

A STUDY OF RESEARCH ATTITUDE AND STREAM DIFFERENCES AMONG POST GRADUATE STUDENTS WITH RESPECT TO USE AND NON-USE OF INTERNET

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to compare the attitude towards research of Internet-users and Internet non-user university students on the basis of their stream differences. The sample of 600 post graduate students (300 Internet-users and 300 Internet non-users) were selected through simple random sampling technique from various departments of three faculties (faculty of Science, faculty of Social science and faculty of Arts) of University of Kashmir, (J&K)INDIA. Attitude towards Research Scale by Vishal Sood and Y. K. Sharma used to collect the data. Besides, Information Blank developed by the investigators to find the Internet-users and Internet Non-users. The data was subjected to statistical analysis by computing Mean, S.D. and test of significance. The results concluded that Internet-users and Internet Non-users from all the three streams were found significantly different. Internet-user group of subjects from all the three streams viz. Science stream, Social science stream and Arts stream found with a favourable Attitude towards Research as against to their comparable group.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's fast changing world, research has become one of the most important intellectual possessions for every human being to change his way life in accordance to the needs and demands of the society. It is a key ingredient in shaping up the world. It opens new frontiers to many fields like, education, business, economics, medicine and science. Truly, research in itself had made a significant contribution in man's giant leap towards the future. Internet has emerged as a formidable social and cultural institution of global proportions facilitating access to a wealth of information on the web for the academic society to support their academic and research activities. The use of information and communication technology has been reported to increase the research productivity of scholars (Misra & Satyanarayan, 2001).

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Information is just a 'finger touch' away from the user and it would not be inappropriate to say that the Internet has become the biggest global digital information library, which provides the fastest access to the right kind of information in nano-seconds to end user at any time and at any place in the world. With the advent of Internet, a significant transition can be seen in the academic communities' approach and the way they seek information and the methods they employ for teaching and learning activities. The principal functions of Internet are increasing the means of researches, facilitating the communication and enabling data share. Agarwal & Dave (2009) reported that students depend on the Internet as a veritable source of research information. Kumar & Kaur (2006) indicated that Internet resources are now preferred source of research information to the print resources among the students. Kamba (2008) maintains that the Internet has not only reduced the need to store information resources but has also increased the output of research publications globally. Jagboro (2003) Internet was the fourth most important resources for materials among the postgraduate students with

respondents using the Internet to access research materials and for email. Internet use for academic activities would improve significantly with more access in departments and faculties. Fasae & Aladenyi's (2012) stated that students use the Internet for research more than they use it for communication and entertainment. Similarly, Yusuf (2006) stated that the Internet provides wide range opportunities for easy access of relevant and current literature, wide range of instruments, online opportunity for validation of instrument, simulation of an ongoing research, and so on. He further adds that collaboration of research (trans-institutional, trans-national and trans-continental) is possible, and wide range of opportunities exist for the dissemination of research findings (journals, personal web page, foundations/organizations' web pages and so on). The only way to pursue knowledge is through research and the Internet is having a profound impact on the research process and dissemination of information.

In addition the number of on-line journals, newspaper and trade magazines increase each month. Much of the information in these publications is free. It is a virtual treasure trove of information. In the academic perspective, the Internet host and allow access to subject gateways, databases and professional websites which contain various types of scholarly resources like electronic copies of journals, articles, books, datasets, short communications, formula, monographs, encyclopaedia, dictionaries, instructional notes, informative web-pages, with numerous links to search and research related websites. So any kind of information on any topic under the sun is available on the Internet. It is a truly "open technology", allowing users with any hardware and software to derive the necessary information from the network, independently from the location of data and knowledge bases. Hence, Internet can therefore be described as a *super highway* of information carrier, where information seekers on any subject or area of discipline can obtain current and useful information and knowledge. Consequently, researchers all over the world are taking advantage of the Internet. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has now broadened the horizon of the opportunities among institutions of higher learning, giving hopes to members of the academic communities to cooperate with their counterparts all over the world (Collis & Wende, 2002; OECD, 2005), and strengthened their mandate of teaching and carrying out research (CHEPS, 2000). Internet use has become a way of life for the majority of higher education students all around the world. It affects the way people learn especially in higher learning institutions (Edmunds & Conole, 2010). It serves as a useful tool in support of the various educational activities that ranged from research to teaching. It also enables scholars and academic institutions to disseminate information to a wider audience around the globe through websites (Luambano & Nawe 2004). The Internet has added a lot to our lives and has also made a certain things disappear. The Internet can be beneficial for students as it allows them to obtain relevant academic information; it also offers other possibilities that may be harmful to their academic experience.

