work. Some of the participant preferred print

sources to e-resources. Lastly, the authors opined that librarians need to expand the availability of electronic resources for the students and faculties. One more similar study set out by Guager and Kacena<sup>9</sup> to inspect what effects institutional size and the selection of JSTOR collection have on the overall usage statistics. For this purpose, they identified five academic libraries approximately equal in size, and then the researchers compared JSTOR log data among selected libraries. In the study, the authors found that the size of the institution influence the overall data usage statistics. It also revealed that information literacy programs made a greater influence on the use of JSTOR database.

#### 7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 7.1 Users of JSTOR Database

Table 1 shows that out of 131 respondent 85 participant uses JSTOR database and 46 respondent does not use JSTOR database. As shown in the Table 1, the number of males (48) are greater than females (37) in case the usage of JSTOR database.

**Table 1. Users of JSTOR**

Users	Respondents (n = 131)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Yes	48	37	85 (64.88)
No	20	26	46 (35.12)
Total			131 (100)

##### 7.2 Reasons not to use JSTOR

The participants were asked to mention reason behind not to use JSTOR database. As displayed in Table 2 that 46 participant do not use JSTOR, because they don't know JSTOR database and 10 participant are found aware about JSTOR database, but they prefer other database. The percentage share of reasons constitutes as 78.26 per cent and 21.74 per cent respectively. Furthermore, female are found more unaware about JSTOR than the male.

**Table 2. Reasons not to use JSTOR**

Reasons	Respondents (n=46)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Don't know JSTOR	17	19	36 (78.26)
Prefer other databases	4	6	10 (21.74)
Total			46 (100)

##### 7.3 Reasons to use JSTOR

The JSTOR database is one of the prime source of information for the researchers of humanities and other sciences which provide a millions of peer reviewed documents for the purpose of research and other academic task. Therefore, the participants were asked to determine the major reason to use it. The results on this question appeared quite similar in both genders. As revealed in Table 3 that 33 participant use JSTOR database for its authenticity followed by 31 participants for its easy access and 22 participant use because of its multidisciplinary nature. Other reasons are good interface by 16 participant, relevancy in available literature by 15 participant

and full text availability by 14 participant. However, only 2 participant use JSTOR database for some other reasons.

**Table 3. Reasons to use JSTOR**

Reasons	Respondents (n=82)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Authenticity	15	18	33 (40.23)
Easy access	18	13	31 (37.80)
Multidisciplinary	14	7	22 (26.82)
Good interface	9	7	16 (19.51)
Give relevant information	6	9	15 (18.67)
Full text	9	5	14 (17.07)
Any other	-	2	2 (2.43)
Total			82 (100)

#### 7.4 Experience of JSTOR

The most important and stunning aspect of assessing the using pattern of any database is the familiarity of the particular database among users. If, the users are not familiar with the particular database, than the study will not serve any purpose. For the accomplishment of this task a question was placed for the respondents. Results, regarding the familiarity of JSTOR database between male and female, the later one category appeared to have more experience than earlier one. Jointly, the Table 4 points out that 21 participants have 1-2 years' experience of using JSTOR database and the same number of participators have 6 month to 1 years' experience. 20 respondents seem to have less than 6 months' experience whereas other 20 participants were reported to have more than two years' experience of using JSTOR database.

**Table 4. Experience of JSTOR**

Experience	Respondents (n=82)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Less than 6 month	9	11	20 (24.39)
6 Month to 1 year	8	13	21 (25.61)
1-2 years	9	12	21 (25.61)
More than 2 years	13	7	20 (24.39)
Total			82 (100)

#### 7.5 Time Spent Time

A question was asked on weekly spent time for the purpose to reach a conclusion that which group of users spends more time in browsing this database. In case of weekly spent time for locating information from JSTOR Database, again the female surmount the male. Among all given options, female participants spend more time than male. As indicated in Table 5 that more than half of the partakers i.e. 45 spends less than 1 hour per week for accessing JSTOR database, followed by 26 participant spends 3-4 hour/week and only 6 participant spends more than 7 hour/week. A very few researchers i.e. only 5 participant spends 6-7 hour/week in using JSTOR database.

**Table 5. Weekly spent time**

Time spend	Respondents (n=82)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Less than 1 hour/week	18	27	45 (54.87)
3-4 Hour/week	12	14	26 (31.71)
6-7 Hour/week	2	3	5 (6.09)
More than 7 hour/week	3	3	6 (7.33)
Total			82 (100)

#### 7.6 Simple Search Techniques

Another, significant aspect of any database is the provision of searching choices in a particular database. And the retrieval of results is determined by the user friendly searching techniques. The JSTOR provides a variety of searching techniques in simple search category. Among all techniques, keyword search takes top place in female category; on the other hand article title search is appeared most common in male category. Collectively, as pointed out in Table 6 that most common search technique is keywords search by 32 participants followed by article title search by 27 participants, author search by 12 participators and subject search by 11 participants. Besides, 12 participants use all these techniques to locate their required information.

