

Use of School Libraries by Teachers for Teaching Purposes: A Survey Conducted in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The school library is an integral part of teaching and learning in the school and the main goal of the school library is to ensure that all members of the school community have equitable access to books and other reading materials available at the library. The present study examines the use of the school library by teachers for teaching purposes. A survey questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool for the study and the study population was in-service school teachers who work in the government schools in Sri Lanka. Multistage cluster sampling technique was applied to select the study sample and the collected data were analyzed by using SPSS (21.0). The results of the survey revealed a low use of school libraries by teachers. Teachers expressed their dissatisfaction towards library resources and services specifically outdated and irrelevant library collections for the subject taught in schools.

Keywords: Library Use, School Teachers, User Satisfaction, Sri Lanka

Introduction

The school library is an integral part of teaching and learning in the school and it plays a key role in enabling community engagement and promotes outward thinking and future-focused thought and discussion. The library, which is the hub of any educational setup, provides information and idea that are fundamental to functioning successfully in the increasing information and knowledge-based society. (Babayi et al, 2019) Morris (2012) defined a school library as a library established in primary and secondary schools that acquire and provide information resources to pupils and teachers. However, in the present digital era, it was found that the library has become a student-dominated place and the usage of the library by the teachers has declined dramatically since the mid-1990s (Martell, 2008). Therefore, the understanding of library use and the level of their satisfaction towards the library services will be helpful to improve the library services in the standard manner. The findings of such studies will be certainly helpful to identify the factors that hinder library use and consequently they may be helpful to plan customer-centered service from school libraries.

Although there was an abundance of studies about school library usage of learners, a few studies exist that explore library usage of school teachers. Therefore, this is the gap that this study seeks to fill. For this study, the researchers intend to investigate the nature and extent of the use of school libraries by teachers for teaching purposes. The study further assessed the extent of teachers' satisfaction with specific information services provided by the library.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were; -

- To investigate the use of school library by the school teachers in Sri Lanka
- To determine the level of satisfaction of teachers towards some library services

Methodology

Data were collected using a survey questionnaire distributed among teachers in Sri Lanka. Multistage cluster sampling technique was employed as school teachers scattered in a wide geographical area of the country were selected in several stages. A self-administered questionnaire specifically designed for the study used as the main data collection tool was administered in early September 2019. A total of 3200 questionnaires were distributed to teachers and 2236 were returned, making a nearly seventy percent (69.9%) response rate. The collected data were analyzed by using SPSS (21.0).

Data Analysis and discussion

Biographical Characteristics of the Respondents

The responses showed the following characteristics of the population of the study: the majority (72%, N=1607) of the teachers were female and only 629 (28%) were male. Concerning age, 50% of teachers (N= 1126) were aged between 31-40, followed by those between 41-50 (24%, N=546) and 20-30 (20%, N=435). This shows that most teachers (74%) were in the middle-aged category. The results also showed that half of the respondents (N=1116) had bachelor's degrees, followed by those with a postgraduate diploma (34%, N=761). More than 15% of respondents whose education was at the Master's level (N=345, 15.4%). It was found that most of the teachers were qualified for serving in the teaching profession.

Reasons for School Library Use

Teachers were asked to indicate the main reasons for using the library. Several possible reasons were given to them so they could select the appropriate ones.

	Reason	Frequency	Percentage
1	Support own reading	1876	83.9
2	Support class room teaching	1781	79.7
3	Keep abreast with current information	1779	79.6
4	Lesson preparation	1701	76.1
5	Read newspapers/magazine	1595	71.3
6	Use of reference books	1498	67.0
N=2236, * Multiple choices allowed			

Table 1: Reasons for School Library Use

As shown in Table 1, the major reason for using the library by teachers (84%, N = 1876) was to get support for their own reading, followed by getting support for classroom teaching (80%). The results also showed that most teachers (79.6%, 76%, and 71%) used the library to keep abreast of current information in subject areas, lesson preparation, or reading newspapers or magazines. This finding is consistent with studies of (Edoka, 2000 and Waite, 1989) who affirmed a school library is a place that has been established in a school to provide a wide range of learning and teaching materials to students and teachers.

Frequency of Library Use

In order to know how frequently a teacher used the school library, respondents were asked to indicate their use and data presented in Figure 1. The data in Figure 1 showed that the majority of respondents (29%, N=644) were using the library on special occasions and about 575 of the respondents 26% were using the library weekly. The results also showed that 23% used the library once a month, whilst 8% used the library rarely. It was found that only 145 respondents (6.5%) visited the library daily. The results give an insight that a majority of the respondents had not used their school libraries regularly.

