

ELECTRONIC USE OF JOURNALS SUBSCRIBED TO BY UINSU FOR STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to find out the use of electronic journals subscribed by uinsu for students of the faculty of social sciences. This research was conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences UINSU Medan. The method in this study uses a qualitative method with data sources through observation, interviews and documentation with students and librarians. Based on the results of interviews with students of the Faculty of Social Sciences UINSU, it can be concluded that there are still many students who do not fully know that the campus provides access to electronic journals (e-journals). Information about this e-journal service is mostly obtained indirectly, both from lecturers and peers, and not from official socialization carried out by the campus or library. The lack of information and promotion causes many students to not know the benefits and potential of e-journals as a credible and up-to-date source of academic literature. In addition, in terms of frequency of use, the majority of students rarely use campus e-journals, even only using them when they are working on a final project or thesis. The low intensity of this utilization cannot be separated from the lack of technical understanding of students in accessing and navigating the available e-journal platforms. This is also exacerbated by the absence of regular training or guidance from libraries and faculties that can help students.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has brought major changes in the pattern of searching, managing, and utilizing information in various fields, including higher education. Libraries, as centers for information, storage, education, and documentation, are required to adapt to these changes by providing fast, relevant, and digitally accessible services. The presence of the internet has made distance and time no longer an obstacle, so that the search for information is no longer limited to print collections. One form of significant service transformation is the provision of electronic journals (e-journals), which contain the latest issues, theories, and findings and become a source of credible, up-to-date, and very important academic literature in supporting learning, research, and scientific publication activities (Zatadini & Khasanah, 2023; Syahrone & Zatadini, 2021).

A number of previous studies have examined the use of e-journals in the university environment. Elisa (2024) emphasized that e-journals provide ease of browsing and speed of access, but their success depends heavily on the digital literacy of users. Aulawi & Mauludin (2023) found that students' low technical skills are one of the obstacles to the use of digital scientific resources. Katabalwa (2023) and Ahmed (2023) also point out that the lack of awareness and lack of official socialization make e-journals not used optimally, while Kurnia Sholihah (2022) highlights the importance of continuous training programs and practical guidelines that are easy for students to understand. Thus, the use of e-journals does not only depend on the availability of access, but also on academic support factors, the relevance of the collection, and the technical skills of the user.

Although UINSU has subscribed to various internationally reputable databases since 2015 such as Sage Publication, Springer Link, Oxford Islamic Studies, Moraref, Cengage Learning, EBSCO-Host, Emerald Insight, One Search, and Cambridge Core, preliminary observation results show that the level of e-journal utilization among students of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FIS) is still low. Information about this service is generally obtained from lecturers or peers, not through official socialization carried out by the campus or library. Some students also find the language and scientific terms used difficult to understand, so they prefer popular sources of information such as Google or Wikipedia which are considered more practical. Technical constraints such as unstable internet connections, device limitations, and lack of user guides have made the situation worse. Furthermore, not all e-journals subscribed to by UINSU are relevant to the field of social science studies, so students' interest in using them is getting lower.

The research gap that is the basis of this research is the absence of a study that specifically integrates the analysis of the level of e-journal utilization, identification of technical and non-technical obstacles, and the design of improvement strategies based on learning theory and technology adoption in the FIS UINSU student environment. Previous research has tended to focus on technical aspects (e.g. access training) or aspects of user behavior separately, without looking at the relationship between infrastructure, digital literacy, collection relevance, and academic support holistically. Therefore, this research offers scientific novelty through a comprehensive approach that combines Social Learning Theory, Diffusion of Innovations, and Digital Literacy Framework to produce strategies that are not only reactive to problems, but also proactive in forming a sustainable culture of scientific literacy.

Based on this background, the research problems raised are: the extent of the use of e-journals by FIS UINSU students, what obstacles are faced in the process of accessing and using them, and what strategies can be applied to increase student awareness, skills, and digital literacy culture. The purpose of this study is to analyze the level of e-journal utilization among FIS UINSU students, identify obstacles that hinder access optimization, and develop effective strategies to increase the use of e-journals as a credible and relevant source of scientific reference to academic needs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher uses a qualitative method because this method is very related to the focus and formulation of the research problem to be researched. Judging from the area, the research only covers very narrow areas or subjects. In this case, what is wanted for the research is to find out how the use of electronic journals subscribed by UINSU for FIS UINSU students (Syahroni & Zataadini, 2021) This research was conducted at the Faculty of Social Sciences UINSU Medan. This research will be carried out from February 2025 until completion. The researcher obtained data sources with collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. Data collection was carried out by visiting the library of the State Islamic University of North Sumatra located on Jl. Lap. Golf No. 120, Kp. Engah, Pancur Batu District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra 20353 and interviewed librarians and students at the university. The withdrawal of informants was carried out using the Snowball sampling technique. The results of the interviews were analyzed to find patterns of meaning related to the use of electronic journals subscribed to by uinsu for students of the faculty of social sciences. The analysis process is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data is strengthened by the triangulation technique of sources and methods, namely comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation (Rila Setyaningsih, 2019).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To get a deeper picture of the use of electronic journals subscribed by UINSU, the researcher conducted interviews with several students from the Faculty of Social Sciences (FIS). This interview aims to reveal the level of knowledge, experience, and obstacles faced by students in accessing e-journals. The following are the results of the interview based on the questions that have been prepared

