

Research Competence of PG Students in Assumption College Autonomous, Changanacherry, Kerala

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Abstract

Research competency refers to the skills, knowledge, and abilities required to effectively conduct research in a particular field or discipline. It involves a range of activities aimed at acquiring, analysing, and interpreting information to address a specific research question or problem. This study aims to find out the research skills, research competencies of students and to know the awareness about plagiarism, reference management software. The questionnaires method was used to collect information from 260 PG students in Assumption College (Autonomous), Changanacherry. Finding revealed that the majority of students expressed that they possess the capability to compose an abstract, construct a literature review, and derive accurate conclusions from their research findings.

Keywords: Research Competency, Research Skills, Plagiarism, Reference Management Software's

1. INTRODUCTION

Engaging in research is widely regarded as a pivotal element within the academic realm. It involves the process of generating novel knowledge through exploration, discovery, invention, and creation. Its far-reaching impact spans various domains of human endeavours including education, decision-making, policy formulation, accreditation, and more. Proficiency in research entails possessing the necessary skills and expertise to conduct investigative work. These competencies are often cultivated through formal education, participation in seminars, and similar developmental activities. Practical involvement in research activities further augments these competencies and subsequently refines research outcomes, which represents the next phase of advancement following improved educational delivery. The cultivation of research competence is particularly vital for postgraduate students. Equipping postgraduate students with knowledge, skills, and a positive approach to research instils systematic thinking, analytical prowess, and the ability to synthesize information. This cultivates academic growth among postgraduates and facilitates the systematic resolution of problems, thereby fostering continuous knowledge enhancement, innovation, and contributing to the systematic evolution of knowledge.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Afolabi et al. (2022) conducted a study on research competence of the postgraduate students in Library School in South-West, Nigeria. This study covers the one hundred and sixty-one library and information science postgraduate students in South-West-Nigeria. The collected data were analysed by using

frequency distribution table and percentage. The findings of the study show that the research competence possessed by the postgraduate in Library Schools in South-West, Nigeria is high. This study states that the level of competence was high which is useful for research. The findings of this study states that the research knowledge, skills and attitude of the postgraduate students which develops the premise of their research competence. The postgraduate students understand that they need to improve their research competence through developing a positive attitude towards research and also neglect all negative attitudes which will affect their interest in their research work.

Awodoyin et al. (2020) conducted a study on the perceived research skill of graduating library and information science (LIS) undergraduates in a Nigerian University of education. The researchers directly administered the questionnaire to all the students. Out of a total of 180 questionnaires administered only one hundred and sixty (160) was retrieved and found useful for the study. The findings of the study is that the graduating students are predictably young and the female students outnumber their male counterparts, which is an indication of the growing enrollment of the female gender in higher education in South-west Nigeria. The student's belief in their research capacity should be a function of the environment of their training, this is supported by Vygotsky in (1987) in his social-cultural learning theory. The conclusion of study is that when examined as a whole, the research skills of the undergraduates was considered as being high; the assessment of each of the research sub-skills by the students was also good, although they also perceive their problem solving and evaluation and statistical \ quantitative analysis sub-skills as moderate.

3. OBJECTIVES

- To know the research competency of PG students in Assumption College, Changanacherry.
- To find out the awareness about plagiarism and reference management software.
- To identify problem while using library.

4. METHODOLOGY

For the present investigation, the 'survey method' was adopted. To collect the information the investigator personally visited all the PG departments of Assumption College (Autonomous) and 260 questionnaires distributed among the students 220 filled questionnaires were received within 3 weeks. The response rate is 84.62%. Thus, the present study is based on responses provided by 220 respondents. Table 1 shows that the percentage of response.

