

Students' Perception on the Role of Library and Media Teachers

Kamal M.A

Faculty of Technology, Universiti Malaysia Pahang
Lebuh Raya Tun Razak, 26300 Gambang, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia
E-mail: mba_matt@yahoo.com

Normah binti Othman (Corresponding Author)

Centre for Modern Language and Human Science, UMP
Lebuh Raya Tun Razak, 26300 Gambang, Kuantan, Pahang, Malaysia
E-mail: normah_othman@yahoo.com

Abstract

The role of library and media teachers in school resource centre management is unquestionably significant. Hence, one of the objectives of this study is to investigate students' perceptions on the role of library and media teachers. This study explores the students' perception on the role of library and media teachers in Malaysia. The findings are intended to help library and media teachers to improve their image. Consequently, corrective necessary measures should emerge, capable of improving the overall educational environment in Malaysia schools system. An anonymous survey was sent to the 30 primary and secondary students in the Terengganu, Malaysia. 27 respondents, or 90%, completed the questionnaire. Overall, students in Malaysian primary and secondary schools have positive perception on the role of library and media teachers. The results of this study proved that 88.9% agreed that their library and media teachers have knowledgeable enough to direct them to find information and 77.8% the respondents agreed that their library and media teachers were improved their abilities to use information effectively.

Keywords: Students' perception, Library and media teachers, School resource centre, teacher librarians, user study

1 Introduction

The role of library and media teachers in school resource centre management is unquestionably significant (Kamal, M.,A & Normah binti Othman, 2012). The government of Malaysia has invested a large amount of money into providing information resources for the school resource centre. Since 2006, the Ministry of Education has begun officially appointed library and media teachers' position in all primaries and secondary school in Malaysia. With this position it is hope that the school resource centre management can be improved. Yet scholars and practitioners question the value of this investment due to a lack of use of school library resources among students. Hence, one of the objectives of this study is to investigate students' perceptions on the role of library and media teachers. One major area of applied library and information science (LIS) research is the systematic investigation of users' perception on the role of librarian. These studies can be valuable in assisting information managers, and other partners in library service provision (Hemminger, Lu, Vaughan, & Adams, 2007). The intersection between users and librarian role in general has been studied from a number of different perspectives, one of which is the nature of the user. Researchers have reported that users are receptive to good advice from librarians (Haglund & Olsson, 2008), and this is especially true for new users (Bostick, 1992). Because new users, such as primary and secondary school students, are unfamiliar with library settings, they are likely to experience library anxiety (Fry, 2008).

2. Literature Review

Perceptions are formed during and result from every interaction between an individual and his or her environment (Fraser, 1998). Given this is the case, student perceptions on the role of library and media teachers associated with different types of control can be thought of as containing individual elements as well as elements that may be consistent with those of all other students in the same school. This distinction between individual and school elements of perceptions for the same teacher and teaching acts is important. Numerous studies on students' perceptions of teachers and the classroom environment have been conducted in the domain of learning environments research (Fraser, 1998). However in Malaysia, there is no such study on students' perceptions on the role of teachers' librarian or library and media teachers being conducted yet.

Students believed that ideal library and media teachers should be 'helpful' as well as 'nice' and 'friendly.' Although most students indicated that the current teacher-librarian demonstrated these characteristics, a few students suggested that these traits were missing. It appears that students' past experiences either positive or negative, have impacted current school resource centre use and student-library and media teachers interactions (McFadden., K. M. 2000).

School resource centre use or non-use is mainly a function of education and generation. Sin and Kim (2008) associated low education levels with non-use of the public library. Flores and Pachon (2008) found that higher education attainment is associated with increased rates of library use, while learning activities are always performed by students, library and media teachers can engage in a wide range of behaviours. However, whether students will engage in and successfully complete the activities as teachers expect may partially depend on the students' perceptions of the quality of their library and media teachers' control behaviours.