a. Lack of understanding in accessing journals subscribed to by uinsu

The student said: "I know that UINSU has an electronic journal subscription, but I have never really used it. I have seen a list of journals on the library website, but it looks less attractive and difficult to access (informant 1)"

Based on the results of interviews with students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, especially from the Department of Library Science, it can be concluded that the use of electronic journals subscribed by UINSU has not been carried out optimally. Most students do know about the existence of e-journal services such as ProQuest and EBSCO, but do not have sufficient understanding and technical skills in accessing and utilizing them. Many students feel that the interface of the UINSU library website is less attractive and tends to be complicated, so they prefer sources that are considered more practical such as Google Scholar or ResearchGate. This phenomenon can be analyzed using the theory of Information Seeking Behavior by Wilson (1999), which states that in the process of searching for information, individuals will tend to choose the path that is the easiest, practical, and least restrictive. In this case, even though electronic journals are available, students prefer to use alternative platforms because e-journals are considered too complex and not supported by adequate technical guidance. Barriers that are difficult to understand and lack of guidance make them avoid access to these official sources of information. In addition, the low use of e-journals can also be seen from the perspective of Diffusion of Innovations Theory by Rogers (2003). Innovations such as the use of electronic journals require stages of adoption, ranging from knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, to confirmation. However, in this case, many students have not passed the persuasion and implementation stage because there is no strong encouragement from lecturers or faculty policies directing them to use official journals. The complexity of the system and the lack of interest of students in its benefits have caused this innovation to not be widely adopted

b. Students rarely use campus e-journals

When asked about the frequency of e-journal use provided by UINSU, the informants' answers showed that the use of e-journals is still relatively low and has not become a routine habit, even among students majoring in Library Science who academically should be closer to scientific reference sources. One of the 8th semester students stated that he only uses campus e-journals when needed, especially to complete paper assignments or research proposals. For the rest, he prefers other sources that are considered faster and more accessible.

The student said: "I use campus e-journals maybe once or twice a semester, and that's also usually when the lecturer tells me to include references from academic journals. For the rest, I use Google Scholar more often because I can read it directly without logging in. Campus journals are actually good, but the procedure is too complicated in my opinion." (Informant 2)"

Based on the results of the interview, it can be seen that the frequency of use of e-journals subscribed to by UINSU is still relatively low, even among students majoring in Library Science. The use of e-journals tends to increase only when there is an urgent academic need, such as the preparation of a thesis or an assignment that requires references to scientific journals. Previously, students preferred easily accessible sources such as Google Scholar, because they felt that the campus e-journal access procedure was too complicated and there was no technical assistance. This phenomenon is in line with the theory of Information Seeking Behavior from Wilson (1999), which explains that individuals will choose the easiest and least restrictive path to seek information. In addition, according to the theory of Diffusion of Innovations by Rogers (2003), the low adoption of e-journals among students also shows that this innovation has not been fully internalized in their learning culture, due to the lack of encouragement from lecturers and the learning system.

c. Students have problems when trying to access or use e-journals

The student said: "The first time I wanted to use the UINSU e-journal, I was confused about which website to open. On the library page there are indeed some links, but they are not well explained. After clicking, it turned out that I had to log in using a certain account, and I didn't know where the account came from. Finally, I backed off and went back to Google Scholar." (Informant 3)

Based on the results of the interviews, the main obstacles faced by students in accessing the UINSU e-journal include technical aspects, lack of digital literacy, and lack of information and assistance from the campus. Students feel confused about determining the official link, difficulties in the login process, and experiencing obstacles in understanding the interface and content of the journal, especially if they speak English. This obstacle makes students prefer to use more practical sources such as Google Scholar. This situation reflects the Information Seeking Behavior theory from Wilson (1999), that when individuals face obstacles in the search for information, both technical and psychological, they tend to shy away and choose the easier path. On the other hand, according to the Digital Literacy Framework from Belshaw (2012), students' low digital literacy is a key factor that makes it difficult for them to evaluate and use digital scientific resources effectively. The complexity of the interface and academic language of journals can also be explained through Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), which states that too high a cognitive load can inhibit information and affect learning effectiveness

d. lack of socialization and training from the campus

"Many students do not know the difference between articles from blogs, open access journals, and academic journals subscribed to by the campus. They are usually more familiar with Google or Google Scholar, and rarely go to the official library website. That's a problem because the sources they use aren't always valid for academic purposes." (Informant 4)