Table 1: Percentage of response

Category	Questionnaires Distributed	Questionnaires Received	Percentage of Response
PG Students	260	220	84.62%

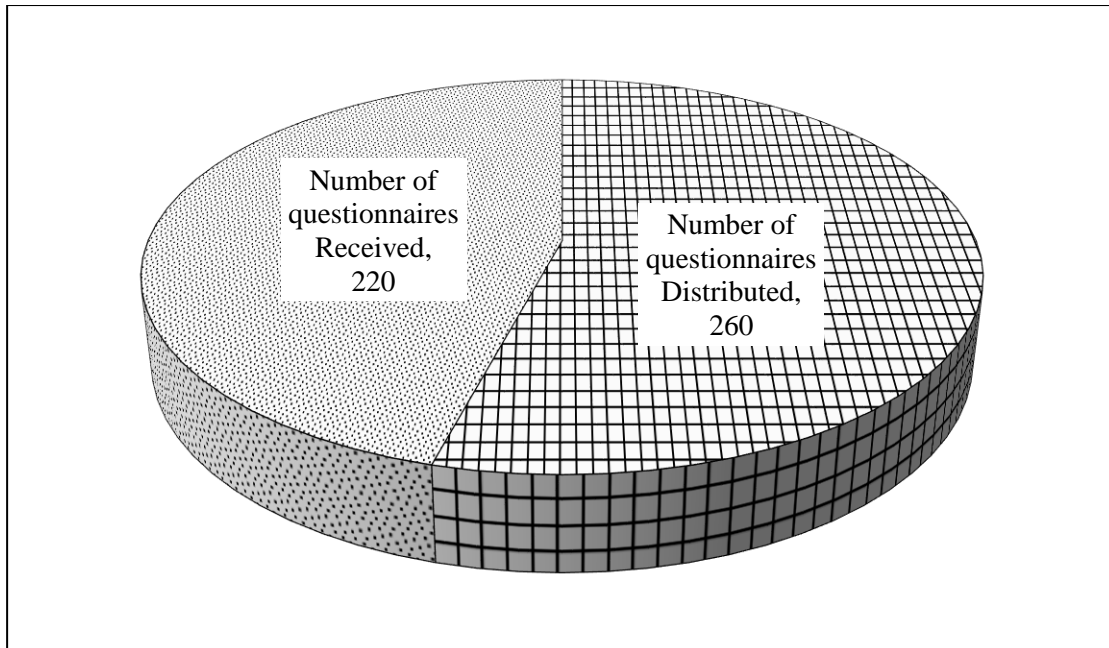


Figure 1: Pie diagram showing Percentage of response

5. ANALYSIS OF DATA

Research skills

Respondents were asked to indicate the following research skills

Table 2: Research skills

SI No.	Research skills	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Able to write an abstract	136	61.82%
2	Able to develop research problems, research plan	80	36.36%
3	Able to explain the purpose of research, significance of the study	100	45.45%
4	Able to prepare literature review	134	60.91%
5	Able describe data collection procedure	112	50.91%
6	Able identify appropriate method for analysing my data	94	42.73%
7	Able to make valid findings and conclusions from the result	134	60.91%

Table 2 shows that 61.82% of respondents opined they are able to write an abstract, 60.91% opined that they are able to prepare literature review and to make valid findings and conclusions from the result, 50.91% of respondents opined they are able to data collection procedure, 45.45% of respondents opined they are able to explain the purpose of research, significance of the study, 42.73% of respondents opined

they are able to identify appropriate method for analysing data and 36.36% of respondents opined they are able to develop research problems, research plan.

Research Competence

Respondents were asked to indicate their competence

Table 3: Competence					
Sl No	Category	Competence			
		Excellent	Good	Poor	Bad
		Number of respondents and percentage			
1	Communication skills	63	142	10	0
		28.64%	64.55%	4.55%	0.00
2	Information gathering, handling, evaluating	66	144	4	0
		30%	65.45%	1.82%	0.00
3	Team work	92	113	5	0
		41.82%	51.36%	2.27%	0.00
4	Ability to work independently	73	131	10	0
		33.18%	59.55%	4.55%	0.00
5	Project management skills	44	145	21	0
		20%	65.91%	9.55%	0.00
6	Time management Skills	62	110	36	1
		28.18%	50%	16.36%	0.45%
7	Problem solving	47	124	37	1
		21.36%	56.36%	16.82%	0.45%
8	Critical thinking	1	6	24	6
		0.45%	2.73%	10.91%	2.73%

Table 3 shows that:

Excellent

41.82% of respondents opined that team work is excellent followed by ability to work independently (33.18%), information gathering, handling, evaluating (30%), communication skills (28.64%), time management Skills (28.18%), problem solving (21.36%), project management skills (20%) and critical thinking (0.45%).

