

Utilization of Library by the Students of Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Karur District, Tamil Nadu: A Case Study

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Abstract

The study was conducted to examine the use of the library by students at the Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Karur District, Tamil Nadu. A combined quantitative and qualitative approach using the case study design was adopted for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 500 students. A survey questionnaire developed by the researchers was employed to determine the use of the library. The findings show that more than half of the library users at Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School visit the library once-a-day. They use the library to read, to borrow books and to make photocopies. Students were satisfied with the library collections and services but not with electronic resources.

Keywords: Internet, Library Networking, School Library

1. INTRODUCTION

The training of competent personnel that would fit into the positions requires adequate and free access to well organized sources of information. Librarianship is a crucial factor in the training of such professional personnel. This is because librarianship helps to update knowledge and improve the standards of teaching and learning ability. This position of librarianship in education is becoming more important than ever before, particularly, at this period in Karur district when most parents can no longer purchase textbooks and other reading material for their children due to economic hardship. In addition, science and technology textbooks are not only rare but very expensive. Consequently the library provides an alternative that can make available the information resources for the intellectual growth of the students.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The objective of the study is to analyze how students use their library resources in Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Karur, and what types of materials are available to them in their library, and what problems they encounter to access these materials.

3. A BRIEF HISTORY OF RAJAH MUTHIAH MATRICULATION HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL LIBRARY

The city Karur is meant for large number of textiles and educational institutions. Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School is one of the leading educational institutions in this city. Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School was founded in 2000. Rajah Muthiah Matriculation School provides adequate exposure not only in academics but also in a variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The School has a well stocked and well- equipped library. The School library, which was established at the same time, has been playing supportive roles in the actualization of the mission and vision of the institution. The collections of the library are made up of fourteen thousand books in different subjects. The Library is well positioned to carry out its directive to the entire staff and students of the school.

The Library was established to provide information resources in support of teaching, and learning. It has the following specific objectives, among others, to carry out.

1. To collect and preserve the most up-to-date materials for teaching service of the school;
2. To collect and preserve information resources in books and non-book formats;
3. To give user-oriented services to the school community through current awareness services ;
4. To provide materials on history, language, culture, and socio-economic and technological development;
5. To provide reading environments in the library;
6. To cultivate reading habits among the school children.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Services Rendered by the Library in Academic Environment

The School library is an academic library which supports learning, teaching in the institution. In addition to providing an atmosphere conducive to reading and consultation of relevant facts and data, the Library also offers a variety of facilities and services to enable readers to make optimal use of library resources.

1. Answering reader's questions;
2. Instruction in the use of library materials;
3. Readers' advisory services;
4. Photocopying facilities;
5. Exhibitions and displays.

In addition to these, the Library also organizes an orientation program for new students at the beginning of each session. The library undoubtedly enhances the intellectual and academic output of students and staff. It is the most central facility to all students and staff. Commenting on the importance of the library as an organ of academic discipline, Aboyade [1] observed that no system of education is complete without well-equipped libraries. A library attached to a university, college or any educational institution is known as an academic library. Academic libraries differ from a public library or a special library in purpose and services. The main

function of an academic library is to serve as an auxiliary to a parent institution in carrying out its objectives. The library is an important intellectual resource of the academic community, and helps them to fulfill the curriculum requirements and to promote studies.

In an academic community, librarianship is very important in terms of the role the library is expected to play. Kothari [2] registered the importance of librarianship by pointing out that academic libraries should provide facilities and services necessary for the success of all formal programs of instruction, open the door to the world knowledge that lies beyond the boundaries of one field of study, and bring books, students, and scholars together under conditions which encourage reading for pleasure, self discovery, personal growth, and the sharpening of intellectual curiosity. Therefore, the academic library has to build a strong collection of information resources in physical and digital formats to cater the knowledge requirements of students, faculty members, research scholars, and scientists of the academic institution.

Preston [3] witnessed to remain indispensable, libraries must come to define and fulfill a reconfigured set of roles for serving their institutions. To be sure, some elements of the future have the familiar cost of tradition as libraries continue to support to core research and educational purposes of the academy. To act on this core purpose in today's academic environment, however, requires that libraries move beyond parameters of earlier times to pursue new modes of serving their institutions.

