

Information needs of students in Israel – A case study of a multicultural society

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Students turn to a variety of sources when searching for information for their academic assignments. This study uses findings from interviewing 151 Israeli students attending a university in Israel. A questionnaire comprising 12 questions was administered regarding their information needs, information behavior, and difficulties in searching and writing an academic assignment. A special emphasis of the study was on the multicultural environment of the Israeli students and its effect on their information behavior. Results show that there is a significant difference between native language groups with regard to the use of search engines, the use of library services, and in the patterns of conducting their academic assignment.

The findings imply that when the language of instruction and assignment delivery is in the students' second language, they have special needs and should receive particular attention from the library and information services.

Highlights

- The majority of the Israeli students use search engines, conduct their search using English and Hebrew keywords, and tend to use the same information sources for their academic assignments.
- The students find the library sources trustworthy and reliable but also difficult to use.
- When writing their assignments, the most important factor is the grade. Other important factors are passing the course, finishing on time, and meeting the requirements.
- The students acquire their search skills by themselves. Only a minority of them accept instruction.
- Due to the multicultural environment in Israel in general and in our survey in particular, we found significant differences between the different native language groups (Hebrew, Arabic, and Russian) concerning use of search engines, English keywords, and library services.