Good

65.91% of respondents opined that project management skills is good followed by information gathering, handling, evaluating (65.45%), communication skills (64.55%), ability to work independently (59.55%), problem solving (56.36%), team work (51.36%), time management Skills (50%) and critical thinking (2.73%).

Poor

16.82% of respondents opined that problem solving is poor followed by time management Skills (16.36%), critical thinking (10.91%), project management skills (9.55%), communication skills and ability to work independently (4.55%), team work (2.27%) and information gathering, handling, evaluating (1.82%).

Bad

2.73% of respondents opined that critical thinking is bad followed by problem solving time management Skills (0.45%).

Awareness about plagiarism

Respondents were asked to indicate the awareness about plagiarism

Table 4: Awareness about plagiarism

Sl No	Parameter	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	187	85%
2	No	21	9.55%

Table 4 shows that 85% of respondents opined that they are aware about plagiarism and 9.55% opined that they are not aware about plagiarism.

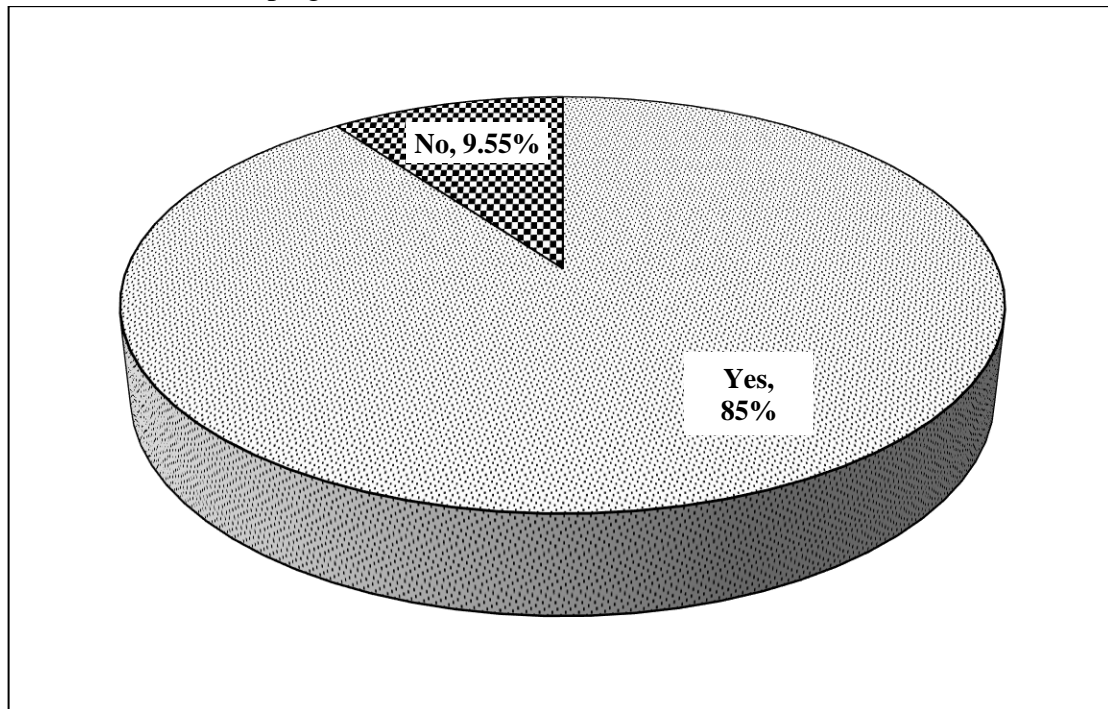


Figure 2: Pie diagram showing awareness about plagiarism

Reference Management Software

Respondents were asked to indicate the awareness of reference management software

Table 5.: Reference Management Software

SI No	Category	Number of Response	Percentage
1	Yes	14	6.36%
2	No	185	84.09%

Table 5 shows that 84.09% of respondents opined that they are not aware about reference management software and 6.36% are aware about reference management software. 9.55% did not respond to the questions.