A library's fundamental purpose has always been to support the process of research and education by helping users find information and as certain its value. In any academic institution, it is expected that the library provide opportunities for librarians to serve users in different ways. The library performs the role of enhancing the creation of new academic communities on campus. One of the most vital advantages of an academic library is space. The positioning of the library conveys a sense of intellectual common ground, a setting in which knowledge from a range of disciplines comes together in a single place. Known as a place of gathering and

collection, the library embodies core academic values reflected in the domains of knowledge that faculty and students pursue. As a physical structure and hub of interaction, the library affirms the value of sustained inquiry in particular fields and at the same time it affirms the need to understand knowledge as a whole.

4.2 Challenges of Academic Libraries

The changing environment and issues has been identified in recent times. The rapid growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs) are said to be changing the way academic libraries operate today. It has been pointed out that academic library collections are no longer collections comprised almost entirely for print materials but collections of materials in multiple formats and media [4]. Information technologies such as computers, multimedia, and CD-ROMs are bringing unprecedented abilities to academic libraries in providing services and resources to the academic community. Over the past few years, the Web has had a tremendous effect on the growth of information and the speed of transmission. The problem with the web is that there is no real organization of information like that in libraries. New means to deliver information over the Web places a challenge to academic librarians in terms of helping students make sense of information found on websites.

Another challenge facing academic libraries in the networked online environment is to exploit all types of digital and telecommunication technologies and find new ways and means to provide feasible forms of collections, services and access to library materials. These technologies increase the responsibilities of the academic librarians. The challenge for academic librarians is to manage services, which offers users a carefully selected mix of multiple formats and media. Academic libraries should rethink their role in the whole academic community. They are to support the needs of the users since the teaching and learning patterns in territory institutions have been changed. Academic librarians must strive to remain competent navigators of each medium in order to assist library users.

4.3 Users' Ever Changing Needs

The concern of many academic institutions on how to improve student learning outcomes has a direct impact on academics libraries and their delivery of services. Due to societal and technological developments, traditional teaching has been changed increasingly to create new learning environments. Students participate in flexible learning processes via more indirect contacts with teachers and facilities, including scientific information [5]. In addition, teaching and learning patterns have been developed towards greater modularization and an emphasis has been laid on self-directed, independent study, and student-centered learning [6]. This has placed greater demands on the library, which is increasingly being used for group work. And Librarians face increased pressure on the enquiry service.

Academic Libraries have to provide information services for users in the changing academic environment. They need to liaise with library users, faculties, and schools to support effective teaching, learning and research in their parental institutions. As Rathinasabapathy [7] explained, liaison is particularly important in a world of resource-based learning where students are encouraged to carry out more independent work and make wider use of a range of learning resources, including electronic information resources. These challenges require academic libraries to offer user-friendly ICT oriented facilities, such as remote access to information and services, analyze users' ever changing needs, and give support to users in new academic environments.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses primarily the method of case study; Questionnaire was given to gather information from students on the use of library of Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Karur.

The Study adopts a case study research design. Questionnaire was given to students. This study adopts a quantitative and qualitative approach. The methods were chosen to allow the researchers to reach out to considerable numbers of the students and sample from

the entire population of students who are regular library users of the Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School Library. This sample was chosen from the students who registered with the library.

A total of 500 Students were selected on random basis from 1100 regular library users. Respondents were requested to return it within 3 days after filling it. The return rate was 100%. From that, every data was analyzed and evaluated. Quantitative data collected in this study was analyzed, using descriptive statistics which include frequency count and percentages. SPSS

Statistical Package for Social Science version 15.0 was used for coding the scores from the study. On the other hand, qualitative data collected was analyzed and presented thematically.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The Students were asked to indicate how often they visit the School Library and for what purpose, they use the library. The findings are given in Table 1 and 2 respectively.

Table 1 Frequency of Library Use by Students

Sl. No.	Frequency of Visit	No. of Students	%
1	Once a Day	273	54.6
2	Once a Week	100	20.0
3	Once a Month	82	16.4
4	Once a Year	37	7.4
5		8	1.6
	Total	500	100

The findings in Table 1 above reveal that 54.6% of the students visit the library once a day, 20% once a week, 16.4% once a month, 7.4% once a year, and 1.6% can't say the frequency of their visit to the library. This

suggests that more than half of the students of Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School visit the library once a day.

