International
Journal of
Modern
Education
(IJMOE)

eISSN: 2637-0905

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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MODERN EDUCATION (IJMOE)
www.ijmoe.com

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GLOBAL ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

STUDENTS' AWARENESS AND UTILISATION OF ELECTRONIC BOOKS IN UiTM CAWANGAN PULAU PINANG

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Article Info:

Abstract:

To provide open access to electronic resources, academic libraries spend millions each year. Free e-books may not keep students interested in and using them, despite the fact that they are available for free. In fact, the librarians at Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak (PTAR) found that students did not fully utilize the e-books available. Thus, they requested a survey to be conducted for students at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang (UiTMCPP) on their e-book awareness and usage. The goal of this study is to identify the reasons why students use and avoid using e-books. More than 200 students at UiTMCPP completed this survey about how they use e-books for learning, how they search for them, what devices that they use to obtain them, and how they read and utilise them. Results show that more than half of the students prefer e-books because they are free and easy to use, while others prefer paper books because they are more convenient. Most students also are aware of and use the library's e-book collection to its fullest, according to the survey results.

Keywords:

E-books, Awareness, Usage, Printed, Assignments

Introduction

An electronic book, or e-book, is a digital reproduction of a printed book that can be read on computers and other mobile devices. It was first implemented about 20 years ago, and ever since then, academic libraries like Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak (PTAR), UiTMCPP, has relied heavily on the usage of it. Digital libraries today often include electronic books alongside

their paper counterparts. Libraries spend a lot of money on maintaining up-to-date collections, especially of academic e-books, due to their rapid growth and increasing number of new editions.

Since e-books are typically less expensive than print books, academic institutions can access knowledge regardless of space constraints or available funds. When using some of its interactive and appealing features, e-books also give instructors and students the chance to view the desired material of their favourite books in a novel manner, which could be more engaging. However, if e-books are not the most preferred source of education and study for students, this may provide some difficulties in the future (Khalid et al., 2017). As technology advances, e-books become interactive media that can incorporate audio, video, animation, and simulation in addition to being one-way texts and images. Asrowi, Hadaya and Hanif (2019) stated that electronic books are thought to be able to overcome some of the drawbacks of printed books. E-books are more resilient than traditional printed books since they won't be torn like physical books. E-books are more convenient in size and may be used on any portable device at any time. In spite of that, the librarians at PTAR found that students did not really utilize the e-books available in PTAR. Therefore, this preliminary survey was carried out to understand their awareness and identify the reasons why students use and refuse to use e-books.

Literature Review

Reviews of the literature disclosed that students are starting to use ebooks as a result of the advancement of e-book technologies and devices. These advancements have numerous advantages over printed books. Ujakpa et al. (2019) revealed that students who read physical books read more on a weekly and monthly basis than those who use e-books. Also, it was discovered that students' adoption and use of e-books is influenced by subjective norm since they are persuaded to do so by their professors and peers. Students perceived the ability to save many e-books on their own devices, the portability of e-books, and the elimination of the need to visit the library as significant advantages, as reported by Majid et al. (2019). Casselden and Pears's (2020) research found that e-books are more popular than printed books for a number of reasons, including the ability to be read anywhere, quick access, easily navigated, and used as a preview to determine a book's usefulness. Furthermore, they discovered that students' learning practises were sometimes challenged by the usage of e-books, and that problems with the technology used to access the e-books resulted in issues engaging with content. Moreover, Lin et al., (2021) found that among the respondents to their survey and interviews, half of the students still chose printed textbooks over e-textbooks, and e-textbooks were still not not in a position to replace printed textbooks for university students in Taiwan.

When comparing the levels of interest and use of e-books among the 157 undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students at the College of Veterinary Science, Proddatur, the results show that undergraduate and graduate students were more likely to be interested in and making use of this medium than were the PhD scholars (Kumar, 2021). Studies done by Farid et al. (2021), and Jun Xin et al. (2020) disclosed that since e-books may be accessed from any computer or mobile device, they were the most popular online learning method among students. Jbeen, Ur Rehman, and Mahmood (2021) findings suggested that students were familiar with and made regular use of e-books. Majority of respondents had a favourable impression of e-books and said they found them helpful for doing homework. They valued e-books' online access to information and entertainment.

