Awareness and uses of Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) System among the users of Law Library

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Abstract

The present study investigates awareness, searching pattern and uses of OPAC among the students of Law College. For this, the researcher selected Geeta Institute of Law, Samalkha as a research area. The descriptive survey research method was adopted to collect the data. 150 questionnaires were distributed among the law students. Out of 150 questionnaires, 143 completely filled questionnaires were received back. On the basis of data analysis, it was found that a majority of respondents were aware (61.54%) about library OPAC system and they were occasionally using (47.55%) the OPAC system for access to the library collection. It was also found that most of the students were using the library OPAC system in library premises (51.75%) and they were not facing any problem (56.64%) using OPAC.

*Keywords***:** Law Library, OPAC, Online Public Access Catalogue System.

1. Introduction

In the modern age, with the use of technology, human life has been simpler. Any information can be made available globally in a minute. The libraries are also not untouched by the use of technology. Today every library is becoming computerized. Library management software is being used day by day. Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) system is an initial part of library automation. Without Online Catalogue System, library automation is incomplete. Though OPAC, a library user can virtually access to library collection from anywhere and anytime. A user can check all library collection availability. OPAC is a searchable database that holds the entire library's catalog. It replaced the old system that libraries used the card catalog. The OPAC tells the information that the card catalog told a user. But, it is much easier to access!! The online catalog helps a user to find what the library owns, either in print or electronic form. So, the present study tries to found out the awareness and uses of a library OPAC system among the law students.

1.1 About Geeta Institute of Law Library

The Law library is by tradition considered to be the laboratory of a lawyer. The library of Geeta Institute of Law is one of the best libraries in Haryana, which is catering to a student community of approximately 1,000 in addition to researchers in law. The library has over 5500 books including bound volumes of various law reports and journals. The library subscribes to over ten journals and SCC Online databases on a regular basis. In addition, we have eight magazines and seven daily newspapers also. Every year about one thousand books are added to the collection. It also has a large collection of books/journals/law reports donated by reputed lawyers and other individuals. The library follows the open access system wherein the students can access the books they want to refer directly from the shelves. It has a computerized database from which one can trace any book with the help of library staff and OPAC. The library can accommodate about one hundred users at a time. GIL library is totally automated and all the services are provided through KOHA library management software and OPAC catalog system.

2. Review of Literature

On awareness and use of OPAC, there are many research works which are available. But the researcher has selected some research work for further reference. Rout & Panigrahi (2018) conducted a study on usage patterns of an online public access catalog. He found that the usage rate is quite low among the library users of Odisha. The findings also revealed that a majority of respondents consulting the OPAC to know the availability and locate a particular book in the library or not. He also states that a majority of respondents were facing problems in query framing. Payel Saha (2017) conduct a study on uses of the OPAC system. She indicates that all the faculty and students are aware of the OPAC system and they are very much comfortable in searching OPAC. Most of the users are searching their required documents by titles, subject, and author. Reference books are the most popular searching for users. Ansari (2008) indicates that a high percentage of library users in five academic libraries in New Delhi use OPAC as a search tool for retrieving documents. Study shows the most of the users handled the OPAC themselves. One can conclude here that users of those five academic libraries have gone through the training offered by the libraries which helped information searchers to use OPAC without requesting for the assistant of the library staff. Malliari & Kyriaki Manessi (2007) conducted a study on the uses of OPAC. They showed in their study that academic disciplines of searchers did not produce any significant differences in the use of OPAC. The low percentage of undergraduate students and faculty members who used the OPAC signified a vacuum that must be filled. The study did not report the reasons for the low usage of OPAC by undergraduate students and faculty members.

3. Objectives

Following are the main objectives of the study:-

- To know the status of OPAC in GIL Library
- To know the user awareness of GIL library's OPAC
- To know the frequency of user access to library resources
- To know the user pattern of information search on OPAC
- To know the satisfaction level of the user about library OPAC

4. Research Methodology

A questionnaire-based survey was adopted keeping in mind the objectives of the research study, the researcher selected the Geeta Institute of Law, Panipat as a research area for data collection. In GIL College, the total strength of students is around 1000 and the researcher randomly selected 15% of students as a research sample. For data collecting, a total of 150 questionnaires were distributed among the students and out of 150 questionnaires, 143 filled questionnaires were received back for data analysis.