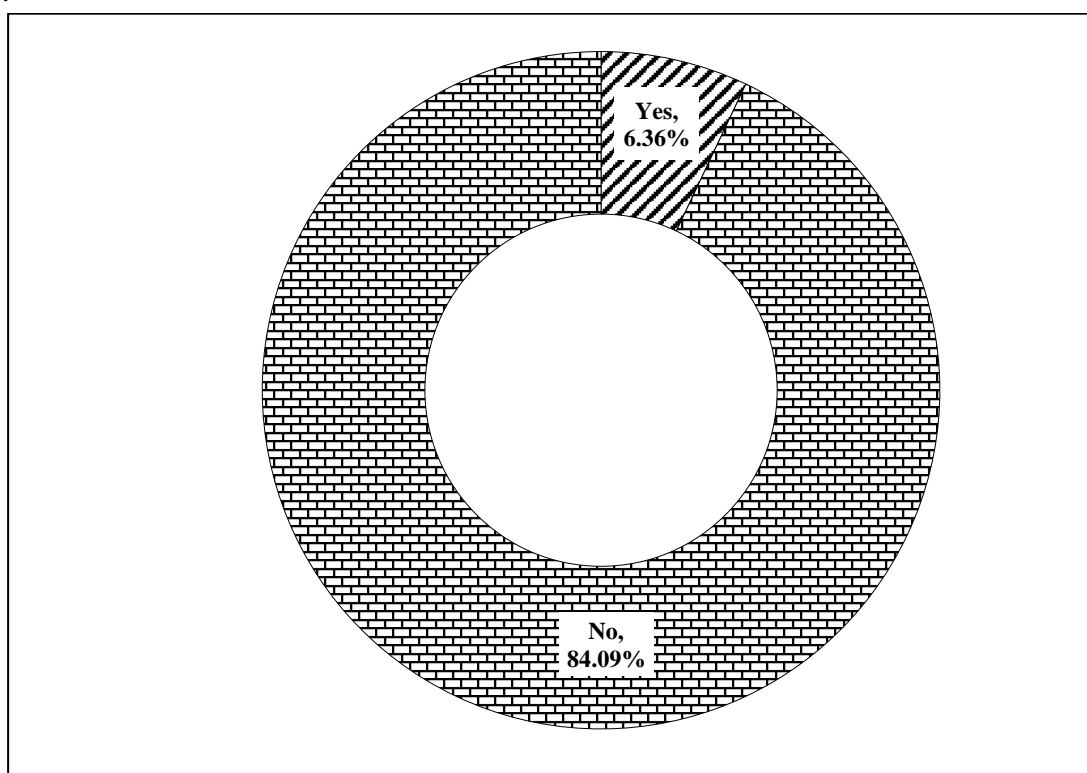


Figure 3: Doughnut diagram showing reference management software

Problems faced using library

Respondents were asked to indicate problems faced while using library

Table 6: Problems

SI No.	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
1	Inadequate professional staff	39	17.73 %
2	Lack of multiple copies of books	126	57.27 %

3	Inadequate working hours	32	14.55 %
4	Poor infrastructure	16	7.27 %
5	Outdated Collection	77	35%

Table 6 shows that 57.27% of respondents selected lack of multiple copies of books as the main problem faced while using the library followed by outdated collection (35%), inadequate professional staff (17.73%), inadequate working hours (14.55 %) and poor infrastructure (7.27%).

