



Use of Internet Resources and Services by Physical Education and Sports Faculty Members in Tamil Nadu Universities: A Survey-Based Study

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Abstract

The rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICT) has made the Internet an essential resource in higher education. This study examines the usage patterns of Internet resources and services among Physical Education and Sports Science faculty members in nine universities in Tamil Nadu. Using a survey method, 207 questionnaires were distributed, of which 146 valid responses were analyzed. The findings reveal that most faculty members are habitual Internet users, with Assistant Professors leading in regular use. Gender and age differences were observed, with males and younger faculty showing higher usage levels. The most common services used were e-mail, search engines, e-books, e-journals, and communication tools such as SMS and chatting. Gmail was the most popular e-mail service, while Dogpile/MSN/others ranked higher than Google among search engines. The study concludes that Internet resources have significantly enhanced teaching, research, and self-learning, while also emphasizing the need for continuous ICT integration in higher education.

Keywords: Internet resources, ICT, faculty members, physical education, sports science, Tamil Nadu, higher education

Introduction

With the advancement of technology, the Internet has become an integral part of everyday life. In higher education, Internet resources have improved the quality of teaching and learning, enabling knowledge creation and dissemination for societal growth. Libraries, once seen as repositories of books, have transformed into knowledge resource centers supporting education and research.

Across the globe, universities have embraced Internet services as essential tools for academic development. Modern technologies facilitate teaching, research, self-learning, and global interaction. For faculty members, especially in specialized disciplines such as Physical Education and Sports Science, Internet resources provide opportunities to update professional knowledge, access global research, and enhance student engagement.

This study investigates the use of Internet services—including e-mail, search engines, e-books, e-journals, and communication tools—by Physical Education and Sports faculty members across nine universities in Tamil Nadu.

Review of Literature

Studies worldwide have highlighted the growing role of Internet resources in higher education. Research conducted in Malaysia and Pakistan found that Internet access significantly improved library services, including reference work, cataloguing, and classification. A study in China revealed that Internet users mainly learned to use online resources through self-instruction or with help from colleagues and friends. In India, the integration of ICT in higher education has been shown to enhance teaching and research quality. Similarly, research conducted in Ghana and other countries demonstrated that while teachers often face challenges in integrating ICT into their teaching practices, the adoption of new strategies and models could help address these barriers. Overall, literature across regions indicates that Internet use has transformed academic practices by improving access to information, enhancing communication, and supporting independent learning.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to analyze gender-wise Internet usage among Physical Education and Sports faculty, examine age-wise differences in usage patterns, identify the locations where faculty members access the Internet, study the extent of use of e-mail, e-groups, e-journals, and e-books, and assess the use of search engines and communication tools.

Methods

This study employed a **survey method**. A total of 207 questionnaires were distributed to faculty members in nine Tamil Nadu universities, out of which 146 valid responses were collected and analyzed. Data was presented in tables and charts for interpretation. The chi-square test was applied to examine differences in Internet usage patterns across demographic and professional variables.

Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study show that there was no major variation in Internet usage among faculty members across the nine universities surveyed. However, some clear patterns emerged when usage was analyzed across demographic variables.

In terms of gender, male faculty members accounted for 87 percent of the respondents, while only 13 percent were female, indicating a considerable gender gap. This imbalance reflects the overall dominance of male faculty in the field of Physical Education and Sports Science.

Age-wise analysis revealed that faculty members below the age of 35 constituted the largest group of Internet users, with 41.1 percent belonging to this category. Faculty members between 36 and 45 years formed 33.6 percent, while those above 45 years accounted for 25.3 percent. These findings suggest that younger faculty are more comfortable and frequent users of Internet resources compared to their older counterparts, likely due to greater digital exposure.

When analyzed by designation, Assistant Professors were the most active users of Internet services, accounting for 71 percent of the total respondents. Professors and Associate Professors, in comparison, were less frequent users. This may be explained by the fact that Assistant Professors are generally younger, more research-oriented, and more engaged in day-to-day teaching and learning activities that demand frequent use of online resources.

The study also found variations in the places where faculty accessed Internet resources. A majority of respondents (41.1 percent) reported using the Internet at their universities, while 37.7 percent accessed it from home. A smaller number used browsing centers (8.2 percent) and other places (6.2 percent). Interestingly, 6.8 percent of faculty members reported not using the Internet at all, a finding that indicates gaps in access or skills.

Regarding e-mail services, Gmail emerged as the most widely used platform, with 32.9 percent of respondents relying on it. Rediffmail (24 percent) and Yahoo (20.5 percent) were also common, while Hotmail and Sancharnet were less popular. A small portion of the respondents (8.9 percent) did not use any e-mail service.

Digital resources such as e-journals and e-books were widely accessed, with most faculty members expressing satisfaction regarding their availability and usefulness for research and teaching. Similarly, communication tools like SMS/chatting and e-mail were the most commonly used, highlighting the preference for quick and reliable communication channels.

Interestingly, when asked about their preferred search engines, respondents ranked Dogpile/MSN/others as the most used, with Google coming in second place. Yahoo and Lycos/AltaVista followed as third and fourth preferences respectively. This result suggests that while Google is widely popular globally, faculty members in this study relied more heavily on alternative search engines, possibly due to habit or institutional guidance.

Overall, the findings indicate that Internet usage has become a regular and essential practice for most Physical Education and Sports faculty members in Tamil Nadu. However, there remain gaps in access and skill development that need to be addressed.

Conclusion

The study concludes that Internet resources play a vital role in the academic and professional lives of Physical Education and Sports faculty members in Tamil Nadu. Internet use has become habitual for most faculty, particularly among Assistant Professors and younger staff. Male faculty members dominate Internet usage, reflecting the overall gender imbalance in the discipline. The majority of respondents reported using the Internet at universities and homes, while only a small fraction accessed it from browsing centers. Gmail was the most widely used e-mail service, while e-journals and e-books were found to be the most valuable digital resources. In terms of communication, SMS/chatting and e-mail were the most commonly used tools.

One of the more surprising findings was the preference for search engines other than Google, with Dogpile/MSN/others ranking highest among the respondents. This suggests the need for further exploration of user preferences and awareness regarding search tools.

In summary, the study highlights the transformative impact of Internet resources on teaching, research, and self-learning in higher education. At the same time, it points to the need for continuous training, better infrastructure, and efforts to bridge gender and age-related disparities in Internet use.

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