Academic Library Outreach: Relevance of Information Literacy in e-environment for Physical Fitness Trainers in Kurunegala District

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Abstract

The study evaluates the impact of Wayamba University's Outreach Program on physical fitness and information literacy for Kurunegala District Physical Fitness Trainers. The program, addressing the underserved target group, emphasises the importance of information literacy in an online environment for trainers. Survey results from 103 participants reveal positive perceptions, with 79.5% female and 20.5% male respondents. Notably, 83.65% of volunteers found the program significantly beneficial. Participants expressed challenges in accessing reliable information, indicating a need for guidance in information search strategies. The study concludes that academic libraries play a vital role in community development by enhancing educational attainment and fostering information literacy. It emphasises the necessity of information literacy to maximise traditional and electronic resources, thereby improving access to electronic information sources and breaking down barriers. The findings underscore the crucial role of information literacy in a digital era for societal well-being.

Keywords: Academic libraries, Outreach services, Information literacy, Physical Fitness, Training, e-information

Introduction

Any programme or activity such as customised library instructions that is designed "to meet the information needs of an underserved inadequately served target group" is referred to as Library Outreach (OR) (Rothenberg and Thomas, 2000). University libraries have

developed OR programmes which aim to increase the general public level of education and skills that are considered essential for economic prosperity and as a key instrument in building a more equitable society (Putnam, 2000). People are observed to be more inclined these days to use information from the internet to fill in knowledge groups. Studying e-information makes it evident that Information Literacy (IL) skills are required for searching it (Mishra and Mishra, 2010). Diverse media are used by Athletes to enhance their performance, particularly to preserve their physical health (Iortimah, and Tyoakaa, 2020).

The man's illness has been caused by this exact development. In this context, academic libraries bear a great deal of responsibility for preserving individual health and fostering a healthy society. As a result, community-based academic libraries run a number of initiatives to help people find the information they need and contribute to community development and national development (Chukwudo, Abubakar, Adeoye, Abubakar and Sule, 2023). Consequently, the academic library is dedicated to providing accurate information in an appropriate manner. In response to community needs, the library at Wayamba University of Sri Lanka regularly organizes a range of outreach programs to raise awareness of these issues among the user communities in the community. These initiatives focus on effectively utilizing the internet to foster the growth of a healthy society. As a result, the Physical Fitness Instructors ought to be well-versed in information and computer literacy. The program included hands-on practical training, videos, images, and guides to other online resources and tools based on events (sports events, athletes or trainees pursuing performance development, workouts, diet plans, exercises, injuries, first aid, fitness-related measurements, etc.).

Objectives

The purpose of the study is to evaluate the Wayamba University Outreach program on the importance of physical fitness and information literacy in an online environment for Kurunegala District Physical Fitness Trainers. Identifying the value of information literacy in an online environment and investigating the difficulties associated with using digital information tools for physical fitness training were specific objectives of the study.

Materials and Methods

The research employed a survey method and a self-structured questionnaire used to collect data. The questionnaires were distributed among 103 trainers selected from the Divisional Secretariat areas (30) in the Kurunagala District in the 2021 physical fitness project, which was conducted in December 2021. The data collected through the closed questions of the questionnaire were analysed using the descriptive-analytical method.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Background Information of the Participants

Category of the Participants	No. of participants	No. of respondents	Percentage of respondents
Sports Officers	30	25	24%
Youth Service Officers	30	23	22%
Active Young leaders (Volunteers) from Sports Societies and Youth Societies	60	55	54%
Total	120	103	100
(n=103)			

Table 1 provides the breakdown of the participants' details. Out of 120 Physical Fitness Trainers, 103 responded with a response rate of 85% and out of them 79.5% were female and 20.5% were male.

Table 2: Obtain an opportunity to gain knowledge about ICT tools and search strategies for web information

Category of the Participants	Strongly Agreed	Agreed	Disagreed	Strongly Disagreed	Total
Sports Officers	05 (20%)	13 (52%)	07 (28%)	00	25
Youth Service Officers	06 (26.08%)	12 (52.17%)	05 (21.73%)	00	23
Active Young leaders (Volunteers) from Sports Societies and Youth Societies	12 (21.84%)	34 (61.81%)	09 (16.39%)	00	55
Total	23 (22.33%)	59 (57.28%)	21 (20.38%)	00	103
(n=103)					

Table 2 shows the participants' opinions of the session: of the 79.61% who took part, sports officers (72%), youth service officers (78.25%), and volunteers (83.65%) thought it had a major positive impact on their ability to find information online. It has been made apparent that this session provided the participants with an opportunity to learn about ICT tools and web information search strategies.

Furthermore, during the concluding open discussion, numerous participants mentioned that even though they use ICT devices for personal purposes, they encounter difficulties in obtaining trustworthy information. This includes access to pertinent videos, diet plans, record management, and other resources. As a result, they require assistance in learning how to access or search for accurate information in the electronic environment. Additionally, it was found that the participants'

common challenges during the online training process included a lack of information literacy (IL) and an ignorance of search strategies as well as linguistic barriers.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The findings of the study indicate that university academic libraries created outreach programs to raise students' educational attainment and recognize community skills as social capital.

The study's discussion led to the conclusion that, in order to maximize the use of information resources both traditional and electronic and to lower barriers to improved access to electronic information sources, information literacy (IL) is crucial.

References

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Putnam R.D. 2000. Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community. New York: Simon & Schuster. https://library.oapen.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.12657/22257/1007916.pdf?sequence=1#page=42 between people and groups; the trust at which these ties are characterized; and resources or benefits that are obtained and given as a result of social ties and social participation.