Purpose of the Study

Every year thousands of young students register themselves in Universities and all of them do not have the necessary skills and motivation to work with ICT resources available to them. This gap in Internet usage is labelled as 'the digital divide' and it has been the subject of many scholarly debates.

Studies conveyed that not all students are as inclined to integrate Internet use into their routine life; as is usually the case in educational debate, blame for this disparity has been most frequently attributed to deficits of skills, motivation and know-how etc on the part of students. Researchers have reasoned that some university students' (non) engagement with the Internet is influenced by perceptions of usefulness, ease-of-use and other psychological attitudes towards both technology and learning (Cheung and Huang, 2005; Joiner et al., 2006). Users and Non-users have different ideas of what the online world is like. Brotcorne (2005) reported that students' use or not to use the Internet is not always due to a disadvantage but 'more due to matters of "digital choice" rather than "digital divide"'.

Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been formulated for the present investigation:

- To find and compare the Attitude towards Research of Internet-users and Internet non-users of Science stream.
- To find and compare the Attitude towards Research of Internet-users and Internet non-users of Social science stream.
- To find and compare the Attitude towards Research of Internet-users and Internet non-users of Arts stream.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses have been framed for the proposed investigation:

- There is significant difference between the mean scores of Internet-users and Internet non-users (Science stream) on their Attitude towards Research.
- There is significant difference between the mean scores of Internet-users and Internet non-users (Social science) on their Attitude towards Research.
- There is significant difference between the mean scores of Internet-users and Internet non-users (Arts stream) on their Attitude towards Research.

Methodology and Procedure

Sample

Descriptive study was conducted in University of Kashmir. Sample of 600 post graduate students (300 Internet-users and 300 Internet non-users) were selected through simple random sampling technique from various departments of the three faculties (Faculty of Science, Faculty of Social science and Faculty of Arts). It comprised of 15 departments with a representation of five departments from each faculty. These departments are: Zoology, Chemistry, Botany, Physics and Home Science (*Faculty of Science*); Sociology, Economics, Political Science, History and Social Work (*Faculty of Social Science*); English, Urdu, Persian, Hindi and Linguistics (*Faculty of Arts*). It is pertinent to mention here that 40 students (20 Internet-users and 20 Internet non-users) were drawn randomly from each sample department with a total of 100 Internet-users and 100 Internet non-users from each faculty of University of Kashmir, (J&K) India. It needs to be mentioned that the subjects (Internet-users and Internet Non-

users) enrolled in 3rd and 4th semesters have been considered as the sample for the present study.

Data Collection Instruments

Information Blank: Self constructed *Information blank* developed by investigator with the purpose to ascertain the Internet-users and Internet non-users. In the present study **Internet-users** are those university students who have direct access to the worldwide network and have their own exposure and skill to use Internet and have minimum of one year’s experience of Internet usage. **Internet-non-users** have been considered those university students who lack a direct access to the worldwide network and have not their own exposure and skill to use Internet.

Attitude Scale towards Research: In the present study, *Attitude towards Research* refers to the dominant set of scores as measured by *Attitude Scale towards Research* by Vishal Sood and Y. K. Sharma (ASTR-SVSY). The scale consists 42 items with Four Dimension-I. General Aspects of Research and Research Process, II. Usefulness of Research in Professional Career, III. Relevance of Research in Personal-Social Life, IV. Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety.

Data analysis and Interpretation

Table No.1 depicts the significance of mean differences between the Science stream Internet-users and Internet non-users on different dimensions of Attitude towards Research viz. General aspects of Research and Research Process and Usefulness of Research in Professional Career.

It has been found that Internet-users belonging to Science stream had a higher mean score than the Internet non-users. The mean scores of Internet-users were reported to be 49.32, 33.05 respectively, whereas, the mean value of Internet non-users of the same stream on the above dimensions came to be 45.45 and 29.03. The table further shows that Internet-users and Internet non-users of Science stream differ significantly from each other on these two dimensions with ‘t’-values of 6.13 and 7.28 respectively. On relevance of Research in Personal and Social life, the mean score of Internet users is reported low (M =29.96) as compared to Internet non users (M= 30.35). whereas, on Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety dimension, the mean score in case of Internet users is higher (M=39.29) as compared to Internet non users (M = 38.84). The ‘t’-values in these dimensions came out to be 0.61 and 0.72 (P< 0.01 and 0.05) respectively.

