

## **e-BOOK AWARENESS and USAGE AMONG UiTM CPP STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Millions of dollars are spent each year by academic libraries to make electronic resources available to students for free. However, free access to e-books might not keep students interested in and using them. Thus, a small-scale online survey of e-book awareness and usage among Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau Pinang (UiTM CPP) students was implemented. Its objectives are to identify the reasons of using and not using e-books. A total of 202 students in UiTM CPP responded to this survey about how they use e-books for learning, how they search for them, what devices they use to get them, and how they read and use them. Part of the survey shows that 62.9% of students found it is free and easy to access e-books, whereas 27.7% preferred printed books. In general, it can be concluded that most of the students are aware and make full use of the availability of e-books in the library.*

**Keywords:** e-book, e-book awareness, e-book usage, university students

### **Introduction**

E-book is an electronic version of a printed book and can be accessed portable electronic devices or a computer. It had been introduced almost 20 years back and since then it has become increasingly a crucial part of the academic libraries including Perpustakaan Tun Abdul Razak (PTAR), UiTM CPP. Besides the printed version books, e-books are now one of the main resources available in the digital collections. Lots of money being spent by the libraries in order to keeping up to date with the latest editions especially academic e-books since they are expanding vastly.

According to the study done by Casselden & Pears (2020), respondents preferred e-books for a variety of reasons, including convenience and accessibility, portability, navigability, and the ability to act as a preview to judge the utility of a certain book. They further found that the learning strategies employed by students also were occasionally challenged by the use of e-books, and the technology used to access the e-books resulted in issues completely engaging with content. Additionally, from survey and interviews done by Lin et al., (2020), half of the respondents still preferred print textbooks to e-textbooks, and e-textbooks were not positioned to replace print textbooks for university students in Taiwan.

When it comes to the importance of e-books, students liked the convenience of not being bound by time or distance. The findings also demonstrate that students were unfamiliar with e-book resources

and how to use them, and that software and hardware limitations can limit digital reading, and due to the new design, taking notes can be difficult (Luo et al., 2021). Majid et al., (2019) states that the capacity to save multiple e-books on personal devices, convenience of utilizing e-books, and no need to go to the library were viewed as key benefits by students. Whereas, eye strain, poor quality scanned e-books, and small smartphone screens were some of the disadvantages of e-books.

A study also found that students who had used an e-text in the study were more excited about using them again in the future than those who hadn't, and this seems to be a good thing for teachers who are thinking about switching to e-texts but are worried about how students will react (Sommers et al., 2019). Due to the above findings, and in order to learn more about why or why not students prefer e-books, new samples among students in UiTM CPP were taken and analyzed.

## **Methodology**

In this study, students from all semesters (diploma and degree) were given a simple survey shared through WhatsApp and Telegram. The questionnaires adapted from Abdullah and Gibb (2006) were in Google form and divided into three sections. The first section is the demographic questions on gender, age, faculty, level of study and semester. In the second part, the students were asked on their awareness of the existence of e-books. The last section is on the reasons of using or not using e-books. The survey was conducted from 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022 until 16<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and a total of 202 students responded to the survey.

## **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 shows a demographic study of 202 respondents who answered the survey. Female students contributed 59.4% of the results and majority of the students (55.9%) are between 18-20 years old. This indicates many diploma students who participated in this survey (59.4%). 40.1% are semester 3 students, 24.3% are semester 1 students and the rest are other semester students.

Table 1: Demographic information

No	Item	Total Sample	
		N	%
1.	Gender:		
	Male	27	40.6
	Female	120	59.4
2.	Age:		
	18-20 years	113	55.9
	21-24 years	82	40.6
	25-30 years	7	3.5
3.	Levels of Study:		
	Diploma	120	59.4
	Degree	82	40.6
4.	Semester:		
	Sem 1	49	24.3
	Sem 2	3	1.5
	Sem 3	81	40.1
	Sem 4	11	5.4
	Sem 5	27	13.4
	Sem 6	5	2.5
	Sem 7	19	9.4
	Sem 8	5	2.5
	Others (Sem10/graduate)	2	1.0

In addition to the demographic information, the survey also reveals that 81.2% of them were aware of the existence of e-books on the PTAR’s website. However only 60.9% realised that PTAR did have a promotion on the use of e-books. Furthermore, the percentage of students who used (47.5%) and didn’t use (52.5%) e-books before the study was conducted is more or less the same.

