



Descriptive Analysis on Use of Digital Resources: A Study of Socio-Demographic Variations



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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the influence of key socio-demographic factors: gender, education level, and geographic location on the use of digital resources among users at Nepal Open University. Analysis of symmetric measures reveals no statistically significant relationship between gender and the use of e-resources, with Pearson's correlation values near zero, indicating a weak and negligible association. Likewise, education level shows a very weak positive but statistically insignificant correlation with e-resources usage and satisfaction. Furthermore, geographic factors based on users' local administrative divisions (rural municipality, municipality, sub-metropolitan, or metropolitan areas) also exhibit no meaningful correlation with the use of digital resources. These findings suggest that demographic variables such as gender, education level, and geographic location do not significantly influence the experience or perception of digital resources usage. The results highlight the need to explore other underlying factors; potentially behavioral, technological, or institutional that may better explain variations in user satisfaction.

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Introduction:

In the age of digital transformation, higher education institutions globally are increasingly integrating digital technologies into their learning ecosystems. Nepal Open University (NOU), as a pioneer of open and distance learning in Nepal, has recognized the necessity of digital resources which represents e-books, journals, articles, dissertations and digital notes enhance educational access,

equity, and quality. The university provides a variety of digital platforms and tools, including e-libraries, e-journals, online classrooms, and learning management systems (LMS), to support both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments Sharma & Adhikari (2020, p. 45). These resources are essential not only for delivering course content but also for promoting research and academic engagement among students and faculty.

One of the critical components of NOU's digital infrastructure is its digital library, which hosts a wide range of academic resources such as e-books, theses, dissertations, peer-reviewed journals, and conference proceedings. This library is accessible to all registered users, allowing students and researchers from remote areas to engage with scholarly content without physical limitations (Karki, 2021, p.58). The university has collaborated with several national and international organizations to expand the reach and richness of its digital content, ensuring learners at all levels from undergraduate to PhD can find resources that meet their academic needs.

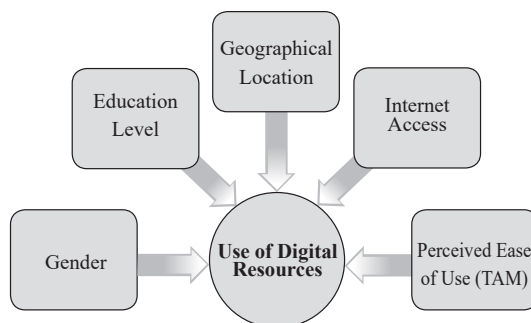
The use of digital resources at NOU also promotes inclusive education. Many students enrolled at NOU reside in geographically remote areas where access to physical libraries or traditional classroom settings is limited. By providing digital tools and resources, NOU ensures these learners are not disadvantaged due to their location. Furthermore, the university offers training and support for both students and faculty to navigate digital platforms effectively, helping to bridge the digital literacy gap across different socio-demographic groups (Thapa & Gautam, 2022, p. 39). This aligns with global goals of digital equity in education as emphasized by UNESCO (2019, p.13).

Despite the progress, challenges remain in the consistent and effective use of digital resources. Limited internet access, especially in rural parts of Nepal, and variability in digital skills among users have posed

obstacles to the full utilization of available resources. Moreover, socio-demographic factors such as gender, age, and education level influence the patterns of digital resources usage, as shown in recent studies conducted among NOU students (Paudel, 2023, p. 71). These studies indicate that while most users have access to the digital library, not all are equally adept or confident in utilizing its full potential, suggesting the need for targeted digital literacy programs.

Looking ahead, Nepal Open University has the opportunity to further innovate and expand its digital offerings. By investing in mobile-friendly platforms, AI-based tutoring systems, and localized digital content, NOU can enhance the learning experience for diverse learners. Additionally, research should continue to monitor how different demographic groups engage with digital resources to ensure inclusive and equitable digital education. The role of digital resources at NOU, therefore, extends beyond academic convenience, it is a foundational pillar of the university's mission to democratize education in Nepal.

Conceptual Framework:



The conceptual framework places the "Use of Digital Resources" at the center, highlighting it as the primary dependent variable. Originally, this framework focused on three socio-demographic variables: Education Level, Gender, and Geographical Location, which were believed to directly influence individuals' engagement with digital resources. The rationale behind this structure lies in the assumption that individuals with higher educational attainment may be more adept and confident in navigating digital tools. Gender is included to explore possible disparities in access and usage such as differing exposure, encouragement, or societal norms. Similarly, Geographical Location may affect the availability of technological infrastructure or services, thereby impacting access and frequency of digital resources use. The visual representation helped demonstrate how these variables independently relate to and influence digital engagement.