The findings revealed that both the groups have similar inclination towards the Relevance of Research in Personal-Social life and Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety. Coming to the composite score of attitude towards Research, the results reveal Internet-users with a mean score of 151.62 and Internet non-users with a mean score of 143.67. The obtained ‘t’-value came out to be 5.37 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. However, this mean difference between the two groups favours the Internet-user group of Science stream. It can be observed that Internet-users of Science stream seem to be with favourable attitude towards research than their comparable group. The information reported in Table No. 2, depicts the significance of mean difference between the two groups of Internet-users and

Table No.1. Showing the Significance of difference between the Mean Scores of Internet-users and Internet non-users on Attitude towards Research (Science Stream; N=100 each)

Dimensions of Attitude towards Research		SIUs		SINUs		t-value
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
I.	General aspects of Research and Research Process	49.32	4.161	45.45	4.659	6.13**
II.	Usefulness of Research In Professional Career	33.05	2.664	29.03	4.305	7.28**
III.	Relevance of Research in Personal Social Life	29.96	4.616	30.35	4.865	0.61*
IV.	Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety	39.29	4.416	38.84	4.378	0.72*
	Composite Score	151.62	10.079	143.67	10.848	5.37**

Note: **p<0.01; *Insignificant
 Acronyms: SIUs =Science stream Internet-users
 SINUs =Science stream Internet non-users

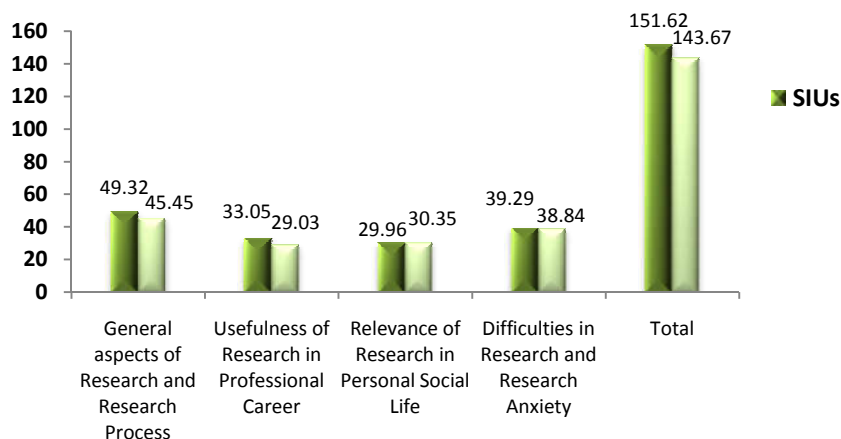


Fig. No.1: Showing the Mean Comparison of Internet-users and Internet non-users on Attitude towards Research (Science Stream; N=100 each)

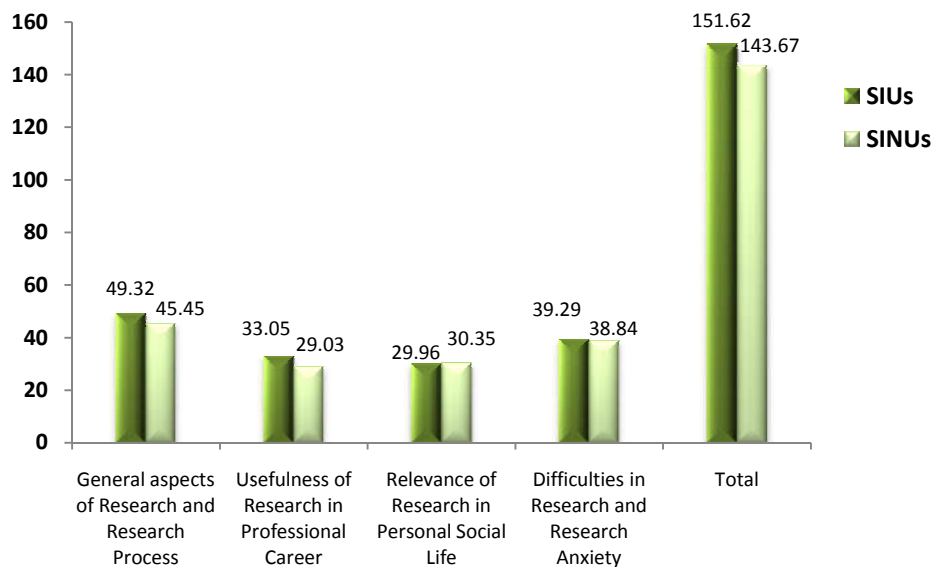
Table No.2: Showing the Significance of difference between the Mean Scores of Internet-users and Internet non-users on Attitude towards Research (Social Science Stream; N=100 each)