Students valued the portability of e-books since they could be accessed from anywhere at any time. Students' lack of familiarity with e-book resources and their use is further proven by the results. The findings also show that software and hardware constraints might hinder digital reading, and that taking notes can be challenging due to the format's redesign (Luo et al., 2021). Furthermore, a few of the drawbacks of reading from a digital device include the risk of eye strain, low-quality scanned e-books, and the limited viewing area of smartphones. It is encouraging news for educators who are considering making the switch to e-texts but are concerned about how their students will respond, as indicated by a study that students who had used an e-text in the study were more enthusiastic about using them again in the future than those who had not (Sommers et al., 2019). In addition, users have a better grasp and general awareness of the limits of e-books, such as digital rights management, licencing, and interlibrary lending, according to a current study (Hackman et al., 2022).

Methodology

In this quantitative study, the researchers used WhatsApp and Telegram to administer a short survey to college students across all academic years and levels. The Google Docs questionnaires, which were adapted from Abdullah and Gibb (2006), consisted of three parts. In the first part, there were some basic information needed about the students, such as gender, year in school, department, and semester. The second section focused on the students' familiarity with e-books. The last part addressed the thinking behind reading or avoiding e-books. This set of questionaire passed a thorough check and validation process by three experts, the chief librarian, a lecturer from Academy of Language Studies and a statistician. A total of 202 students in UiTM Cawangan Pulau Pinang participated in the survey, which ran from January 16th to February 19th, 2022. The responses were then extracted and explained further in this paper.

Results and Discussion

Figures 1a, 1b, and 1c display the results of a demographic analysis based on responses from 202 respondents. Almost 60% of the respondents were female students, and 55.9% of them were in the prime of their academic life (ages 18-20). This suggests that a sizable proportion of diploma-seeking individuals participated in the survey (59.4%) and the rest were degree students.
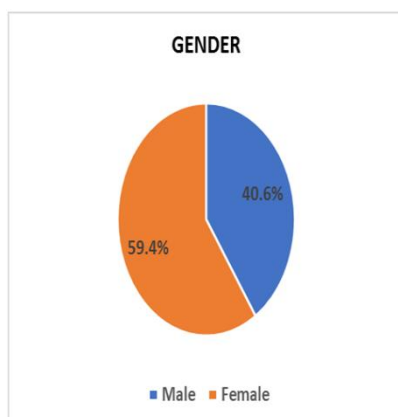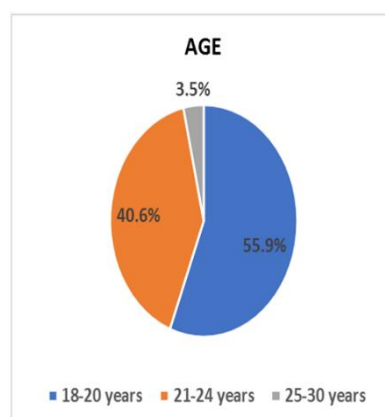

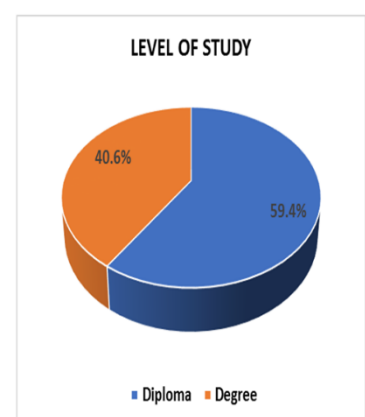**Figure 1a**   **Figure 1b**   **Figure 1c**