5. Data Analysis

Collected data were analyzed using percentage approach and were presented in chart form.
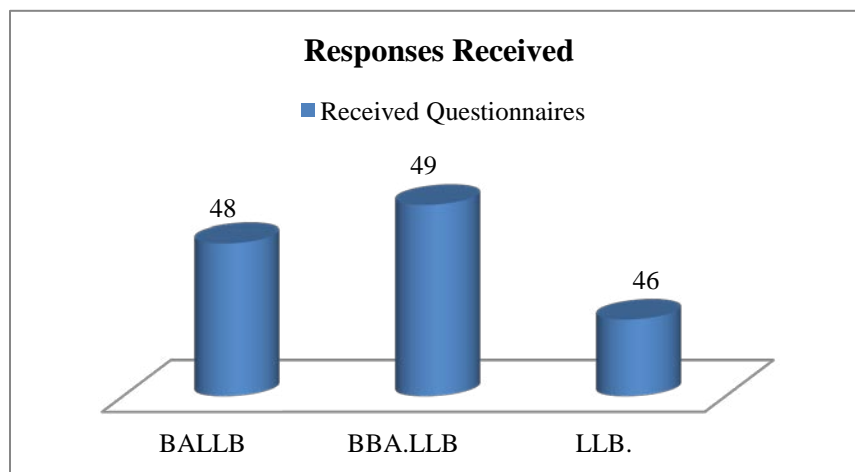
Demographic Data

Figure 1

Figures 1 shows the distribution of questionnaires and received responses of respondents. Out of 143 respondents, 33.57 percent of respondents were studying in BA.LLB. Course, 34.27 percent of

respondents were studying in BBA.LLB. Course and 32.17 percent of respondents were studying in LLB course.
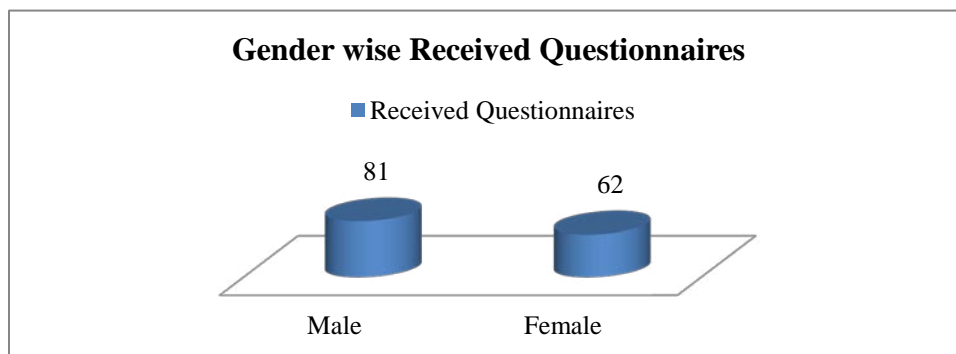

Figure 2

Figure 2 indicates the gender wise distribution of respondents. Out of 143 respondents, 56.64 percent of respondents were male students and 43.36 percent of respondents were female students.
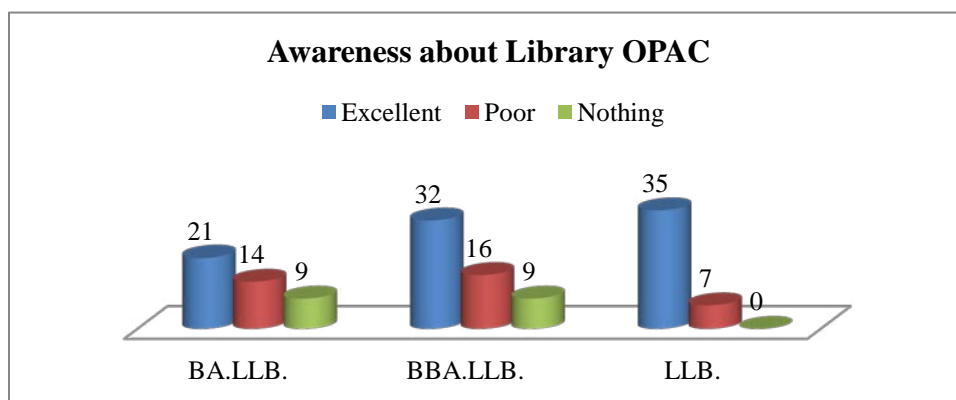

Figure 3

Figure 3 reveals the awareness about library OPAC system among the law students. A majority of respondents were aware (61.54%) about the library OPAC system in which include BA, LLB., BBA.LLB. and LLB. students.

Frequency of Usage of OPAC

■ BA.LLB. ■ BBA.LLB. ■ LLB.