Dimensions of Attitude towards Research		SSIUs		SSINUs		t-value
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
I.	General aspects of Research and Research Process	48.67	5.057	43.83	4.438	6.88**
II.	Usefulness of Research In Professional Career	32.91	4.040	27.90	4.054	7.80**
III.	Relevance of Research in Personal Social Life	32.01	4.877	31.12	4.774	1.33*
IV.	Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety	40.66	4.535	37.16	4.109	5.63**
	Composite Score	154.25	9.867	140.01	9.968	10.15**

Note: **p<0.01; *Insignificant

Acronyms: SSIUs =Social science stream Internet-users

SSINUs =Social science stream Internet non-users

**Fig. No.2: Showing the Mean Comparison of Internet-users and Internet non-users on Attitude towards Research (Social Science Stream; N=100 each)**

Internet non-users (Social Science stream) on different dimensions of Attitude towards Research viz. General aspects of Research and Research Process, Usefulness of Research in Professional Career and Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety. It has been found that Internet-users belonging to this stream had a higher mean score than the Internet non-users on the above dimensions and the obtained mean score in case of Internet-users were reported to be 48.67, 32.91 and 40.66 respectively, whereas, the mean value of Internet non-users of the same stream were lower on these dimensions 43.83, 27.90 and 37.16. The table further shows that Internet-users and Internet non-users of Social science stream differed significantly from each other on these three dimensions with 't'-values of 6.88, 7.80 and 5.63 respectively. However, on Relevance of Research and Research Anxiety, the mean difference could not be established at any level of significance. The 't'-value on this dimension came out to be 1.33 ($P < 0.01$ and 0.05). Analysis of data reveals that Internet-users seem to be with favourable attitude towards General aspects of Research and Research Process, Usefulness of Research in Professional Career, and Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety than their comparable group.

The findings further revealed that both the groups have not claimed to be superior to either of the groups on the Relevance of Research in Personal and Social Life. Coming to the composite score of attitude towards Research, the results reveal Internet-users with a mean score of 154.25 and Internet non-users with a mean score of 140.01.

The obtained 't'-value came out to be 10.15 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. However, this mean difference favours the Internet-user group belonging to Social science stream. It can be observed that Internet-users from Social science stream may be favourable on attitude towards research than their comparable group. While comparing the Internet-user and Internet-non-user group (Arts stream) on various dimensions of attitude towards research Table No.3, reveals statistically significant difference on General aspects of Research and Research Process. The mean scores of Internet-users on this dimension is reported to be 49.35 which is higher than the mean score of Internet non-users from Arts stream ($M=45.11$). The 't'-value came out to be 8.22, which is significant at 0.01 level. It is inferred that Internet-users from Arts stream can be favourable on attitude towards General aspects of Research and Research Process. However, in rest of the three dimensions i.e. Usefulness of Research in Professional Career, Relevance of Research in Personal Social Life and Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety, the mean scores of Internet-users were reported to be 32.62, 31.58 and 38.21 respectively, whereas, the mean value of Internet non-users of the same stream came to be 32.46, 32.19 and 37.77, the mean differences failed to arrive at any level of significance. The 't'-values in these dimensions came out to be 0.26; 0.17 and 0.75. The findings revealed that both the groups have similar inclination towards the i) Usefulness of research in professional career, ii) Relevance of research in personal social life and iii)