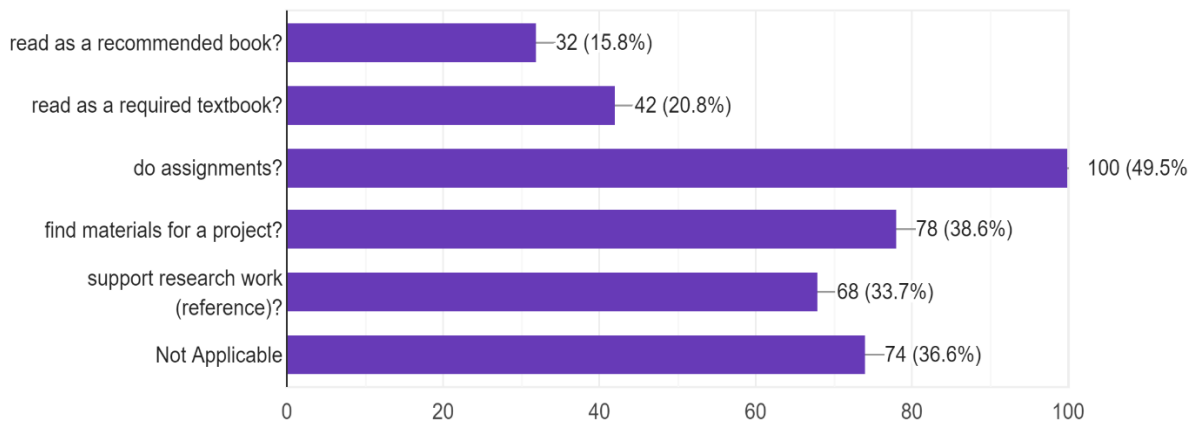


Figure 1: Purposes for using e-books.

From Figure 1 above, it can be clearly observed that most of the students used e-books to complete their assignments (49.5%). Whereas, 72.3% used e-books to find materials and support their projects or research works. 36.6% of them used e-books as a recommended or required textbook. There were also 36.6% of the students who did not used e-books (not applicable). Out of 202 respondents, 63.9% of them accessed the e-books using their personal computer or laptop, 45% used their android phone and only 6.4% used the tablet.

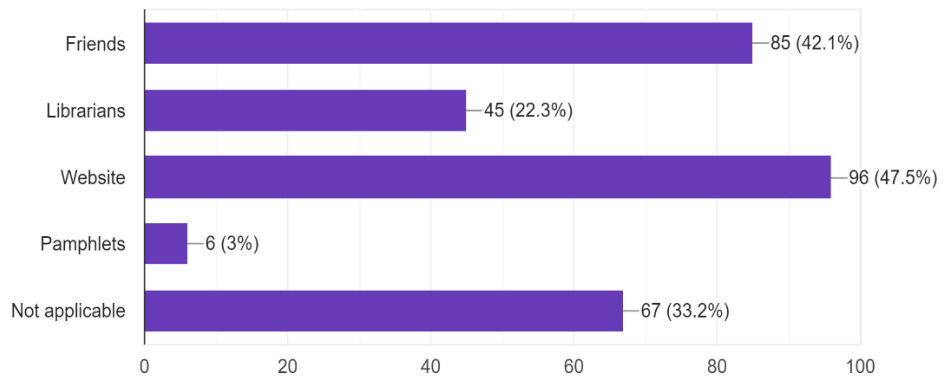


Figure 2: How do students find about e-books.