The updated figure expands the model by incorporating Internet Access and Perceived Ease of Use (from the Technology Acceptance Model - TAM), alongside the initial three variables. These additions enhance the framework by integrating both technical and psychological dimensions. Internet Access is a practical enabler or barrier without stable connectivity, digital resource use is naturally limited. Meanwhile, Perceived Ease of Use, a key concept from TAM, captures users' subjective experiences: if individuals believe that digital platforms are easy and beneficial, they are more likely to adopt and use them. Altogether, the figure now reflects a more

comprehensive view of the multifaceted factors ranging from socio-demographic to infrastructural and perceptual that collectively shape how digital resources are utilized.

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative research approach using descriptive and inferential statistical analysis with the help cross-tabulation to assess the use of digital resources at Nepal Open University (NOU). Data was collected from 200 respondents representing various education levels, genders, and geographical locations., the paper analysis relied on basic descriptive tools to uncover trends, patterns, and variation in the dataset. In a study conducted by Al-Momani (2019, p. 150), Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to investigate the relationship between students' academic self-concept and academic achievement among secondary school students in Jordan. The results revealed a strong positive correlation, supporting the idea that students with a higher academic self-concept tend to achieve better academic outcomes. This study illustrates how Pearson's r is a powerful statistical tool for examining associations in education-related research.

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between the use of digital resources and selected socio-demographic variables—gender, education level, and geographic location—among users at Nepal Open University (NOU). The central statistical tool used for data analysis is the Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient (r), which measures the strength

and direction of linear relationships between continuous or ordinal variables. A descriptive and correlational survey method was adopted to gather data from 200 valid respondents using a structured questionnaire. According to a study by Sadeghi et al. (2020, p. 114), Pearson's correlation was used to explore the relationship between body mass index (BMI) and systolic blood pressure among adult patients. The findings showed a moderate positive correlation ($r = 0.45$, $p < .01$), emphasizing the relevance of Pearson's r in health sciences for identifying meaningful associations that can influence preventive strategies and patient management.

The instrument was designed to collect information about users' frequency of digital resources usage, satisfaction level, gender identity, educational attainment, and geographic origin (categorized as rural municipality, municipality, sub-metropolitan, and metropolitan areas). Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to evaluate the relationship between independent variables (gender, education level, and geographic area) and the dependent variable (use and satisfaction of digital resources). As per Best & Kahn (2006, p. 338), Pearson's r is suitable when assessing the linear relationship between two continuous variables. The values of r range from -1 to $+1$. his research is grounded in the theory of technological acceptance (Davis, 1989, p.320), which posits that the perceived usefulness and ease of use influence the acceptance of digital resources, often regardless of demographic profiles. Moreover, Castells' (1996, p.404)

theory of the network society supports the idea that access to digital information is becoming universally integrated into social and educational life, reducing traditional barriers such as gender and geographic boundaries. In the context of digital learning, Kumar & Sharma (2021, p. 518) applied Pearson's correlation to analyze the relationship between time spent on e-learning platforms and students' performance in online assessments. A significant positive correlation ($r = 0.63$, $p < .001$) was found, indicating that students who engaged more frequently with digital platforms tended to perform better. This supports the use of Pearson's r in behavioral and technological studies.

Previous studies have shown mixed results. For example, Zhou & Lu (2011, p.97) found no significant gender-based difference in e-learning resources usage among Chinese university students. In contrast, Wong et al. (2014, p.210) emphasized that education level can affect digital literacy but may not directly correlate with user satisfaction. A study by Sharma and Adhikari (2021, p. 58) on digital resources usage in Nepalese higher education institutions revealed that geographical barriers are gradually diminishing due to improved digital infrastructure, aligning with the current study's findings of no significant correlation. Correlation analysis quantifies the strength and direction of relationships between variables (ranging from -1 to $+1$), enabling researchers to uncover significant associations and potential predictors without implying causation (de Winter et al., 2024,

p. 1). This statistical approach aids in model selection and hypothesis formulation by illustrating whether variables move together, diverge, or remain unrelated (Verywell Mind, 2005, para. 2). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and present frequencies, percentages, mean values, and standard deviations. These measures provided insights into the general usage patterns of digital resources. For instance, the mean values represented average levels of digital resources use across different respondent groups, while standard deviations indicated the extent of variability within those groups.

