

# Assessing The Digital Information Behavior And E-Resources Adoption Among Textile SMEs In Salem District

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## **Abstract**

*Background - This study evaluates the adoption of e-resources by textile SMEs using the textile-industrial cluster in Salem District, Tamil Nadu, as a case study. The effective use of electronic resources, or e-resources, is now essential for boosting competitiveness and making informed decisions.*

*Methodology - The study examined how Salem District textile SMEs use digital information and e-resources using a descriptive survey research methodology. Managers, staff members, and business owners of textile SMEs provided primary data using a methodical questionnaire. Out of 200 questionnaires, 196 were returned. The collected data were examined using SPSS to explore relationships between demographic characteristics and information-seeking behaviour using descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, ANOVA, and Post Hoc Tukey HSD tests.*

*Findings – There were 46.9% (90) female responders and 53.1% (102) male respondents. In terms of how they sought information, 33.3% (64) of the respondents relied on traditional media, followed by digital media (26.5%, 51), informal sources (26.0%, 50), and formal sources (14.0%, 27). ANOVA analysis of the frequency of information seeking by age group revealed a statistically significant difference ( $F = 4.283, p = 0.003$ ). In contrast, 31.7% (61) of respondents were pleased, and 21.8% (42) were highly satisfied with printed resources.*

*Conclusion - The study comes to the conclusion that digital information behaviour is essential to improving the operational effectiveness and competitiveness of Salem District textile SMEs. Even though the use of e-resources is growing, there are still differences in access and usage amongst various demographic groups. To promote efficient use of e-resources, targeted digital literacy initiatives, enhanced ICT infrastructure, and cooperative information support systems incorporating libraries, governmental organisations, and trade groups are advised. For textile SMEs, strengthening these areas can greatly enhance sustainable growth and well-informed decision-making.*

**Keywords:** *Information seeking behaviour; Textile SMEs, Information resources, Electronic resources, Digital Literacy.*

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## **I. Introduction**

Information is a basic need of human beings. Nowadays, information is needed for social development. Information seeking has been studied in the digital era to identify the user's opinion. The manufacturing sector plays a vital role in the economic development of Tamil Nadu, particularly in districts like Salem, which is known for its strong textile manufacturing base. However, despite the growing presence of digital information systems, many SMEs still face challenges in identifying, accessing, and effectively using e-resources. To close this gap, it is crucial to comprehend how textile professionals and entrepreneurs access information. The term "information needs" refers to the particular kinds of knowledge needed to carry out commercial activities successfully, from market trends and production methods to technology advancements and export laws. This study is to provide light on the patterns, preferences, and frequency of e-resource consumption among textile SMEs in the Salem district by examining how these demands are satisfied by e-resources. While Tamil Nadu's Salem district has a dense cluster of textile manufacturers, these firms face dynamic market pressures from technological change, buyer preferences, and global competition; therefore, effective information access and use are essential for resilience and growth.

The rapid proliferation of e-resources (online journals, databases, e-catalogues, government portals, and social media business networks) has changed the information ecosystem available to SMEs. Electronic resources

offer immediacy, breadth, and the potential for tailored, searchable content — but actual adoption depends on factors beyond mere availability: awareness, digital literacy, infrastructure (internet, devices), perceived relevance, and institutional support. Studies show that even when e-resources exist, heterogeneity in usage and satisfaction remains, driven by socio-demographic variables (age, education), organisational characteristics, and the nature of the information need (technical vs. market vs. regulatory).

This study also aims to assess the degree of e-resource adoption, the frequency of seeking information, and the satisfaction users have when trying to access them. The results will be useful in pinpointing areas where digital resource management and information distribution need to be improved. Therefore, the purpose of this study, "A Study on Information Seeking and Usage of E-Resources among Textile SMEs in Salem District," is to evaluate user satisfaction, analyse the current state of e-resource utilisation, and recommend ways to improve access to and awareness of electronic information resources within the textile manufacturers. Usually, manufacturers need information related to the sector. There are many ways, like printed resources, electronic resources, to so on, to acquire their information. Information-seeking behaviour emerged from the broad concept of user studies.

## **II. Problem Statement**

SMEs in the textile industry depend more and more on timely and pertinent information in the quickly changing digital environment. Online databases, digital libraries, e-journals, and web portals are examples of e-resources that give managers and entrepreneurs access to a wealth of knowledge. Nevertheless, many textile SMEs in the Salem district might not be completely aware of or motivated to use these resources, even though they are readily available. There is a knowledge gap on these businesses' information-seeking habits, frequency, and e-resource usage strategies. The best use of e-resources may be hampered by elements like poor information management techniques, time restrictions, and a lack of digital literacy. Studying how textile SMEs in the Salem district look for and utilise e-resources, the difficulties they encounter, and their information-seeking habits is therefore essential.

