

## Chapter 9

# Student Intention to Use Online Library Services of a Locked–Down University: A Quantitative Study

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### ABSTRACT

*The COVID-19 pandemic had a drastic impact on the teaching and learning practices of universities around the globe. To comply with the new normal, universities shifted their teaching and learning activities online. Academic libraries also shifted their services online. However, in many cases, the students enrolled in universities during COVID-19 era had no prior experience of online library services. This study investigated the factors that drive or inhibit these students' use of online library services. Various recommendations and implications for library management are reported.*

### INTRODUCTION

Libraries are the place of knowledge collection and information storage catalogued for its potential users. The Internet has enabled libraries to reach more people and provide easier access to required information. However, this has not changed the basic function of libraries. Academic libraries are a cornerstone in learning institutions. In Spring 2020, COVID-19 pandemic forced a wide majority of colleges and universities to go online (Kelly & Columbus, 2020; Cox, 2020; Mashroofa, 2021; Alajmi, 2019). In this scenario, academic libraries faced significant challenges in providing continued access to library services by students. Many libraries implemented various measures to continue their operations in compliance with COVID-19 safety protocol (Breeding, 2020). While researchers have studied the provision of online library services (Perera & Suraweera 2021; Fernando & Senevirathne 2021; Almaiah & Alismaiel,

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2019) the examination of new university students' intention to use (ITU) these online services is still missing. This examination is important to determine whether online libraries were able to satisfy the needs of students in the time where students were forced to confine themselves (Kelly & Columbus, 2020). Therefore, this study examines the factors influencing students' intention to use the online library services during the lock-down.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

An online library is a library without walls in which a significant proportion of the resources does not exist in tangible form but is accessible electronically. An online library is a collection of services that supports users in creating, dealing and sharing information and organization/presentation of information objects. The collection of information artifacts is available for access via digital format. There are various services provided by online libraries including remote reference services. Online library services offer multiple advantages including quick addition to the collection, quality control, Improved search, quicker access to information, and reduced bureaucracy (Ameen et al., 2019). Online libraries are highly dynamic and able to hold inter-linked, multimedia objects as well. Online libraries support documents and significant meta-data which can be extracted automatically. From access control point of view, online libraries can be distributed and ubiquitous and their physical/logical organizations can be separated (Chung et al., 2010). Online libraries can support multiple layers of access control. Online libraries can support two-way user-communication and quick interaction. Online libraries support symmetric search, complex interactions, navigation, and social filtering (Sharon & Frank, 2020; Asabere et al., 2021).

COVID-19 pandemic caused physical libraries to move their operations online to serve the requirements of their users i.e., students, faculty, and researchers. In the era of Internet, academic libraries face significant complex challenges to meet the needs of their stakeholders (Cox, 2020; Lee & Lehto, 2013; Lwoga & Sife, 2018; Mohamad Rosman et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021). This was because of rapid increase in the sources of information and changes in the behavior of library users (Hinchliffe & Wolff-Eisenberg, 2020; Ghazal et al., 2018). To meet this challenge, libraries made significant changes to adopt to this new norm of COVID-19. Some libraries utilized their existing online platforms while others developed their online capabilities (Breeding, 2020; Kelly & Columbus, 2020; Breeding, 2020; Rahman & Mohezar, 2020; Rivo & Žumer, 2022). Libraries also started integrating their online systems with online learning management systems (LMS) of the universities (Nicholas & Tomeo, 2005; Johnson, Trabelsi, & Fabbro, 2008; Moncrieff, Macauley, & Epps, 2007; Hwee & Yew, 2018; Rosman et al., 2019; Shivdas et al., 2020; Soltani-Nejad et al., 2020; Teo et al., 2019; Tyagi et al., 2022; Wibowo, 2019). Providing library services online was not easy task. The libraries were not sure that whether they would be able to provide all their services effectively and efficiently to satisfy the users. In the online learning mode, fewer students visited the libraries physically. Rather, students demanded round the clock access to information (Dilevko & Gottlieb, 2002; Moyo, 2004; Gardner & Eng, 2005; Allen & Seaman, 2008; Allen & Seaman, 2008; Isibika & Kavishe, 2018).

The rapidly changing technology landscape has brought significant changes the way students seek information and now majority of students prefer online library resources (Tipton, 2002; Kelley & Orr, 2003; Moyo, 2004; Walters, 2004; Liu & Yang, 2004; Kennedy, 2005; Stephan et al., 2006; Williamson et al., 2007; Nicholas, 2008; Brandt, 2008; Ilahi et al., 2019). It was reported that convenience was the most significant that drove students' use of online library resources (Brandt, 2008). Researchers argue

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