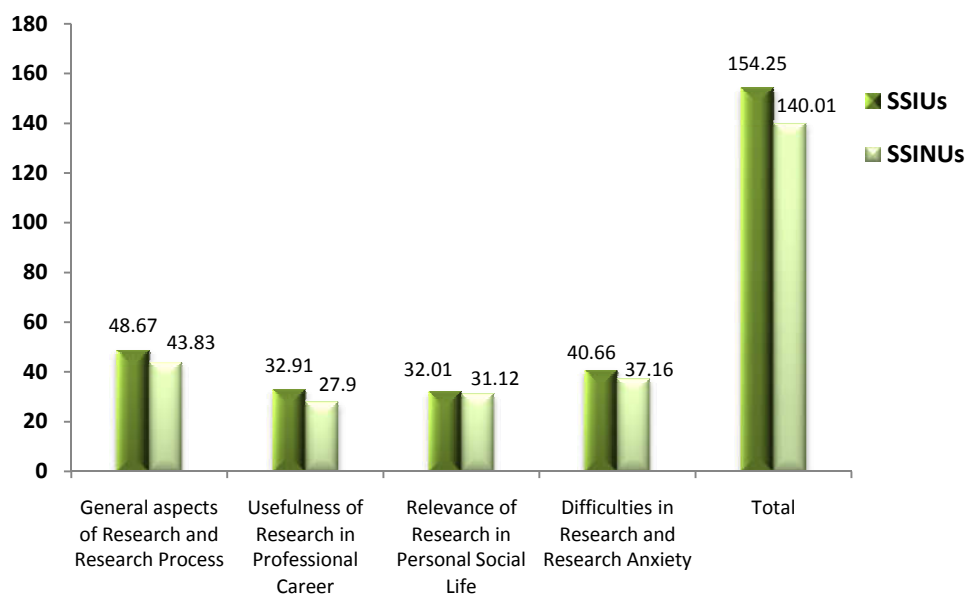
Table No.3: Showing the Significance of difference between the Mean Scores of Internet-users and Internet non-users on Attitude towards Research (Arts Stream; N=100 each)

Dimensions of Attitude towards Research		AIUs		AINUs		t-value
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	
I.	General aspects of Research and Research Process	49.35	4.222	45.11	3.269	8.22**
II.	Usefulness of Research In Professional Career	32.62	4.129	32.46	3.960	0.26*
III.	Relevance of Research in Personal Social Life	31.58	3.210	32.19	3.454	0.17*
IV.	Difficulties in Research and Research Anxiety	38.21	4.130	37.77	4.592	0.75*
	Composite Score	151.76	9.493	147.53	7.500	3.61**

Note: **p<0.01; *Insignificant

Acronyms: AIUs =Arts stream Internet-users

AINUs =Arts stream Internet non-users

**Fig. No.3. Showing the Mean Comparison of Internet-users and Internet non-users on Attitude towards Research (Arts Stream; N=100 each)**

Difficulties in research and Research Anxiety. Coming to the composite score of attitude towards Research, the results reveal Internet-users with a mean score of 151.76 and non-users with a mean score of 147.53. The obtained 't'-value came out to be 3.61 which is significant at 0.01 level of confidence. However, this mean difference favours the Internet-user group from Arts stream.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results also revealed Internet-users and non-users significantly different on various dimensions of Attitude towards Research (faculty wise). Internet-users from Science stream had been found favourable on Attitude towards Research with reference to: i) General aspects of research and ii) Research process and Usefulness of research in professional career. On the basis of these findings, it can be inferred that Science stream Internet-users may be favourable on attitude towards the concept of research, research process, and current scenario of research works. This group of Internet-users feels that research work does not impose any extra workload on them. They are well-known about the essentiality to publish their research findings in order to enhance the authenticity and acceptability of research works within academic community. Positive feelings with regard to the significance and usefulness of research in their professional life, field of study and career, research skill as helpful for their future and research projects as an integral part of every post graduate course has remained the demand of Internet users.

They believe that research activity provides them insight to solve the related issues of their career and profession. However, in the rest of the two dimensions i.e. Relevance of research in personal-social life and Difficulties in research and research anxiety, the mean differences between the two groups failed to arrive at any level of significance. It can be inferred that both groups have more or less similar attitude towards Research on these two dimensions. Both the groups were found with positive feeling about the relevance of research and research-related activities in their personal and social life. Attitude towards the application of research methods/processes and findings solutions to routine type of problems have favourably been seen associated with science stream group (Internet-users and Internet non-users). Both the groups (Internet user and non user) from science stream seem to have a common feeling that knowledge acquired through research may be more useful in their lives as compared to knowledge gained through reading literature.

The two groups are further observed to employ research approaches in their lives and consider that research is highly relevant and beneficial for their personal and social lives. They also feel that society gets benefited from research and makes them systematic and hardworking in their daily lives. They feel comfortable to get engaged in research and scholarly activities. Inclination towards research projects and interest in research and research related activities was observed with positive agreement between both the groups of subjects.

While comparing the Internet-users and Internet non-users (Social science stream) on various dimensions of lifestyle, it has been found that the two groups differ significantly from each other on attitude towards research and the difference favours the Internet user group. Internet-users of the stream were found favourable on attitude towards—i) General aspects of research and research process—ii) Usefulness of research in professional career and iii) Difficulties in research and research anxiety. It can be said that Internet-users from Science stream show a favourable attitude towards the concept of research, and research process. The study revealed that research work does not impose any extra workload to the subjects belonging to science stream. Science stream group of Internet-users has been reported in positive association with the significance and usefulness of research viz.a.viz. research findings. Research as an integral and essential component has been expressed by this group of subjects. They feel stress-free and comfortable when engaged in different sorts of theoretical and practical research-related activities. Work on research projects with devotion and interest has favoured the subjects under discussion.