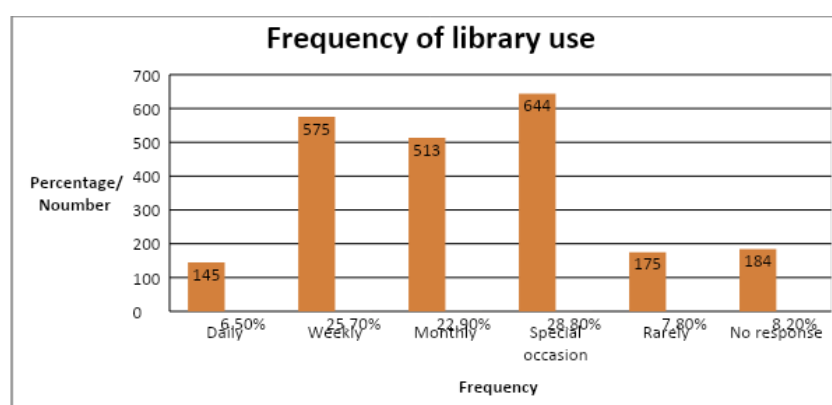


Figure 1: Frequency of School Library Use

Satisfaction towards Library services

Teachers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with specific library services, plus they were asked to mark the agreement against the statements given on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree"

to "Strongly Agree." Statements are listed in descending order according to the mean scores recorded. (Table 2)

The results showed that 56% (N=944) of respondents for the statement on "library user awareness programs on library services and available resources are very helpful" with having the mean score of 3.34 suggests that the teachers were not sure whether the library awareness programs were helpful to know about available library services and resources. Over one-third of respondents (38%) agreed on "Staff in the library is helpful" with having a mean score of 3.28 suggests that the teachers were uncertain about the helpfulness of library staff. When asked about whether "library arrangement is good and easily locate relevant information sources," 40% agreed, with having the mean score of 3.14 suggests that the teachers were neutral about library arrangement. More than 45% of the respondents (N=944) agreed with the statement on "library catalogue provide easy access for library resources" with having the mean score of 3.10 suggests that the teachers were uncertain about easy access to the collection through the library catalogue. (Table 2)

	Statements	SDA	DA	NU	AG	SA	RS*	MN*	SD*
1	Library user awareness programs are helpful	139 (7%)	198 (10%)	789 (38%)	705 (34%)	239 (12%)	2070	3.34	1.025
2	Staff in the library is helpful	143 (7%)	176 (9%)	958 (47%)	504 (25%)	266 (13%)	2047	3.28	1.026
3	Library arrangement is good and easily locate relevant information sources	197 (9%)	418 (20%)	641 (31%)	566 (27%)	270 (13%)	2092	3.14	1.159
4	Library catalogue provide easy access for library resources	254 (12%)	417 (20%)	469 (23%)	756 (36%)	188 (9%)	2084	3.10	1.184
5	I am satisfied with resources available to the subjects that I taught	268 (13%)	375 (18%)	1082 (52%)	262 (13%)	92 (4%)	2079	2.78	.974
6	Library has current and updated collection	216 (10%)	734 (35%)	686 (33%)	352 (17%)	88 (4%)	2076	2.69	1.007
Scale: 1.SDA= Strongly Disagree; 2.DA= Disagree; 3. NU= Neutral; 4 AG= Agree; 5 SA= Strongly Agree; RS= Number of Responses; MN= Mean Score; SD= Standard Deviation									

Table 2: Satisfaction towards Available Library Services and Resources

For the statement on "I am satisfied with resources available to the subjects that I taught," 31% (N=643) of the respondents disagreed while only 17% were agreed, and the majority (52%) (N=1082) were neutral. The mean score of 2.78 suggests that the teachers were not satisfied with the resources available to their subjects in the library. When asked about whether "library has a current and updated collection," 45% disagreed, and only 21% were agreed, with having the mean score of 2.69 suggests that the teachers were not satisfied with currency and updated library collection. The results gave an insight that most of the respondents were not satisfied with library services, particularly about the currency (outdated library materials) and the relevancy of

resources available for their subject fields despite satisfaction with user education programs conducted by the library.

The results are in line with the study of Attafuah (2015), who found the teachers were not satisfied with the services of the library. The study also established that, in a situation where information needs were not met at the school libraries, teachers sought help from the internet to satisfy their information needs, which is right in the local context also. In terms of the satisfaction with library services and resources available, most of the respondents agreed that the user awareness programs on library services and available resources conducted by the library were beneficial. This finding is not in agreement with the findings of Tachie-Donkor, and Dadzie (2017), who found there was no in-service training in information literacy (library and internet skills) conducted for teachers.

Conclusion

This study has given a clear picture of the use of school libraries by teachers which implies been disappointing. The utilization of school libraries in the country can be enhanced if libraries are equipped with up-to-date library materials that are relevant for the subjects taught at schools. In order to motivate teachers to use school libraries resources, the libraries should be funded to acquire the most relevant and current library materials that need to fulfill teachers' information requirements.