To explore associations between categorical variables such as gender, education level, and geographic region with the use of digital resources, cross-tabulation was applied. This technique allowed for the visualization and comparison of subgroup distributions, helping identify potential relationships in user behavior without statistically testing for independence. By interpreting frequency distributions and comparing subgroup proportions, the study provided a clear, accessible snapshot of how different demographic groups engaged with the digital library resources., it offers a practical and transparent overview of user behavior across categories, suitable for policymaking and further hypothesis-driven studies.

The data analysis was performed using SPSS to ensure accuracy in computing descriptive metrics and to produce well-organized tables for interpretation. This method proved effective in identifying usage patterns and understanding demographic impacts on

digital resources access at NOU, laying the groundwork for more complex future analyses.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involves the systematic organization, tabulation, and application of statistical methods to the collected information. Through data processing and presentation, fundamental patterns and structures are identified. To explore the use of digital resources, a structured questionnaire comprising 25 items was employed, many of which were designed using a Likert scale to capture participants' satisfaction levels. This approach enabled a nuanced understanding of user experiences, ranging from highly dissatisfied to highly satisfied responses. The questionnaire was thoughtfully crafted to encompass various dimensions of digital resources usage such as accessibility, user interface, content quality, and technical support ensuring a comprehensive view of the subject.

For participant selection, the convenience sampling method was adopted, allowing researchers to gather data from respondents who were readily available and willing to participate. This method proved effective in reaching a diverse group of users while maintaining practical feasibility. By centering the study on users' satisfaction levels as a sample indicator, the research aimed to uncover patterns, preferences, and potential challenges in the digital learning environment.

The outcomes of the analysis are presented in

the subsequent sections, employing a range of statistical tools derived from the responses to the questionnaire. This study primarily emphasizes descriptive analysis using the SPSS software and explores the relationships

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age Distribution	Frequency	Percent
20 to 25	4	2
25 to 30	52	26
30 to 35	59	29.5
35 and above	85	42.5
Total	200	100

Table 1 illustrates the data on the age of respondents provides a clear picture of the age distribution among the 200 participants surveyed. A small portion of the respondents, only 4 individuals or 2%, fall within the 20 to 25 age group, making it the least represented category. The 25 to 30 age group includes 52 respondents, accounting for 26% of the total. Slightly more, 59 respondents or 29.5%, are aged between 30 and 35. The largest group is those aged 35 and above, with 85 individuals, making up 42.5% of the sample. This progression is further reflected in the cumulative percentage, which shows that

between educational level, gender, and geographical location of NOU users. Karl Pearson Correlations method to find out the relation.

Age Distribution

by the time we include the oldest age group, the data reaches 100%, indicating complete coverage. The data suggests that the majority of users of digital resources at Nepal Open University are mature adults, particularly those over the age of 35. This may reflect a trend of continuing or lifelong education among older learners who actively engage with digital platforms.

Gender Distribution

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	45	22.5
Male	155	77.5
Total	200	100

Table 2 presents the data on the gender of respondents shows a clear imbalance in representation between male and female participants in the study. Out of the total 200 respondents, 45 individuals (22.5%) identified

as female, while a significantly larger group of 155 respondents (77.5%) identified as male. These figures are consistent across the percent, valid percent, and cumulative percent columns, as there are no missing

responses. The cumulative percentage reaches 100% with the inclusion of the male category, confirming full data coverage. This distribution indicates that the study sample is male-dominated, suggesting either a greater

male engagement with digital resources at Nepal Open University or a potential gender gap in access or participation that may need further exploration.

Education Level

Table 3: Education Level

Level	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor	53	26.5
Master	80	40
MPhil	57	28.5
PHD	10	5
Total	200	100

Table 3 mentions the data on the education level of respondents reveals a diverse academic background among the 200 participants. A total of 53 respondents (26.5%) have completed

their Bachelor's degree, while the largest group consists of Master's degree holders, accounting for 80 respondents (40%). This is followed by 57 individuals (28.5%) who have attained an MPhil, and 10 respondents (5%) with a PhD. The cumulative percentages show a progressive increase, with 66.5% of respondents holding at least a Master's degree, and 95% having education up to the MPhil level. The full 100% is reached with the inclusion of PhD holders. This

distribution indicates a highly educated respondent group, with a substantial majority (73.5%) holding postgraduate or higher degrees. Such a profile suggests that the users of digital resources at Nepal Open University are predominantly advanced learners or researchers, highlighting the importance of digital access in higher academic pursuits.