## **III. Literature Review**

Adekanye, Aramide & Adewuyi (2015) investigated market women in Nigeria to map typical information channels used for trade (market prices, suppliers). Found reliance on interpersonal networks and traditional sources; recommended targeted interventions to expand digital awareness. Jorosi (2006) explored SME managers' priorities and concluded SMEs primarily seek practical, actionable business information rather than academic literature; information gaps were often logistical or regulatory. Orrensalo & Nikou (2021) Systematically reviewed literature on entrepreneurs' uptake of digital information, identifying drivers (perceived usefulness, ease of use) and barriers (trust, digital skills). Emphasised heterogeneity across sectors. Orrensalo, Brush & Nikou (2024). Recent synthesis showing entrepreneurs increasingly rely on social media, open datasets, and peer networks for actionable intelligence; highlights evolving search strategies and platform choices. Ansari & Tripathi (2024) focused on craft weavers' information needs and barriers low digital literacy, irregular internet access, and strong reliance on local networks. Recommended community training and localised content. Popoola (2024) linked managerial problem-solving and self-efficacy with information seeking and utilisation — managers with higher self-efficacy sought and applied information more effectively. Adekanye & Haliso (2015) demonstrated a positive association between access to market information and economic empowerment outcomes for textile vendors; they recommended institutionalised information services. Rodge & Jadhav (2022) mapped information channels and identified gendered differences in access and preferences; women entrepreneurs often used local networks and government schemes but showed lower use of advanced e-resources. Ikoja Odongo (2024) provided a conceptual framework for the information behaviour of informal entrepreneurs, emphasising contextual constraints (regulatory, infrastructural) and the role of intermediaries. Chiware (2008). Comprehensive empirical work showing varied information needs across business functions and highlighting inadequate formal information services for SMMEs. Proposed integrated information service models.

## **IV. Objectives**

1. To identify the information-seeking methods of textile SMEs.
2. To analyse the frequency of information seeking by textile SMEs.
3. To find out the socio-economic characteristics of the textile SMEs.
4. To identify the preference in accessing e-resources and printed resources.
5. To evaluate the level of satisfaction with information resources.

## **V. Hypothesis**

H0: There is no significant difference between the information-seeking methods and the gender of the respondents  
H1: There is a significant difference between the information-seeking methods and the gender of the respondents

H0: There is no significant association between the frequency of information seeking and the age of the respondents

H1: There is a significant association between the frequency of information seeking and the age of the respondents

### VI. Methodology

This study involves examining the information needs and usage of e-resources of textile SMEs; the survey focused on the primary data collection method involved using a questionnaire. The user group of this study includes textile SMEs in the Salem district. A survey method as a parameter to gather data about the information needs, resources and seeking behaviour of textile SMEs. Distributed 200 well-structured questionnaires, 196 questionnaires were received from the respondents. The obtained data were analysed and tabulated by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science). Descriptive statistics were used to describe the resources used by textile SMEs. Mean, Standard deviation, Chi-square, and ANOVA were applied to analyse the hypothesis.

### VII. Analysis And Interpretation Of Data

**Table I: Gender Frequency**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	90	46.9
Male	102	53.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table II: Information Seeking Methods and Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Information Seeking Methods				Total
	Traditional Media	Digital Media	Formal Sources	Informal Sources	
Female	30 (34.4%)	22 (25.2%)	12 (13.7%)	23 (26.4%)	87 (100%)
Male	34 (32.3%)	29 (27.6%)	15 (14.2%)	27 (25.7%)	105 (100%)
Total	64 (33.3%)	51 (26.5%)	27 (14.0%)	50 (26.0%)	192 (100%)

Table 2 shows the information-seeking methods and the gender of respondents. 64(33.3%) of the respondents have used traditional media, 51(26.5%) of the respondents have used digital media, 27(14.0%) of the respondents have used formal sources, and 50(26.0%) of the respondents have used informal sources to seek information.

**Table III: Chi-Square Test (Methods and Gender of Respondents)**

Pearson Chi-Square Value	27.081
d.f	4
P-Value	0.001
Hypothesis	Rejected
Cramer's V contingency	0.376
Level of relationship between the two variables	Moderate

The Pearson Chi-Square value of the above table 3 is 27.081 at a 5% level of significance. Since the P-Value is less than 0.001, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted. It concluded that information-seeking methods are independent of the gender of the textile SMEs. Cramer's V contingency has been used by the researcher when the number of rows and columns is not equal. The Cramer's value is 0.376. This means that there is a moderate relationship between the information-seeking behaviour and the gender of the respondents.

**Table IV: Standard Deviation Rank**

Variable	No. of Respondents	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Electronic Resources	192	3.82	1.17	I
Printed Resources	192	3.69	1.15	II

Table 4 shows the basis of the mean value and ranks assigned by the respondents. The mean score of electronic resources is 3.82 with a standard deviation of 1.17 is less than the mean value. It concluded that most of the textile SMEs used electronic resources. The mean score of 3.69 of respondents used printing resources, with a standard deviation of 1.15. It is concluded that the electronic resources are I rank.