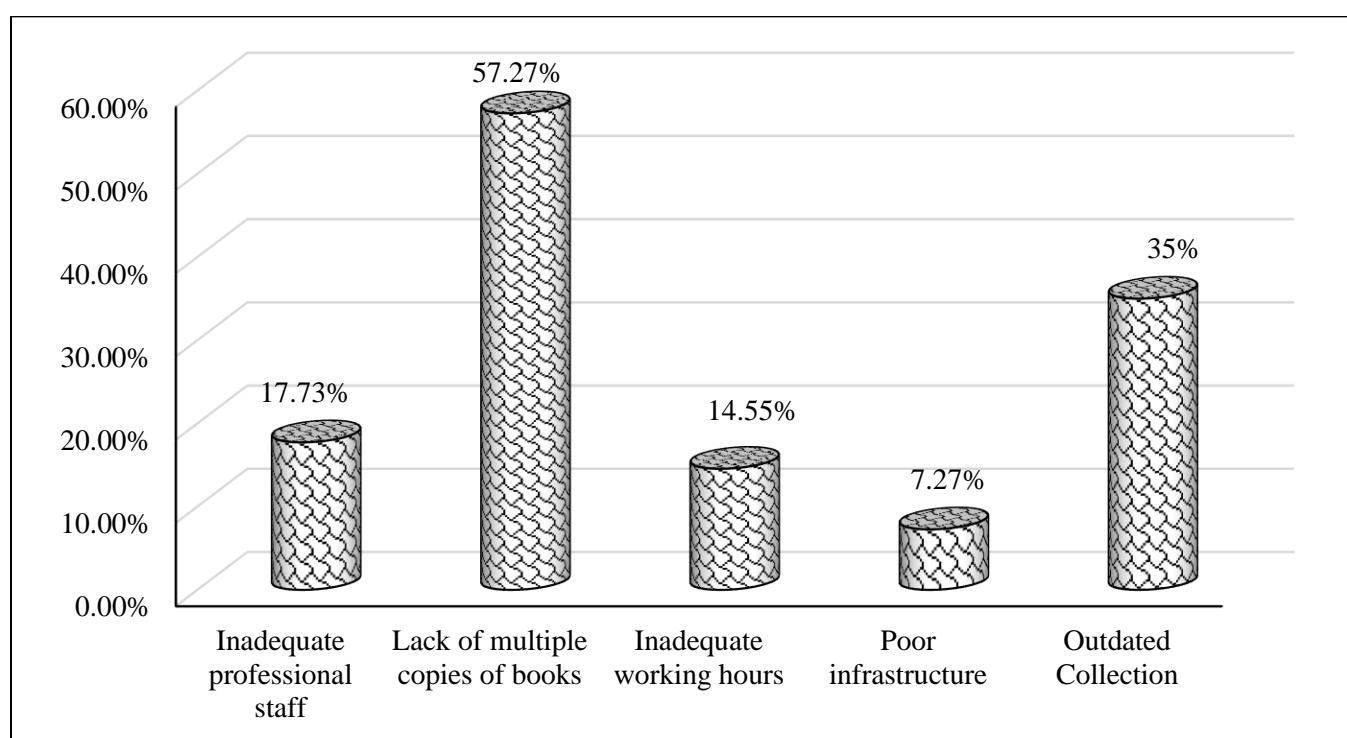


Figure 4: Cylinder diagram showing Problems

6. FINDINGS

The majority of students expressed their proficiency in composing abstracts, creating literature reviews, and deriving meaningful conclusions from their research outcomes. Additionally, most students indicated that their abilities in project management, communication, and the acquisition, handling, and evaluation of information were satisfactory. However, their critical thinking skills were reported to be notably lacking. The analysis indicated that a significant portion of students possessed knowledge about plagiarism, but a majority were unfamiliar with reference management software. The findings from the analysis underscored that a substantial number of students encounter challenges due to the insufficient availability of multiple copies of books.

7. CONCLUSION

Properly managing reference is crucial for maintaining accuracy, credibility and integrity in research. It allows them to acknowledge their work and avoid plagiarism. Efficient reference management software

saves time and effort during writing and publishing stages. Findings revealed that the majority of the PG students are unaware of reference management software systems. Hence it is suggested to give them proper orientation and hand on training reference management tools like Zotero/Mendeley.

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