As Figure 2 illustrates, most of the students found about e-books in PTAR through the websites (47.5%) and their friends (42.1%), 22.3% from the librarians, and 3% from the pamphlets distributed around the campus. For the non-applicable (33.2%) probably came from those who did not aware or used e-books. The survey also disclosed that 48.5% of the students preferred reading the e-books on screen and 25.7% would rather print the e-books.

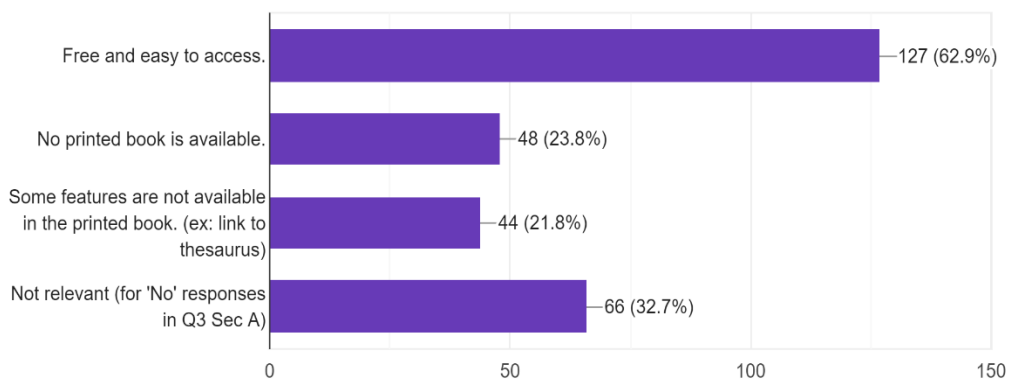


Figure 3: Reasons for using e-books.

When the students were asked why they used e-books, 62.9% responded that e-books are free and easy to access. 23.8% of them said that no printed book was available and 21.8% agreed that some features were not accessible in the printed textbook. 32.7% were those who did not use e-books.

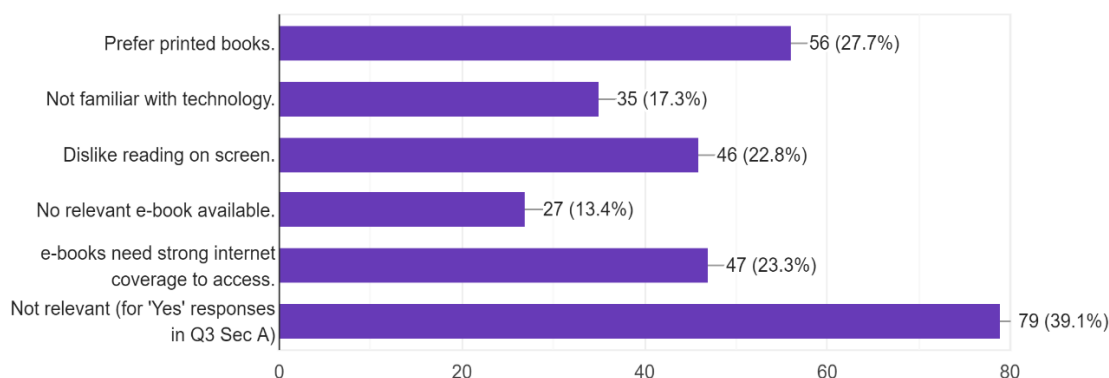


Figure 4: Reasons for not using e-books

Figure 4 shows that 27.7% of the students preferred printed books, 22.8% dislike reading on screen and 23.3% said that strong internet coverage is needed to access e-books. In addition, about 17.3% were not familiar with the technology and 13.4% said that no relevant e-book is available. Out of the 202 respondents, 39.1% used e-books during their study.

**Conclusion**

In short, most of the results supported the studies done by previous researchers mentioned in the introduction. Nevertheless, some of the findings in this study could still be questionable. For instance, if the students can't find the e-books, do they willing to buy or rent the print books? Students should also

be asked on whether they want to used e-books after the survey. In future, the survey can further investigate on the advantages and disadvantages of using e-books among UiTM CPP students.

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