In addition to the above, among the students, Figure 2 shows that 40.1% were in their third semester, 24.3% were in their first, and the rest were in other semesters. In Figure 3, it illustrates that 67.4% were engineering students (Civil (PKA), Electrical (PKE), Mechanical (PKM) & Chemical (PKK), whereas the remaining came from Hotel Management (PPHP), Pharmacy (PF) and Health Science (PSK).
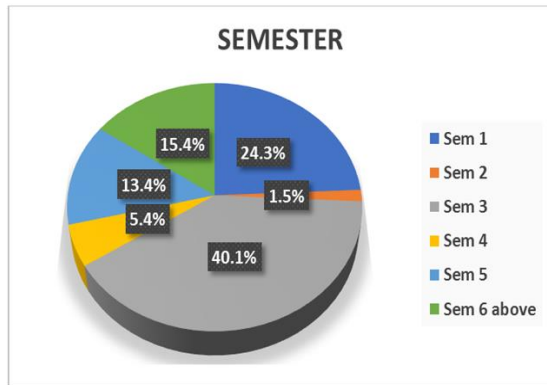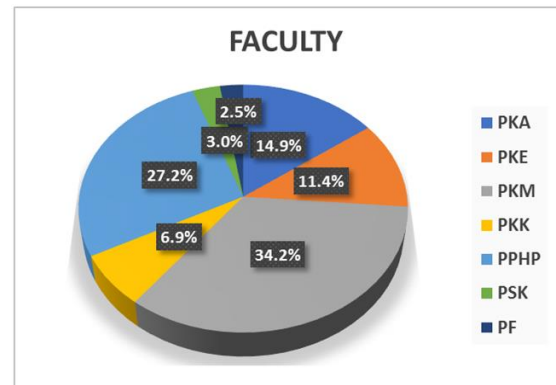

Figure 2

Figure 3

In addition to basic demographics, the study found that 81.2% of respondents were aware of the availability of e-books on the PTAR's website. Out of this percentage, 100 of them were females and 64 were males (Figure 4). However, Figure 5 shows that only 77 females and 46 males (60.9%) were aware that PTAR does promote the usage of e-books, and the other 39.1% most probably did not even notice it on any advertisement.
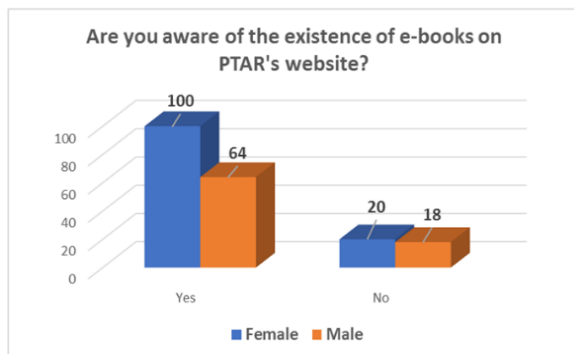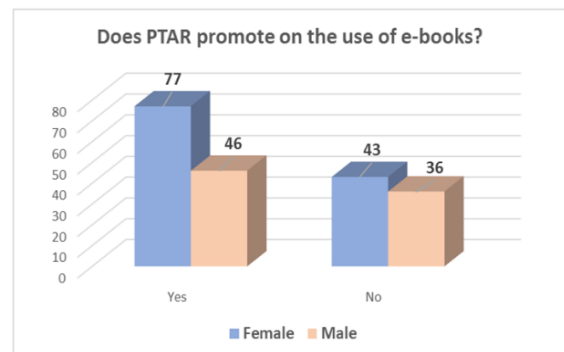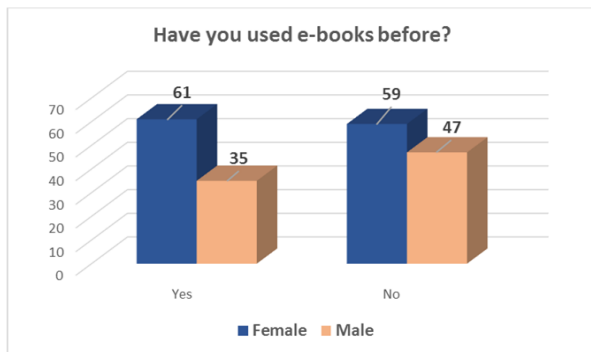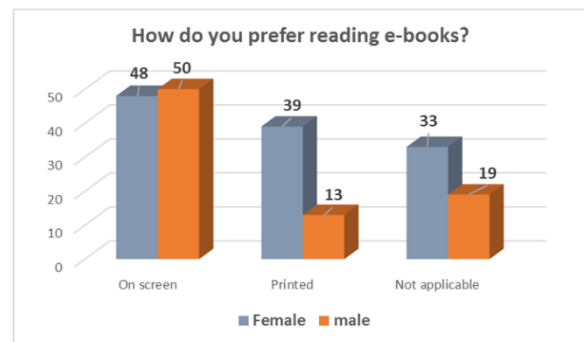