Among the recent changes in the Malaysian education system are school-based assessment and student-centred learning (Ministry of Education,2012). Reasons for these changes include the ever-growing pressure in school systems to provide job skills, the ubiquitous nature of information and communication technology and the increasing combination of work and study leading to a need for more flexible study arrangements. Education has therefore become more student-centred. The library and media teachers' role becomes more crucial. School resource centre and library and media teachers are expected to provide facilities like more spaces for study, more personal computers and workstations, online databases Internet facilities and information literacy instruction. Library and media teachers are also expected to give guidance and support in the use of the resources and to train the students on how to make effective use of them (Cobbah, 2004).

Library and media teachers' traditional role of selection, organisation, storage and retrieval of information becomes enhanced as they have to ensure that both teachers and students get the needed information in whatever format, and irrespective of place and time. This becomes more crucial when it comes to help students from rural area communities who are disadvantaged in infrastructures, writing and other skills as part of economic reason and infrastructures disadvantages. School resource centre, have a major role to play in complementing the school curricula. The Library and media teachers, with their training and knowledge in library resources and services, play an important role in teaching and learning of information literacy programmes.

Habit of using school resource centre, however, means continuous and regular use of a library by the individual with the purpose of meeting his/her intellectual requirements (Erdamar., Demirel, 2009). However, studies found in the literature shows that students do not have much positive attitudes for reading and using libraries. School resource centre increase student success at school and they help them to acquire the educational knowledge necessary for adapting to changing and evolving circumstances (Kamal M.A & Normah binti Othman, 2012). There are many studies in the literature that indicate a positive relationship between students' library use habits and their success at school (Lance, Rodney, & Hamilton-Pennell, 2000). In Malaysia, it can be said that all primary and secondary schools have library or school resource centre. However, none of them have a library and media teachers who are employed on a full-time basis (Kamal M.A & Normah binti Othman, 2012).

Students do not ask librarians for help much (Erdamar: Demirel, 2009). Other studies also showed that librarians have a negative image for students and the latter do not ask them for help (Kershaw, 2001). It finds that the factors affecting the successful interpersonal relationships between librarians and students as: lack of professional training, collaboration and satisfactory working conditions seem to be crucial for the meaningful interpersonal attitude (Bhatti, 2009). Thus library and media teachers professionals need to play a very effective role in changing their image. School resource centre have always played an important role in the development of knowledge society. Sadly, students do not make sufficiently frequent use of libraries that are offered to them (Bhatti, 2009). The study proved that library and media teachers will have to maintain good interpersonal relationship and acquire good teaching skills in order to contribute positively to the educational process.

In the changing patterns of librarianship worldwide, library and media teachers' professionals need to play a very effective and enthusiastic role in supporting teaching and learning process. There is no question that students support is vital to the success of any library media programmes at the school level.

Positive students' perceptions on the role of school resource centre and library and media teachers' is a vital to the establishment and maintenance of a quality library media programme. The cumulative result is that students have only a limited and inaccurate understanding of school resource centre and library and media teachers. The only way to change students' perceptions is to assault them directly, repeatedly, and from a multiplicity of directions (Hartzell, 2002). Reshaping perceptions takes time and effort and commitment. In the meantime, these erroneous perceptions will continue to guide most students' relationships with school library media specialists.

It is vital that school libraries "continually re-examine" whether they are offering the services and resources that students need and desire (Brophy, 2005). Investigating student perceptions of library media teachers' role is one way of assessing how well the service is being delivered, as well as a means of evaluating its quality and relevance. Understanding student perceptions on the role library and media teachers can also contribute to an awareness of how well new school library or school resource centre are working.

This study explores the students' perception on the role of library and media teachers in Malaysia. The findings are intended to help library and media teachers to improve their image. Consequently, corrective necessary measures should emerge, capable of improving the overall educational environment in Malaysia schools system.

3. Research Question

In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, the following research questions are formulated to guide the investigation:

1. What are the perceptions of students on the role of library and media teachers?
2. What should library and media teachers be doing to best serve students using the school resource centre?