Current local level body from where digital resources/e- library is used

Table 4: Current local level body from where digital resources/e- library is used

Local Level	Frequency	Percent
Rural municipality	56	28
Municipality	92	46
Sub-Metropolitan City	16	8
Metropolitan City	36	18
Total	200	100

Table 4 provides the information regarding the data regarding the current local level bodies from which the e-library is accessed highlights the geographical diversity of the respondents.

Out of 200 participants, 56 individuals (28%) reported accessing the e-library from a rural municipality, while the highest number, 92 respondents (46%), are from a municipality, indicating that nearly half of the users come from semi-urban areas. Additionally, 16 respondents (8%) belong to a sub-metropolitan city, and 36 individuals (18%) are from a metropolitan city. The cumulative percentage reaches 100% with the inclusion of all categories, confirming full data representation. This distribution suggests that

while digital library usage is present across all types of local administrative units, it is most prominent in municipalities, followed by rural areas. The lower figures from sub-metropolitan and metropolitan cities may reflect population distribution, internet accessibility, or differing levels of awareness and usage of e-library resources across urban and rural settings.

Gender and Use of E resources/digital resources Crosstabulation

Table 5: Gender and Use of E resources/digital resources Crosstabulation

Gender and Use of E resources/digital resources							Total
Likert Scale		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Gender	Female	0	3	9	26	7	45
	Male	3	10	27	100	15	155
Total		3	13	36	126	22	200

Table 5 asserts the cross-tabulated data between gender of respondents and their scale in use of e-resources/digital resources reveals noticeable differences in satisfaction levels among male and female users. Out of 45 female respondents, 26 (57.8%) expressed agreement, and 7 (15.6%) strongly agreed with the statement regarding satisfaction, indicating a generally positive experience. Only 3 females (6.7%) disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, while 9 (20%) remained neutral. This suggests that a majority of female users are satisfied with their experience using e-resources, though a smaller proportion are highly satisfied.

In comparison, among the 155 male

respondents, 100 (64.5%) agreed and 15 (9.7%) strongly agreed with being satisfied, showing a similarly strong positive inclination. However, 27 males (17.4%) stayed neutral, while 10 (6.5%) disagreed and 3 (1.9%) strongly disagreed. This indicates a slightly wider range of opinions among male users, with a small minority expressing dissatisfaction. Overall, both male and female respondents show a high level of satisfaction in using e-resources, with over 70% of the total sample expressing agreement or strong agreement, reflecting generally positive user experiences at Nepal Open University.

Correlation in gender and use of digital resources

Table 6: Correlation in gender and use of digital resources

Test	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Pearson's R	-0.046	0.069	-0.645	.519 ^c

Table 6 presents the correlation between gender of respondents and their use of e-resources, using Pearson's r. The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.046 with an asymptotic standard error of 0.069. The value is very close to zero, indicating a very weak negative relationship between gender and satisfaction level; in other words, gender has almost no linear or ordinal effect on satisfaction with e-resources. The approximate t-value for coefficient is 0.645 for Pearson is also low, suggesting that the observed correlations are statistically insignificant. Furthermore, the p-values (significance levels) are 0.519 for Pearson's r which is greater than the conventional alpha level of 0.05. This confirms that the correlation is not statistically significant. In summary, based on a sample of 200 valid cases, the statistical evidence suggests no meaningful or significant relationship between gender and use of e-resources at Nepal Open University.

Education level and Use of E-resources/
digital resources Crosstabulation

Table 7: Education level and Use of E
resource/digital resources Crosstabulation

Education level and Use of E-resources/digital resources						
Education Level/ Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Bachelor	2	6	9	30	6	53
Master	1	4	15	51	9	80
MPhil	0	1	7	42	7	57
PHD	0	2	5	3	0	10
Total	3	13	36	126	22	200

Table 7 illustrates the cross-tabulation between education level and overall satisfaction in the use of e-resources reveals varying degrees of satisfaction among respondents with different academic qualifications. Among those holding a Bachelor's degree (53 respondents), the majority expressed positive satisfaction, with 30 agreeing and 6 strongly agreeing, while a smaller portion remained neutral or dissatisfied. Respondents

with a Master's degree (80 individuals) showed a similar pattern, with 51 agreeing and 9 strongly agreeing to their satisfaction, indicating a strong positive response from this group. Those with an MPhil (57 respondents) also demonstrated a predominantly positive outlook, with 42 agreeing and 7 strongly agreeing to satisfaction, alongside a few neutral and minimal disagreement responses. However, among the smaller group of PhD

holders (10 respondents), satisfaction levels were more mixed, with only 3 agreeing and none strongly agreeing, while some expressed neutral or disagreement responses. Overall, the data suggests that higher education levels tend to be associated with a generally positive

perception of e-resources usage, although the smallest group (PhD holders) shows less enthusiasm, possibly due to differing expectations or needs from digital resources.