Figure 4

Figure 5

In addition, the results show that the percentage of students who used e-books (47.5%), where 61 of them were females and 35 were males, and the percentage for those who did not use e-books (52.5%) were virtually the same before the study was done as illustrated in Figure 6. Figure 7 on the other hand demonstrates how the students prefer reading e-books, if any. Amazingly, females and males were almost equal in numbers that constitute 48.7% of the total respondents, whereas 25.7% of females and males preferred to print the e-books.
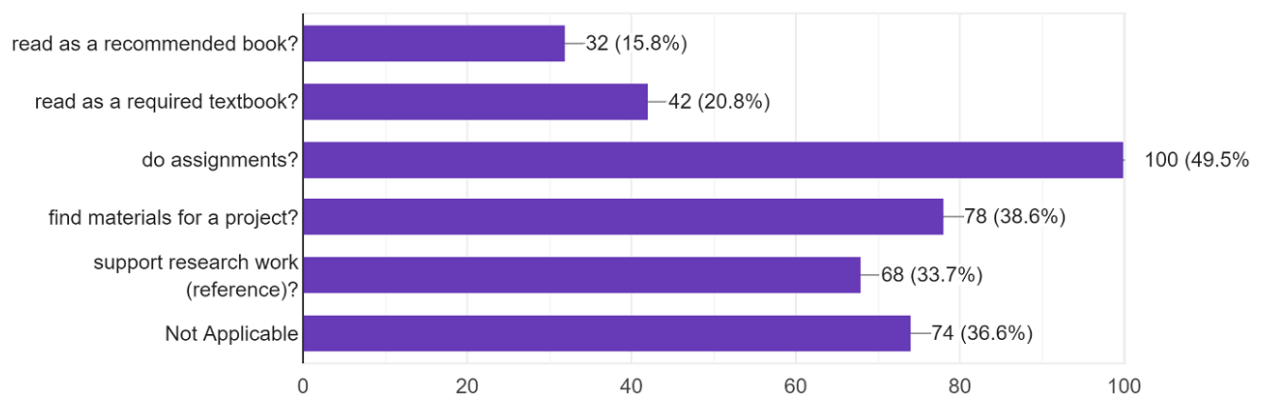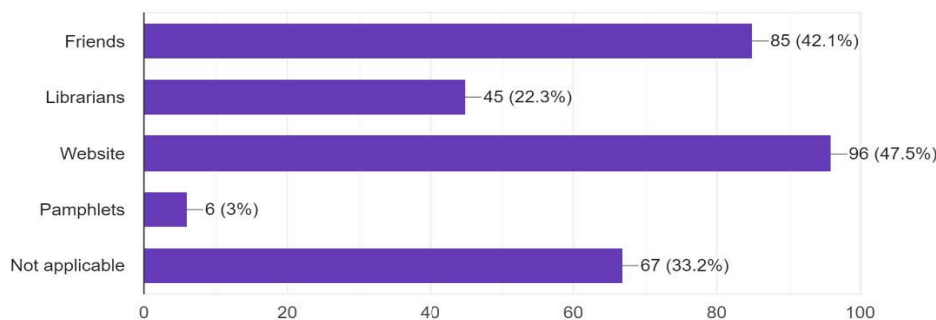
Figure 6

Figure 7

The students were also being asked on their purpose of using e-books during the semester. Most students (49.5%) used electronic books when working on their tasks or assignments, as seen in the accompanying Figure 8. However, 72.3% relied on electronic books as a source for information for their assignments and to support their research work. 36.6% of them relied on electronic books as a necessary or suggested resource. Additionally, 36.6% of the student body did not make use of electronic books (not applicable). This poll also revealed that 63.9% of the 202 respondents used a desktop/laptop computer, 45% used an android phone, and only 6.4% used a tablet.


Figure 8: Purpose of Using E-books.

As shown in Figure 9, majority of the students learned about e-books in PTAR from websites (47.5%) and their friends (42.1%), librarians (22.3%), and flyers placed around campus (3%). The non-applicable (33.2%) most likely came from those who were unaware of or did not utilise e-books.

Figure 9: How Do Students Find Out About E-books.