Daily: 8, 9, 15
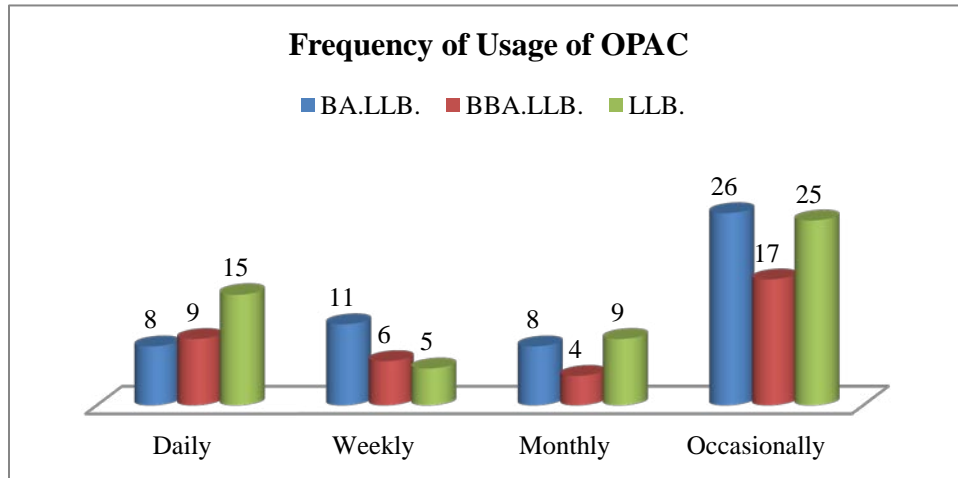Weekly: 11, 6, 5
Monthly: 8, 4, 9
Occasionally: 26, 17, 25

Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the frequency of usage of library OPAC system among the law students. A majority of respondents (47.55%) used occasionally and (22.38 %) used daily to library OPAC system, which include the students of BA.LLB, BBA.LLB. and LLB. students.

Access to Library Resources

■ BA.LLB. ■ BBA.LLB. ■ LLB.

Library Staff: 14, 12, 9
Friends: 8, 5, 7
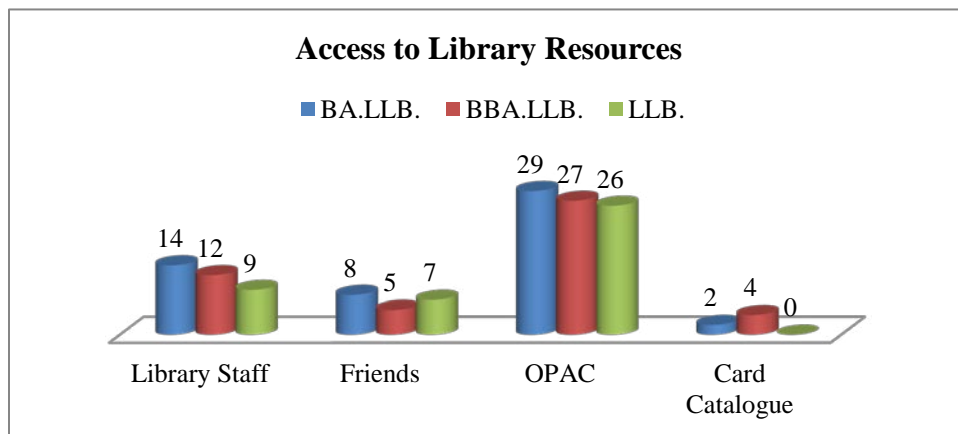OPAC: 29, 27, 26
Card Catalogue: 2, 4, 0

Figure 5

Figure 5 indicates the access point of a law student to library resources. A majority of respondents (57.34 %) used the library OPAC system and library staff (24.48%) for access to library resources. While a little numbers of respondents took the help of friends for accessing to the library resources.
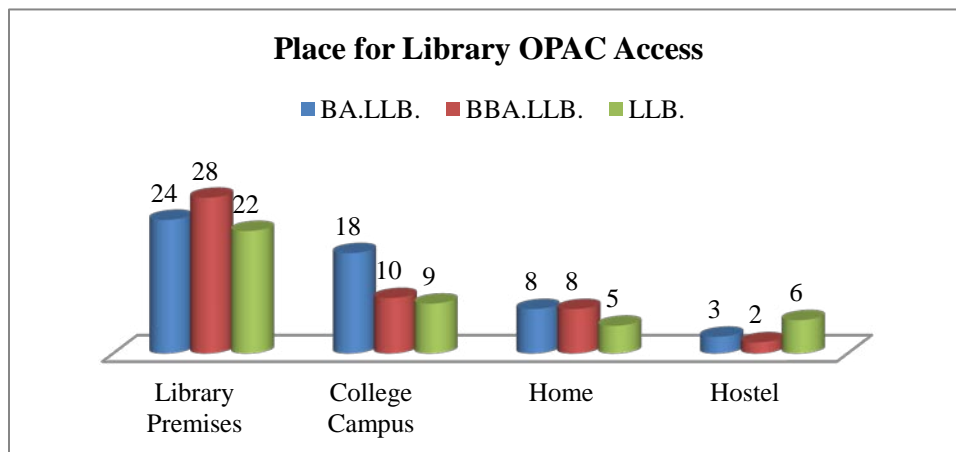
Figure 6