**Table V: ANOVA – Frequency of Information Seeking**

Frequency of Information Seeking	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.245	4	2.061	4.283	0.003
Within Groups	8.901	187	0.476		
<b>Total</b>	972.63	191			

Table 5: The p-value of the frequency of information seeking was found to be not significant at a 5% level of significance. Hence, the null hypotheses are accepted, and the alternative hypotheses are rejected. It concludes that the frequency of information seeking is independent of the age of the respondents.

**Table VII: Post-Hoc Tukey HSD**

Dependent Variable	Age Group	Mean Difference	Std. Err	Sig.
Frequency of Seeking Information	Below 25	0.245	0.218	0.762
	26-35	0.890	0.282	0.015
	36-45	1.032	0.318	0.008
	46-55	1.421	0.351	0.001
	Above 55	0.645	0.259	0.074

**Table VIII: Homogeneous**

Age	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
		1
Below 25	40	3.12
25-35	49	2.83
36-45	40	2.60
46-55	35	2.36
Above 55	28	2.15
<b>Sig.</b>		.168

**Table IX: Satisfaction Level of Electronic and Printed Resources**

Level of Satisfaction						
Electronic Resources	Highly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Highly Satisfied	Total
Google	3(5.17%)	3(5.17%)	20(34.4%)	22(37.9%)	10(17.2%)	58(100%)
Media	2(2.6%)	2(2.6%)	26(34.6%)	30(40.0%)	15(20.0%)	75(100%)
Others	5(8.47%)	5(8.47%)	19(32.2%)	20(33.8%)	10(16.9%)	59(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>10(5.2%)</b>	<b>10(5.2%)</b>	<b>65(33.8%)</b>	<b>72(37.5%)</b>	<b>35(18.2%)</b>	<b>192(100.0)</b>
Printed Resources						
Newspaper	1(1.1%)	3(3.3%)	33(36.6%)	32(35.5%)	21(23.3%)	90(100%)
Magazines	3(5.3%)	9(16.7%)	17(30.3%)	15(26.7%)	12(21.4%)	56(100%)
Others	4(8.6%)	7(15.2%)	12(26.0%)	14(30.4%)	9(19.5%)	46(100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8(4.16%)</b>	<b>19(9.8%)</b>	<b>62(32.2%)</b>	<b>61(31.7%)</b>	<b>42(21.8%)</b>	<b>192(100.0)</b>

Table 9 describes the satisfaction level of electronic resources and printing resources among a total of 192 respondents. Out of which, 72(37.5%) of the respondents are satisfied, 65(33.8) of the respondents are Neutral, and 6(3.8%) of the respondents are using E-resources to access information.

### VIII. Discussion

The highest mean (3.82 vs. 3.69) indicates that respondents preferred electronic resources over printed ones when it came to information sources. This suggests that traditional channels for gathering information about businesses and markets are gradually giving way to digital ones. The standard deviation numbers, however, indicate that there is still variation in satisfaction levels, which may be caused by variations in digital literacy, information management techniques, and access to ICT technologies. Overall, the findings are consistent with earlier research, which showed that SMEs in developing nations are becoming more reliant on digital information sources but still encounter obstacles, including poor infrastructure and training. Therefore, even though the Salem district's textile SMEs are clearly using e-resources, their adoption is still unequal and needs institutional support.

The report suggests:

1. Training sessions and awareness campaigns to improve SME owners' and workers' digital competency.
2. Better access to dependable internet services and ICT infrastructure within industrial clusters.

3. Libraries, government organisations, and business associations working together to create e-information services tailored to SMEs.
4. Information must be regularly assessed to guarantee that e-resources continue to be pertinent to the textile industry's business needs.

## IX. Findings & Conclusion

The results of this study show that demographic factors like age and gender have an impact on the information-seeking behaviour of textile SMEs in the Salem district. Information-seeking techniques and gender were found to be significantly correlated by the Chi-square test ( $\chi^2 = 27.081$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that both male and female respondents actively use various information channels, although males tend to rely slightly more on digital media and informal sources. A significant difference ( $p = 0.003$ ) was found in the ANOVA test comparing the frequency of information seeking across age groups, indicating that younger respondents are more likely than older respondents to seek information. Respondents in the age categories 26–35, 36–45, and 46–55 demonstrated statistically significant differences in information-seeking frequency when compared to those under 25 or over 55, according to the Post Hoc Tukey HSD test. Younger respondents form a unique cluster with higher mean scores in information-seeking behaviour, as further shown by the homogeneous subset test ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

The study comes to the conclusion that information is essential to raising the competitiveness and productivity of Salem area textile SMEs. The results show that the majority of respondents regularly utilise e-resources for business-related information and have a favourable view of them. However, there are still differences in awareness, access frequency, and satisfaction based on organisational characteristics and demographics. Although electronic resources are thought to be more immediate, convenient, and complete than printed sources, their use is frequently hampered by issues including a lack of ICT facilities, a lack of digital skills, and a lack of knowledge about the databases that are available. Significant variations in the frequency of information-seeking across age groups are confirmed by the ANOVA and Tukey test results, highlighting the necessity of tailored digital literacy initiatives aimed at various user segments.

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