When asked why they utilised e-books, 62.9% of students said it was because they were inexpensive and convenient. About a quarter of them (23.8%) indicated that they could not find a printed version of the book, and about a fifth (21.8%) agreed that certain elements were not available in the traditional textbook. About one-third of the population, or 32.7%, did not use electronic books (Figure 10).
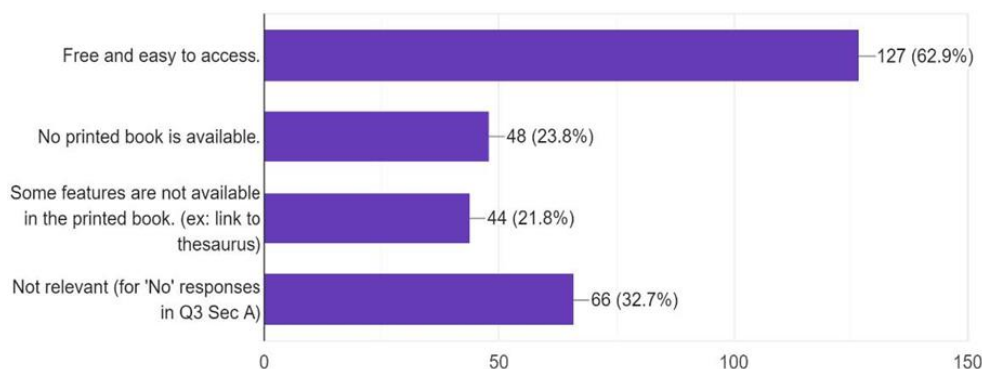
Figure 10: Reasons For Using E-books.

According to Figure 11, students who preferred printed books recorded 27.7%. Those who disliked reading on screens showed 22.8%, and for those who felt that strong internet access was necessary to access e-books recorded 23.3%. 13.4% of respondents indicated there was no relevant e-books available, while 17.3% said they were unfamiliar with the technology.
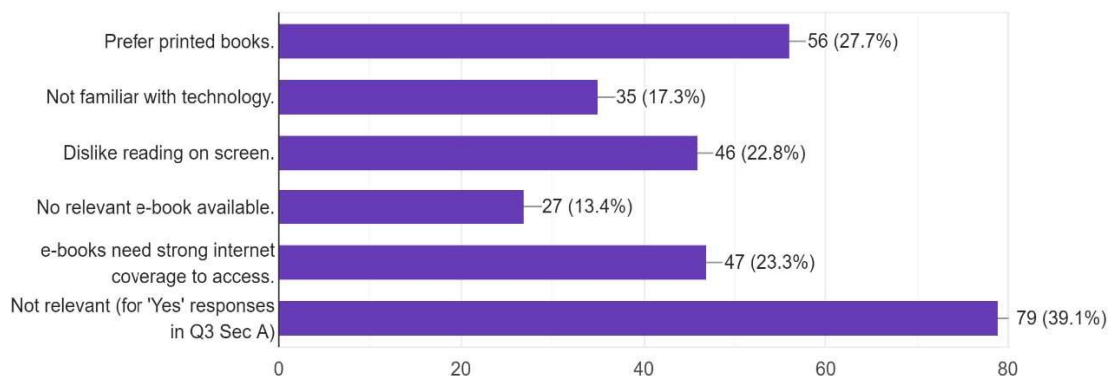
Figure 11: Reasons For Not Using E-books.

Conclusion

In essence, in meeting the objectives of the study which are to determine the students' awareness and utilisation of e-books, this preliminary survey generally discovered that most students were aware of the existence of e-books on PTAR website. Nevertheless, in terms of the usage preference, only slightly less than half of the respondents preferred to use e-books. This finding do not seem to be in line with the findings of the earlier studies carried out by Kumar (2021), Jun Xin et al. (2021), Toor, Ashfaq, and Ilyas (2021), and Abdul Razak and Moktaram (2022), which indicated that most students preferred using electronic books to printed books. As for the respondents of the study, they were found to prefer printed books as e-books require strong internet connection. However, some of the conclusions from the study can still be debatable. For instance, are the students prepared to buy or rent printed books if they cannot find the e-books? Following the survey, students should be questioned about whether they plan to utilise e-books. In the future, the survey can look into the benefits and drawbacks of e-book usage among UiTMCPP students. The results of this study may significantly help the PTAR and other libraries to find viable solutions for promoting e-books and offering reliable educational resources in the digital age. Perhaps a more thorough strategy to promote e-books is required.

Acknowledgements

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