4. Methodology

The aim of this study is to investigate primary and secondary school students' perception on the role of library and media teachers, from their own perspective. An anonymous survey was sent to the 30 primary and secondary students in the Terengganu, Malaysia. A follow-up reminder was sent, and 27 respondents, or 90%, completed the questionnaire. There were thirty three closed ended question. The survey instruments were first written in English, the researchers' mutual language -but then translated into Malay language - the language of the subjects investigated. The instruments were developed based on issues discovered during an extensive literature review related to user perception's on the role of librarians. The data was statistically analyzed to determine frequency, percentages, and means using spss v19.

5. Results and Discussion

This section presents a results and discussion of the research findings.

5.1 Personal background data of respondents

Of these 27 respondents, 55.6% of them were male and 44.4% were female, , aged over 16 years (48.2%), with a mean 14.2 years. Slightly over 66.7% of the respondents were students at secondary schools. The remaining 33.3% were studying in primary schools. Thus the respondents could be considered as fairly experienced with library and media teachers' service.

Table 1: Gender and range of age of the respondents

		gender	
		male	female
		Count	Count
age	10-12	7	2
	13-15	2	3
	16-17	6	7
	18 and above	0	0

5.2 Opinions on the role of library and media teachers

The respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on different statements regarding the role of library and media teachers in their school resource centre (table 2). 77.8% of the respondents agreed that their library and media teacher is helpful when searching for information, while 6(22.2%) respondents disagreed with this statement. Twenty four respondents (88.9%) agreed that their library and media teachers have knowledgeable enough to direct them to find information. Almost 55.5% of the respondents believed that their library and media teachers responded to their problems quickly while 44.4% state otherwise which probably indicates that these respondents were not satisfied with library and media teachers' service. 77.8% the respondents agreed that their library and media teachers were improved their abilities to use information effectively.

Table 2: Perception on the role of library and media teachers

No.	Statement	No. of respondents (%)	
		Agree	Disagree
1	I find library and media teacher is helpful when searching for information	77.8	22.2
2	I find library and media teacher knowledgeable enough to direct me where I can find information	88.9	11.1
3	I find library and media teacher respond to my problems quickly	55.5	44.4
4	I find library and media teacher improve my ability to use information effectively	77.8	22.2

5.3 Level of agreement with services provided by library and media teachers

To assess the levels of agreement with services provided by library and media teachers, the respondents were asked to rate their perceived levels of 13 common services provided by library and media teachers. . The distribution of responses is as shown in Table 3. It can be seen from Table 2 that most of them agree with the statement, with very few disagree.

An analysis of the mean scores for each of the 13 services (based on a scale of 1 to 4, where 1 represented 'strongly agree', and 4 represented 'strongly disagree' showed that the mean in 12 of the services to be slightly at 2 (i.e. representing 'agree'), except for library and media teacher manages school resource centre effectively which is 1.667 (represented "strongly agree") . It can be seen that the respondents were very satisfied with the management of their school resource centre services.

Table 3: Level of Agreement with Services Provided by Library and Media Teachers

Statement	No. Of respondents (%)			
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This teacher is knowledgeable about the information resource	0	0	59.3	40.7
This teacher is passionate about his/her work	0	7.4	55.6	37.0
This teacher has a good interpersonal relationship with his/her students	0	18.5	51.9	29.6
This teacher instructs me about information literacy	0	18.5	40.7	40.7
This teacher offers students reasonable number of information to fulfill their learning	0	25.9	33.3	40.7
This teacher encourages me to reflect on why I think or work the way I do	3.7	18.5	25.9	51.9
This teacher responds to students question and comments in a timely manner	0	25.9	44.4	29.6
This teacher manages students behaviour effectively	3.7	18.5	40.7	37.0
This teacher assists me in finding my information needs	0	14.8	37.0	48.1
This teacher manages school resource centre effectively	0	7.4	29.6	63.0
This teacher improves my ability to retrieve and use information	0	22.2	44.4	33.4
This teacher improves my ability to communicate with information	0	25.9	44.4	29.6
This teacher improves my ability to present information effectively	0	25.9	40.7	33.4

5.4 Characteristics when choosing/using information resources at school resource centre

As mentioned above, participants were asked to evaluate the importantness of the following characteristics when they choosing or using information resources at their school resource centre. From the outset, it must be remarked that 100% of respondents believed the accuracy of information resources as the most importance characteristics. Moreover, the others characteristics such as accessibility, convinience and delivery method rated as higher importance characteristics which the score are higher than 90%.