Figure 6 shows the preferred place for access to the library OPAC system. A majority of respondents used the library premises (51.75%) and college campus (25.87%) for access to the library OPAC system. In which, most of the students of BBA.LLB (28), BA.LLB.(24) and LLB (22) used the library premises.
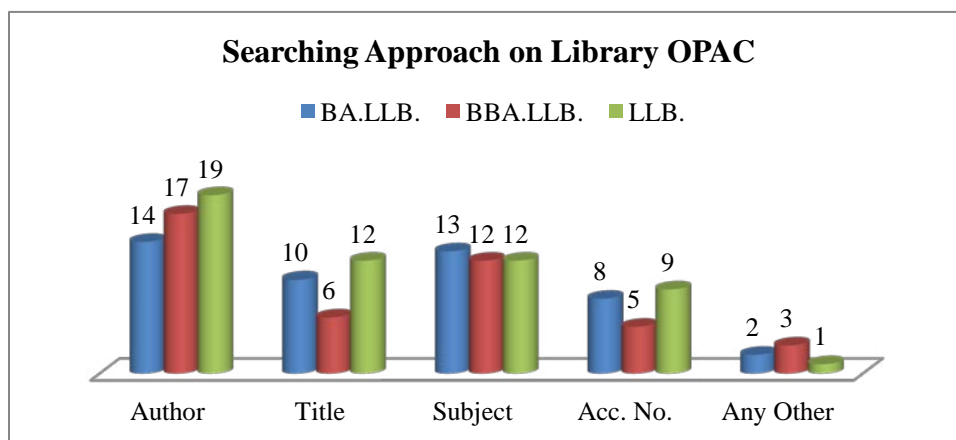

Figure 7

Figure 7 states the searching approach on library OPAC system. A majority of respondents searched library resources through author (34.97%) and subject (25.87%) which included LLB (19) and BBA.LLB (17) students.
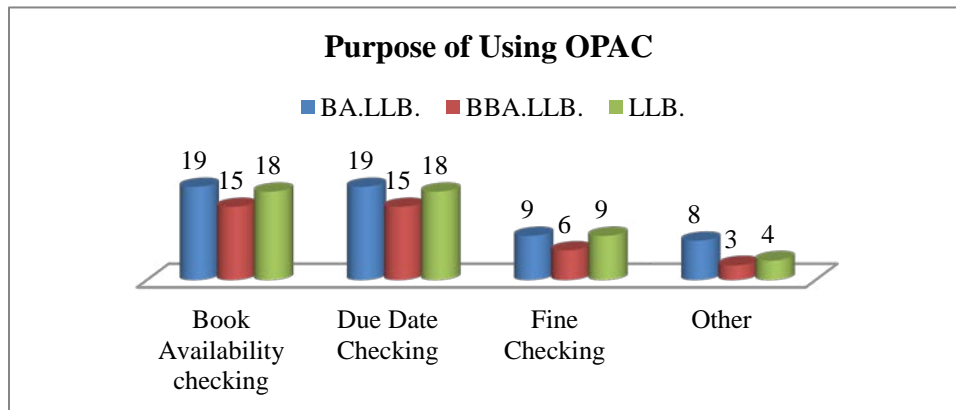
Figure 8