**Table 6. Simple search methods**

Simple Search	Respondents (n=82)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Through keywords	14	18	32 (39.02)
Article title	17	10	27 (32.92)
Author name	8	4	12 (14.63)
All of these	4	8	12 (14.63)
Subject	5	6	11 (13.41)
Date of publication	2	4	6 (7.31)
Total			100 (121.92)

*(N is over due to multiple answers)*

#### 7.7 Advanced Search Techniques

Any database whether national or international, whether it is citation and full text must provide some sort of searching tools and techniques in advance searching techniques to dig information from it. These searching tools works as a library catalogue helps to dig information from a library. Thus, the JSTOR Database also provides some kinds of searching techniques to locate information. Comparatively, advance search techniques are little more technical to simple search techniques. Albeit, the participants in both categories also use advance search methods to locate information from JSTOR database. Among all advance searching techniques, field search is found most preferred searching technique in in both groups equally by 14 participants each. In details, it can be seen in the table 7 it executes that phrase search is used by 23 participants and boolean operator is used by 13 participants. Anyhow, 7 participants is used all of these techniques. Surprisingly, none of the participant uses wild card technique.

**Table 7. Advanced search techniques**

Advanced search	Respondents (n=82)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Field search	14	14	28 (34.04)
Phrase search	10	13	23 (28.04)
Boolean operators	8	5	13 (15.85)
Not mentioned	7	3	10 (12.19)
All of these	3	4	7 (8.53)
Truncation search	5	2	7 (8.53)
Total			92 (111.26)

(N is over due to multiple answers)

### 7.8 Purpose of using JSTOR Database

Any database or source of information serves multiple purposes. It is user community that use it for different purpose depending upon the users' profession. In research communities the purpose for using any database remains more or less same. Here, the scholar of social science also uses JSTOR Database primarily for research work and this purpose is almost same between both genders. As disposed in Table 8 that more than one third participant i.e. 69 uses JSTOR database for their research work, followed by domain knowledge and teaching assignments by 23 and 1 participant, respectively. In addition to this, near about one fourth of the participants uses JSTOR database for some other purposes.

**Table 8. Purpose of using JSTOR**

Purpose	Respondents (n=82)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Research work	33	36	69 (84.14)
Any other	11	9	19 (23.17)
Domain knowledge	8	8	16 (19.51)
Teaching assignment	1	-	1 (1.21)
Total			105 (128.03)

(N is over due to multiple answers)

### 7.9 Satisfaction Level of Users

The satisfaction level is an indispensable phenomenon in any service provided by the libraries. The assessment of users' satisfaction level reveals the significance of a particular information product. Therefore, Table 9 reflects that not much difference was found between male and female as far as the

**Table 9 Satisfaction level of users**

Satisfaction level	Respondents (n= 82)		Total (%)
	Male	Female	
Satisfied	22	17	39 (47.56)
Partially satisfied	26	16	42 (51.21)
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	-	1	1 (1.23)
Total			82 (100)

level of satisfaction towards the use of JSTOR is concerned. Satisfaction level was recorded maximum. As shown in Table 9, more than half of the researchers i.e. 42 researchers are found partially satisfied and 39 researchers are found satisfied with the use of JSTOR database. It is a matter of appreciation that none of the researchers seem to be dissatisfied. Insignificantly, only a girl was appeared neutral and none of the participants in both categories was found dissatisfied.

### 8. CONCLUSIONS

At last, it can be said that JSTOR proved a key source of information for researchers as well as other professionals. Due to its availability at their door, today researchers are more focused on e-journals in comparison to print journals. The findings revealed that users of Maulana Azad Library are obtaining a significant benefit from this database for their research works and other academic tasks. Although, the numbers of journals in social science disciplines are less in comparison to other disciplines in the databases, it is helping researchers to enhance their research work. Above all, a large number of researchers are not aware of this database. Therefore, the library should take care of such researchers through organising literacy programs and orientation programs for new researchers so that they become familiar about the available sources of the library and can use these resources to its maximum potential.

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## CONTRIBUTORS

**Mr Nahav Alam Ansari** currently pursuing his PhD in the Department of Library and Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. He has attended four international conference and also presented paper in two of them. He has also attended many national seminars and workshops.

In the current study, he collected data through a questionnaire, and later the data was rigorously analysed statistically by him.

**Dr M. Masoom Raza** received his MSc (Hons), ML&I.Sc and PhD from Panjab University, Chandigarh. Currently working as Associate Professor in the Department of Library and Information Science, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. He has about 60 publications in different professional journals/books of LIS.

He has guided and supervised while conducting the current study.