Table 4: The importance characteristics when choosing/using information resources

Characteristic	No. Of respondent (%) N = 27	
	Importance	Not importance
Accessibility	92.6	7.4
Availability	88.9	11.1
Convenience	96.3	3.7
Accuracy	100	0
Adequacy	85.2	14.8
Relevance	77.8	22.2
Comprehensiveness	81.5	18.5
Cost	74.1	25.9
Currency	85.2	14.8
Delivery method	96.3	3.7
Technical accuracy	70.4	29.6
Timeliness	85.2	14.8

5.5 General information regarding student use of the school resource centre

Lastly, general information regarding student use of the school resource centre was included, their school resource centre use habits were identified and then it was investigated whether such habits varied depending on student group of age. Table 4 shows that 18.5% of students using school resource centre daily and another 51.9 % use school resource centre once or twice a week. However two respondents not complete this question.

Table 5: Frequency of using school resource centre

Using school resource centre	Frequency	Percent
Almost daily	5	18.5
Once or twice a week	14	51.9
Once or twice a month	6	22.2
Never	0	0

It was interesting to note that out of the 11 respondents with ages between 16 and 17 years old, none of them using school resource centre daily (Table 6). In the contrary, out of the 10 respondents with their age between 10 to 12 years old, 30% of them using school resource centre daily. Table 5 summarise the relationship between the frequency of use and the age of respondents

Table 6: The relationship between frequency of use and the age of respondents

		Frequency of use				Total
		.00	almost daily	once or twice a week	once or twice a month	
age	10-12	0	3	5	2	10
	13-15	1	2	2	1	6
	16-17	1	0	7	3	11
Total		2	5	14	6	27

On the quality of the school resource centre programmes the respondents have participated in, the results in Table 5 were obtained. The majority of the respondents were impressed with the quality of the trainings they have participated in and rated them between good and very good. Specifically, 33.3% of the respondents rated the quality of the school resource centre programmes that they have participated in as good, 33.3% described them as very good

and only 3.7% stated as poor.

Table 7: The quality of the training programmes

Quality of training	Frequency	Percent
Poor	1	3.7
Average	4	14.8
Good	9	33.3
Very good	9	33.3
Excellent	2	7.4

When the opinion of the respondents were sought as to whether the staff at school resource centre had the requisite skills for their service delivery, an interesting point emerged where 74.0% of respondents answers positively where 18.5% of them rated them as excellent. The results in table 6 show how the respondents rated the competency of the staff of school resource centre in service delivery. It can be observed that 29.6% of the respondents rated the competency of the staff of school resource centre in terms of service delivery as good, 25.9% rated them as very good, only 3.7% of the respondents rated the service delivery as poor.

Table 8: Competency of the staff at school resource centre

Competency of the staff	Frequency	Percent
Poor	1	3.7
Average	4	14.8
Good	8	29.6
Very good	7	25.9
Excellent	5	18.5

6. Conclusion

Overall, students in Malaysian primary and secondary schools have positive perception on the role of library and media teachers. Dynamic school library programs and strong collaborative partnerships between library and media teachers and students are two factors that can enhance the overall school curriculum and provide a more holistic educational environment for students. Library and media teachers are urged to facilitate students' with information literacy skill. . At the same time, they are well aware of the need to manage the school resource centre. . They also are encouraged to provide adequate directions, to monitor and adjust and to take appropriate actions to ensure students get on and stay on task and to achieve at an acceptable level.

In this study, the empirical structure behind students' perceptions of library and media teachers role was investigated. The results of this study proved that 88.9% agreed that their library and media teachers have knowledgeable enough to direct them to find information and 77.8% the respondents agreed that their library and media teachers were improved their abilities to use information effectively.