Correlation in education level and use of digital resources

Table 8: Correlation in education level and use of digital resources

Test	Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Pearson's R	0.051	0.077	0.715	.476 ^c

Table 8 shows the correlation coefficient is presented here assess the relationship between education level and overall satisfaction in the use of e-resources using correlation coefficient: Pearson's r. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.051 with an asymptotic standard error of 0.077. Coefficient is very close to zero, indicating a very weak positive correlation between education level and satisfaction. The approximate t-value for the correlation is 0.715 for Pearson is low, and the associated

p-value is 0.476 for Pearson is well above the common significance threshold of 0.05. This means the observed weak correlations are not statistically significant, and there is insufficient evidence to conclude that education level has any meaningful association with overall satisfaction in e-resources usage. Based on 200 valid cases, these results suggest that the use of e-resources is generally independent of the respondents' education level.

Local level and Use of E resource/digital resources Crosstabulation

Table 9: Local level and Use of E-resources/digital resources Crosstabulation

Local level Use of E-resources/digital resources Crosstabulation						
Local Level/Likert Scale	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Rural municipality	0	4	10	34	8	56
Municipality	2	6	17	61	6	92
Sub-Metropolitan City	0	2	1	9	4	16
Metropolitan City	1	1	8	22	4	36

Table 9 displays the cross-tabulation data examines the relationship between the local level body from which respondents access the e-library and the use of e-resources. Among respondents from rural municipalities (56 individuals), the majority expressed positive satisfaction, with 34 agreeing and 8 strongly agreeing that they are satisfied with the e-resources. A smaller number were neutral (10 respondents) or disagreed (4 respondents), with none strongly disagreeing. This indicates generally favorable satisfaction levels among rural users.

For respondents from municipalities (92 individuals), the pattern is similar, with 61 agreeing and 6 strongly agreeing to overall satisfaction. However, this group also showed slightly higher levels of disagreement, with

6 disagreeing and 2 strongly disagreeing, suggesting a wider range of experiences or expectations among municipal users. Among the smaller groups from sub-metropolitan cities (16 respondents) and metropolitan cities (36 respondents), satisfaction remains generally positive, with most respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing, though some neutral and a few disagreeing responses are present. Notably, the metropolitan group had one individual strongly disagreeing. Overall, the data suggests that e-resources satisfaction is broadly positive across all types of local administrative units, with rural and municipality users forming the largest satisfied groups, highlighting the widespread acceptance and use of digital resources across diverse geographic areas.

Correlation in local level and use of digital resources

Table 10: Correlation in local level and use of digital resources

Test	Value	Asymp.Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Pearson's R	-0.007	0.071	-0.101	.920 ^c

Table 10 presents the relationship between the current local level body where they live and their use of e-resources. The Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.007 with an asymptotic standard error of 0.071. The correlation value is extremely close to zero, indicating virtually no linear or ordinal relationship between the two variables. The approximate t-value is very low -0.101 for Pearson and the associated p-value is 0.920 for Pearson is far above the typical significance threshold of 0.05. This means that any observed association is statistically insignificant, and there is no

sufficient evidence to suggest a meaningful connection between the type of local body from where e-library services are accessed and respondents' satisfaction levels. Based on 200 valid cases, these results imply that overall satisfaction with e-resources does not depend on whether users are from rural municipalities, municipalities, sub-metropolitan, or metropolitan cities.

Conclusion

The analysis of the symmetric measures indicates that there is no significant relationship between gender and the use of

e-resources among respondents at Nepal Open University. Both Pearson's is very close to zero, suggesting only a very weak negative association that is not statistically significant. The low t-values and high p-value further confirm that gender does not have a meaningful impact on how satisfied users feel about the e-resources. This means that male and female respondents generally report similar levels e- resources use, indicating gender does not influence their experience or perception of digital resources.

Similarly, the relationship between education level and use e-resources was examined, revealing a very weak positive correlation

that is also statistically insignificant. The correlation coefficient is near zero, and the accompanying statistical tests suggest that education level does not meaningfully affect how users rate their satisfaction. Additionally, the analysis of the local administrative body from which respondents access the e-library—whether rural municipality, municipality, sub-metropolitan, or metropolitan—shows no significant correlation with digital resources use. Together, these findings suggest that the use e-resources is generally independent of demographic factors like gender, education, and geographic access point, implying that other variables might be more influential in determining user satisfaction.

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