To feel at ease in arithmetic and statistical computation in research, Internet-users from science stream were seen very much confident in understanding research terminology. Besides, the findings revealed that understanding of methodology to carry research works and awareness about the steps to follow in pursuing any research project has gone in favour of Internet-users (Science stream). However, on Relevance of research in personal-social life, the differences between the two groups failed to arrive at any level of significance, i.e. the difference between the mean scores could not be established. This can be said that both groups belonging to science stream may be more or less similar on attitude towards the Relevance of research in personal-social life. Both the groups are reported with productive ideas about the relevance of research and research-related activities in their personal and social life. Internet users and non users of science stream were seen equally inclined towards: employing research approaches in routine life and considering research as highly relevant and beneficial for one's personal and social life.

While comparing the Internet-users and non-users (Arts stream) on different dimensions of lifestyle, it has been found that the two groups differ significantly on attitude towards research. Arts stream Internet-users have been found favourably inclined towards General aspects of research and research process and were observed with the expression that research work does not impose any extra workload on them. They are well-known about the essentiality to publish the research findings in order to enhance the authenticity and acceptability of research work within academic community. They have positive feelings with regard to the significance and usefulness of research in their professional life and career. On rest of the three dimensions, the difference between the mean scores of the two groups could not be established. This can be attributed that Internet-use and non-use could not establish any variation in Arts stream students with regard to Usefulness of research in professional career, Relevance of research in personal social life and Difficulties in research and research anxiety. It can further be concluded that the two groups have more or less similar Attitude towards research. From the above discussion it can be revealed that Internet-users of Science, Social science and Arts stream were found positive on attitude towards research as compared to the Internet non-user group.

So, it can be concluded that Internet use, among the university students with different streams, and attitude towards research is in positive association except for Internet non-users. The results are supported by a cluster of researchers in the field as *Ahmad Fauzi et al.* (2014) found Internet users from Social science with higher scores on academic attainments. For Social science students, a significant and positive correlation existed between the overall time spent through online basis and the time spent on the Internet for academic research. *Sudhier & Seethalekshmi*, (2011) revealed that Internet resources are the most used e-resources among the students from the Arts Faculty. Most of the students use Internet for educational purposes and most preferred search engine for academic purposes, seminar presentations and for the project works. *Siemens et al.* (2010) found that science students were better on attitudes towards research. The findings further reveal that majority of the students expressed that the research seems to be beneficial to them in their career. They also found science students, with pre-medical background, significantly better on attitude towards research than those who belong to Arts subjects. *Ogunlade* (2008) revealed that Science and Social science students do make use of the Internet; because it was considered to provide a wide coverage of adequate information. The study further revealed that (part of the benefits of the Net) provides the student with resources to carry out assignment which enhances their knowledge and allows them to communicate faster. It was also revealed that though a greater percentage of them patronize the library, the satisfaction required was not provided. Some of the reasons were: inadequacy of library materials, obsolete cataloging and poor library conditions. *Pruskil et al.* (2009) found that students who had high attitude towards science would tend to be highly involved in research activities. *Unnikrishnan et al.* (2008) found significant relationship between the study and the purpose of Internet use. Science students preferred Internet over text books because it accessed the latest knowledge. *Horrigan* (2006) reported Internet as a resource for news and information about science.

The findings also confirmed that the convenience of getting scientific material on the Web opens doors to better attitudes and understanding of science. *Preeti Mahajan* (2006) revealed that students use electronic resources more than paper resources as they were confident to find resources through Internet rather than paper resources. The other purposes of using Internet were: document delivery services, online job seeking, publishing research papers in e-journals etc. Most of the science researchers and Social science students agreed that Internet had a positive impact on their study and research, while students in humanities did not agree. *Kaur* (2005) found that Internet as time saving, easy to use, more informative and more preferred. Nearly all the science students believed that they obtained more information which seems to be beneficial to their area of study. This may be due to result of various Internet resources like scientific database, e-journals, e-books and technical reports available freely or through little subscription on the Internet. *Kumar & Kaur* (2004) found that majority of the Internet-users used it for educational and research purposes.

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