Information about students' perceptions of library and media teacher role can serve as a powerful feedback tool for these teachers in order to stimulate reflection about their own role. Library and media teachers and teacher trainers can use this information to be aware of and attend to students' perceptions. Teachers may then use their own observations and perceptions to consider how these diverge from or converge with the perception of their students and how to improve their performance.

Finally, there is a need no note that student perceptions of library and media teachers role are their personal assessment and views. Their perceptions do not inform us of the actual intentions of teachers; the quality, frequency or function of these teacher role.

7. References

- Bostick, Sharon L. (1992). The development and validation of the Library Anxiety Scale (Doctoral dissertation, Wayne State University, 1992). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 53-12, Section A, 4116.
- Brophy, P. (2005), *The Academic Library*, 2nd ed., Facet, London.
- Flores, E., & Pachon, H. (2008). Latinos and public library perceptions. Los Angeles, CA: Tomás Rivera Public Policy Institute. Retrieved June 2, 2012 from http://www.webjunction.org/c/document_library/get_file?folderId=10860985&name=DLFE-2520003.pdf.
- Cobbah., A., A. (2004). The role of libraries in student-centred learning: the case of students from the disadvantaged communities in South Africa. *The International Information & Library Review* 36, 263–271
- Erdamer., G., M. & Demiral, H. (2009). The library use habits of student teachers. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 1, 2233–2240
- Fry, R. (2005). The high schools Hispanics attend: Size and other key characteristics. Washington: DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved May 23 from <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/54.pdf>.
- Fraser, B. J. (1998). Science learning environments: assessment, effects and determinants. In B. J. Fraser, & K. G. Tobin (Eds.), *International handbook of science education* (part one) (pp. 527–564). London: Kluwer Academic Publishers
- Hemminger, Bradley M., Lu, Dihui, Vaughan, K. T. L., & Adams, Stephanie J. (2007). Information seeking behavior of academic scientists. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 58(14), 2205e2225.
- Hartzell, G. (2002). What's it take? IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services). Paper presented at the *White House Conference on School Libraries*. Retrieved May 29, 2012, from <http://www.laurabushfoundation.org/Hartzell.pdf>
- Hartzell, G. (2002). The Principal's Perceptions of School Libraries and acher-Librarians. *School Libraries Worldwide – Volume 8, Number 1*, 92-110
- Kamal, M. A. & Normah binti Othman. (2012). Training and development for library and media teachers in selected Malaysian school resource centre. *Journal of education and practice*, 3, 77-86.
- Kershaw, K.L. (2001). *Student use of the secondary school library*. ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED477763.
- Lance, K. C., Rodney, M. J., & Hamilton-Pennell, C. (2000). How school librarians help kids achieve standards: *The second Colorado study. Executive summary*. Retrieved May 29, 2012 from <http://www.lrs.org/documents/lmcstudies/CO/execsumm.pdf>
- Ministry of Education, Malaysia. (2012). Latar belakang KSSR. Retrieved June 10, 2012 from http://kssr.bpk.my/pengenalan/latar_belakang
- McFadden., K.M. (2000). An Investigation and Exploration of Grade 10 Students' Perceptions of a Teacher-Librarian and a School Media Centre. Master dissertation. Queen's University Kingston. Ontario. Canada
- Rubina Bhatti, (2009), "Interpersonal relationships: students, teachers and librarians in university libraries of Pakistan", *Library Review*, Vol. 58 Iss: 5 pp. 362 – 371

Kamal M. A is a part-time Ph.D candidate at the Faculty of Technology, Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Malaysia. He has more than ten years experienced as library and media teacher at secondary school in Terengganu, Malaysia.

Normah binti Othman is Kamal M.A.'s supervisor. She is an Associate Professor at the Centre for Modern Languages and Human Sciences, Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Malaysia.

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:**

<http://www.iiste.org/Journals/>

The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a fast manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