Table 2 Purpose of Students' Visit of the Library

Sl. No.	Purpose of the Visit	No. of Students	%
1	To Read	223	44.6
2	To Borrow Books	117	23.4
3	To Take Photocopy	68	13.6
4	To Search the Library Catalogue	34	6.8
5	To Borrow Journal Issues	33	6.6
6	Others	25	5.0
	Total	500	100

The findings in Table 2 above show how students use the library. The responses were arranged in order of magnitude. The most common use of the library by students is for reading. This was indicated by (44.6% Mean = 0.446; SD = 0.7). It is followed by using the library for borrowing books (23.4%; Mean = 0.234;

SD = 0.5), Making photocopies (13.6%; Mean = 0.136; SD = 0.4) and searching the library catalogue (6.8%; Mean = 0.068; SD = 0.3). Other uses include borrowing journal issues and other materials. The findings indicate that the students of Rajah Muthiah Matriculation School mainly use their library to read, borrow books, or make photocopies.

Table 3 Students' Degrees of Satisfaction with the Library Services

Library Collection	Respondents	Satisfied	%	Not Satisfied	%
Periodicals	500	411	82.2	89	17.8
Books	500	420	84.0	80	16.0
References	500	330	66.0	170	34.0
Newspapers/Magazines	500	383	76.6	117	23.4
Videos/Tape/Slides	500	278	55.6	222	44.4
Book Circulation Services	500	339	67.8	161	32.2
Library Instruction/Guidance	500	327	65.4	173	34.6
Bulletins/Pamphlets	500	394	78.8	106	21.2
Staff Assistance	500	445	89.0	55	11.0
Opening Hours	500	475	95.0	25	5.0
Library Closing Hours	500	448	89.6	52	10.4
Library Sunday & National Holidays	500	485	97.0	15	3.0
Electronic Information Services	500	-	-	500	100
Library Web pages	500	5	1.0	495	99.0
Internet/Email	500	1	0.2	499	99.8

Table 3 reveals that students were satisfied with the library collection and library services but not with electronic information services. This is evidenced by the percentage of students' satisfaction greater than their

non-satisfaction with all the service except electronic information services, which include library web pages, Internet/Email where the reverse in the case.

Table 4 Connectivity of the School Library

Is your school connected to the Internet?	Yes	No
Respondents Answer	2(0.2%)	498 (99.8%)

The findings in Table 4 above reveal that the overwhelming majority of the students (99.8%) indicate that their library is neither networked nor connected to the Internet. On the other hand, 0.2% of the students indicate their library is connected. Perhaps the 0.2% of students may not understand what network means, or perhaps their own perception of network is different from the network meant in this study. Meanwhile, part of alternative the students embark upon place of connectivity in their school library is via cyber cafes close to their school.

To answer this question, students were asked to indicate the efforts or action that has been taken so far by the school to get the library networked or connected to the Internet. The findings indicate that about 95% of the students indicate that a state-of-the-art computer centre

has been established in the school where computers, printers and other information technologies were provided. It was explained by the students that it is at this centre where those who have computer experience type their assignments, print or make photocopies of reference materials.

In order to buttress the information provided by the students on whether their school library is networked or not, the same question was asked to school staff members also. The findings revealed that 14(90%) of the respondents interviewed confirmed that the school library was not networked. On the other hand, all the 14(90%) respondents indicated that efforts were being made to get the library networked.

From the responses to the first question, it is evident that the school is making efforts to network the library.

As part of the efforts that have been made, a state of the art computer center has been established with computers, printers and photocopiers. It is also evident from the interview that when the project commences, the school does not want any interruption until its completion. This was said to be the reason for the delay in the commencement of the project so that adequate planning can be put in place. This information corroborates the information provided by the students.

7.CONCLUSION

This study has assessed the general use of the library by Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School Students. The results reveal that the Rajah Muthiah Matriculation Higher Secondary School Students use their school library mostly to read, that students were satisfied with the library collections and services but not with electronic information services, that an overwhelming majority of the students (98.8%) indicate that their school library is neither networked nor connected to the internet, and that the school has put in place a state of the art computer centre as part of the efforts to get the school library networked or connected to the Internet.

The study shows that students have attached more importance to the library as a place to read than doing other academic related activities. Reading will certainly improve students' academic performance. However, Students should not neglect other activities they can do in the library, such as searching the catalogue to find information related to their class assignments. Furthermore, this study reveals that Rajah Muthiah Matriculation School library is neither networked nor connected to the Internet. As an alternative, the students usually patronize the cyber café close to their school. One thing that academic institutions need to recognize in this digital era is the need to get their library connected to the Internet, the absence of which may have many adverse effects, such as depriving the faculty and students of access to up-to-date research publication in electronic format, and hindering the collaboration of faculty and students with other academic institution around the world.

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