It is known that students of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FIS) still face various obstacles in accessing and utilizing campus electronic journals. This obstacle is recurrent and predominantly occurs in students who are not used to using digital scientific references. Students often do not understand the difference between official academic journals and open source search engines such as Google or Google Scholar, so the quality of the references used is often not valid for academic purposes. This phenomenon is in accordance with the Digital Literacy Framework from Belshaw (2012), which emphasizes that digital literacy includes not only technical capabilities, but also a critical understanding of the quality and credibility of information sources. The inability of students to search, evaluate, and use academic databases indicates a lack of competencies at a higher level of literacy. In addition, from the perspective of Information Seeking Behavior (Wilson, 1999), students tend to choose easier and more familiar search paths, such as Google, rather than through official access that requires further technical understanding. Students also said that the lack of socialization and training from campuses and faculties was an inhibiting factor. This is related to the Social Learning Theory from Bandura (1977), which explains that learning behavior is influenced by environmental models and support. In this context, the absence of lecturers as supervisors in the use of e-journals also weakens student initiatives. Without any obligation or direct example from the teacher, students become passive and not encouraged to explore the facilities that are actually fully available to them.

e. Infrastructure limitations

Students said that technical problems and infrastructure limitations have indeed become real obstacles in accessing e-journals, both from the side of the library system and from the user side (students). Although UINSU has provided several officially subscribed electronic journal databases, the utilization process is still not optimal due to a number of technical factors. One of the problems that often occurs is unstable internet network access, especially in some reading rooms or campus areas that are far from the network center. When students try to access the database through the library's digital portal, a slow or disconnected connection causes the process of searching and downloading articles to be disrupted.

This phenomenon can be explained through the Information Seeking Behavior Theory from Wilson (1999), which states that when individuals face obstacles in the process of seeking information, both technical and systemic, they tend to stop searching or look for more accessible alternatives. In addition, this condition also illustrates the Digital Divide situation, where digital infrastructure gaps, such as device availability and network quality, result in

differences in the ability to access digital resources between users. On the other hand, the complexity of the display and navigation system on the e-journal platform also adds to the cognitive burden of students, as explained by Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), which states that too many information elements in one system can hinder the process of processing information effectively.

- f. Strategies that can be applied to increase the use of e-journals by FIS UINSU students
Steps that the campus can take to increase the use of e-journals by students

Based on interviews with two librarians, it was concluded that the campus needs to take more active and practical steps to increase the use of e-journals. Students assessed the importance of direct technical training, consistent socialization, the provision of digital tutorials, and the existence of assistance in the form of literacy ambassadors or information clinics. They consider that this approach will make it easier for students to understand how to access and cultivate the habit of using academic journals independently. This view is in line with Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which explains that individuals learn through observation, interaction, and guidance from their social environment. In this context, students will be more motivated to use e-journals if they see direct examples and are actively supported by lecturers, librarians, and peers. This opinion is also reinforced by Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), which emphasizes the importance of scaffolding or gradual support in the learning process, including through training, tutorials, and technical mentoring. In addition, according to the Digital Literacy Framework (Belshaw, 2012), mastery of information technology will be more effective if it is supported by access to flexible learning resources such as videos, digital modules, and open consultation facilities

- a. Students take part in training or socialization on the use of e-journals

Based on the librarian's interviews, it is known that they have never participated in official training or socialization from the campus regarding the use of e-journals. The first student stated that during the lecture period there were no special activities focused on e-journal training, while the second student considered that even if there were such activities, the information would not be disseminated widely and evenly. This ignorance causes students to tend to search on their own without adequate guidance, and eventually find it difficult when they have to use e-journals for academic purposes. This situation can be explained through the Social Learning Theory of Bandura (1977), which emphasizes that learning will be more effective if it is supported by an environment that provides direction, model, and reinforcement. In this case, the lack of direct guidance from lecturers and librarians causes students to not have learning figures that can be imitated in utilizing e-journals. In addition, according to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (2003), the dissemination of innovation, including academic information technology, will not be effective without a comprehensive communication strategy. Unstructured and uneven socialization causes students to not receive information consistently, so that the use of e-journals does not spread widely. It is also closely related to the Digital Literacy Framework (Belshaw, 2012), which emphasizes the importance of institutional support in building digital skills, including through formal training, practical guidance, and clear communication from the campus.