Figure 8 shows the purpose of using a library OPAC system among law students. Out of 143 respondents, a majority of students were using the library OPAC system for checking the book availability (36.36%) in the library and due date (36.36%) of issued book. This includes the LLB, BALLB, and BBA.LLB students. While a little number of students used library OPAC system for checking their library fine (16.78%).
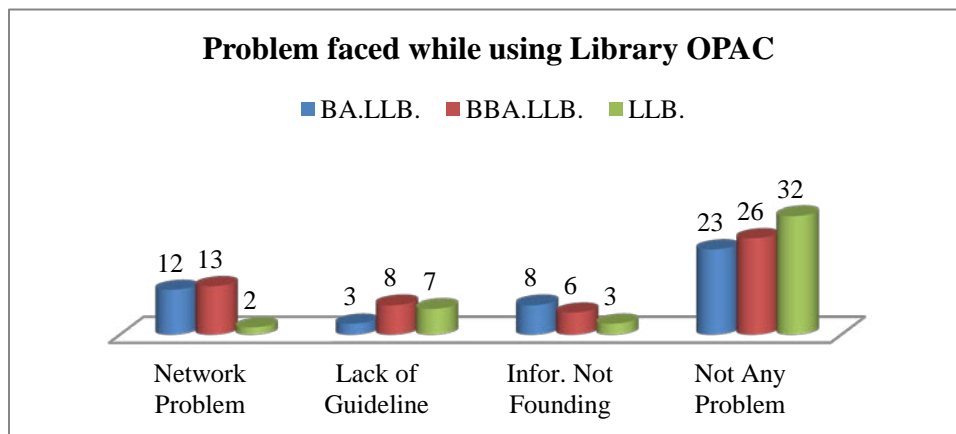

Figure 9

Figure 9 indicates the problem faced by respondents while using the library OPAC system. Out of 143 students, a majority of respondents were not facing any problem in using library OPAC system. This includes the students of LLB (32), BBA.LLB (26) and BALLB (23). A little number of students were facing the network problem (18.88%) and lack of guideline (12.59%).
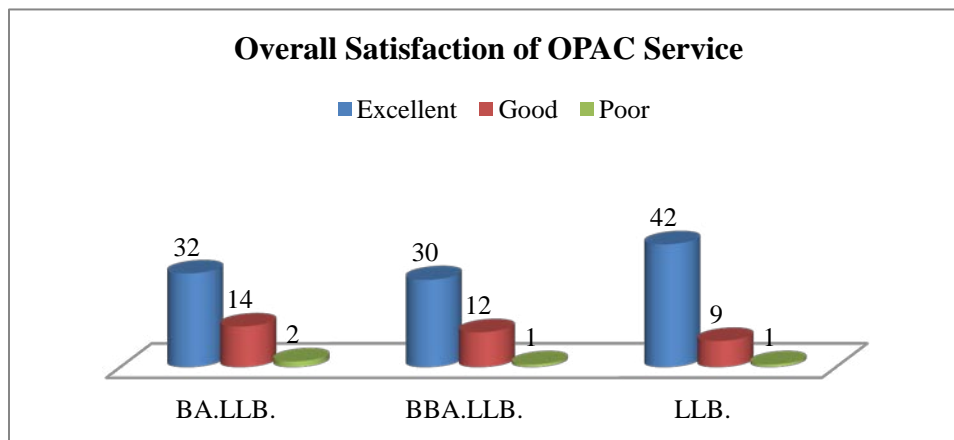
Figure 10

Figure 10 reveals the overall satisfaction of library OPAC service among the respondents. A majority of respondents were satisfied with the library OPAC system which included the LLB (42), BA.LLB (32) and BBA.LLB (30) students.

6. Summary of findings

1. The study shows that a majority of male (56.64%) respondents are using the library OPAC system to access the library collection while a (43.36%) of female respondents were using the library OPAC system.

2. The study indicates that the majority of respondents are well aware (61.54%) about to library OPAC system and they use occasionally (47.55%) and daily (22.38%) library OPAC system.

3. The study shows that a majority of respondents are using the OPAC system (57.34%) to access library resources and the most respondents use library OPAC system in library premises (51.75%).

4. The study reveals that a majority of respondents are searching the library databases though author and subject wise on the library OPAC system.

5. The study shows that a majority of respondents are using the library OPAC system for checking availability of any particular book or the due date of any issued book (36.36%) but a little number of respondents are also using to library OPAC for check their library fines (16.78%) also.

6. The study shows that a majority of respondents are not facing any problem (56.64%) during the use of library OPAC system while a little number of respondents are facing the network problem (18.88%) and lack of guidelines (12.59%).

7. The study also indicates that a majority of respondents are completely satisfied (72.73%) with library OPAC service.

7. Conclusion

Due to the application of technology, all libraries are converting from tradition to digital form. Today, most the libraries are providing the all online services. To know the level of awareness and satisfaction of users about the OPAC system, the researcher conducted a survey on law students. As a result, found that most of the law students are aware of to library OPAC system and they are using OPAC system to access to library resources. It was also found that the majority of students are using library OPAC in library premises and searching all data though author or subject wise. During the OPAC using, students are not facing any problem but a little number of students are facing network problem only. In short, students are completely satisfied with library OPAC services. Despite this satisfaction level students need more guidance for utilizing the library OPAC system.

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