- b. Conducting a curriculum-based information literacy program that teaches basic digital literacy skills

According to UINSU librarians, the best strategy to maximize the use of e-journals among students of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FIS) is through a collaborative approach between libraries, faculties, and lecturers teaching courses. The librarian considers that the library's efforts in providing access to e-journals will not have a significant impact if it is not accompanied by the integration of the use of e-journals into daily lecture activities.

The librarian said: "The main key is the involvement of the lecturers. If the lecturer requires references from e-journals in assignments or papers, students will automatically try to find and learn how to access it. That's where the role of the library comes in as a companion." (librarian)

In addition, librarians suggested that there be a curriculum-based information literacy program that teaches basic digital literacy skills, including finding and evaluating information sources from e-journals. This program can be used as part of mandatory courses or routine workshops per semester. Another strategy is increased promotion and visibility. e-journal services through social media and campus digital

platforms, such as the faculty website, student WhatsApp groups, and class announcements. According to him, so far many students do not know or not realizing that the campus has actually subscribed to various databases of international and national journals.

Based on the results of the interview, according to UINSU librarians, the best strategy to maximize the use of e-journals among students of the Faculty of Social Sciences (FIS) is through a collaborative approach between libraries, faculties, and lecturers teaching courses. The library considers that the availability of access is insufficient if it is not directly integrated in academic activities. The involvement of lecturers in requiring the use of e-journals as a reference in assignments or papers is considered very effective in encouraging students to be more active in learning how to access and use e-journals. In addition, the library suggested a curriculum-based information literacy program and increased promotion through social media and campus digital platforms. Empowering students as literacy ambassadors is also considered an effective strategy to expand the reach of information literacy. This approach is in line with the Collaborative Learning Theory from Dillenbourg (1999), which emphasizes that the learning process will be more meaningful when it involves interaction and cooperation between various educational actors. In this context, collaboration between libraries, lecturers, and students creates a complementary learning ecosystem. Lecturers act as academic facilitators, libraries as providers of resources and training, and students as agents who expand the reach of literacy to their peers. This approach not only improves students' technical skills in accessing digital information, but also builds a more participatory and scholarly source-oriented academic culture.

c. Formation of Literacy Ambassadors or Student Volunteers

The next strategic step is to form information literacy ambassadors from among students, who are specially trained to help their friends in accessing and using e-journals. A peer-to-peer model like this is very effective, because students tend to be more comfortable learning than fellow students. This approach is in line with Collaborative Learning Theory (Dillenbourg, 1999), which emphasizes the importance of collaboration and cooperation between individuals in forming a common understanding. Literacy ambassadors function as agents of change in the student environment, while expanding the reach of education that is not possible for librarians alone.

d. Collaboration Between Libraries, Faculty, and Lecturers

An equally important strategy is to build systemic collaboration between libraries, lecturers, and faculty. The library provides access and training, while lecturers integrate e-journals in the learning process. When the two work together, students' information literacy will develop faster and more comprehensively. This collaboration reflects the Collaborative Learning Ecosystem, where all education actors complement each other to support the learning process. According to the Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 2003), libraries as agents of change must cooperate with local influences (lecturers) so that the adoption process is faster and widespread.

e. Development of Curriculum-Based Information Literacy Programs

In order for the use of e-journals to become part of academic culture, it is necessary to develop a digital information literacy program that is integrated into the curriculum, for example in the Research Methodology or Scientific Paper Writing courses. In this program, students are not only introduced to theory, but also directly taught practical skills such as journal search, source credibility evaluation, and citation techniques. This strategy supports the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (ACRL, 2000), which states that students must have the competence to recognize information needs, access, evaluate, and use them ethically and effectively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of interviews with students of the Faculty of Social Sciences UINSU, it can be concluded that there are still many students who do not fully know that the campus provides access to electronic journals (e-journals). Information about this e-journal service is mostly obtained indirectly, both from lecturers and peers, and not

from official socialization carried out by the campus or library. The lack of information and promotion causes many students to not know the benefits and potential of e-journals as a credible and up-to-date source of academic literature. In addition, in terms of frequency of use, the majority of students rarely use campus e-journals, even only using them when they are working on a final project or thesis. The low intensity of this utilization cannot be separated from the lack of technical understanding of students in accessing and navigating the available e-journal platforms. This is also exacerbated by the absence of regular training or guidance from libraries and faculties that can help students develop digital information literacy skills. From these two points, it can be concluded that the low use of e-journals by FIS UINSU students is due to a lack of socialization, limited information, and the absence of academic habits that demand the consistent use of journal sources. Therefore, a strategic approach from the campus and library is needed to build awareness, equip students with technical skills, and instill a culture of scientific literacy from an early age in the lecture process.

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