

The Role of Library and Media Teachers in Malaysian School

Resource Centre

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Abstract

Library and media teachers should be clear with the role of school resource centre has a direct relationship with the implementation of the curriculum and co-curricular programmes at the school level. Thus, many tasks that needs to be focused to ensure that school resource centre facilities can be leveraged by students and teachers. This study explores 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 50 library and media teachers in the Terengganu, Malaysia. 100% respondents completed the questionnaire. The study revealed that all schools in Malaysia not employ full-time and adequately trained professional school librarians and often teachers without proper professional library or information science training manage their school resource centre. As these teachers are also expected to take full teaching load and other tasks assigned by their school management, they have limited of time to the school resource centre. Evidence from the results of studies shows the impact of school library programmes on academic performance provide support on the need for professionally trained and credentialed school library media specialists.

Keywords: Library and Media Teacher, School Resource Centre, Teacher Librarian, School Libraries

1. Introduction

School resource centre is a generator for creating a knowledge society and a promoter to promote information literacy in line with rapid development of information and communication technology (ICT). It is the policy of Ministry of Education to improve the quality of education in this country to achieve world-class standard. Therefore, library and media teachers must play an important role to strengthen school resource centre programmes (handbook of school library and media duties, 2007).

School resource centre should be well managed and organised. It is a duty of library and media teacher to ensure all equipment, facilities and teaching and learning materials are kept up to date. Library and media teachers should be clear with the role of school resource centre has a direct relationship with the implementation of the curriculum and co-curricular programmes at the school level. Thus, many tasks that needs to be focused to ensure that school resource centre facilities can be leveraged by students and teachers. Library and media teachers serve to enhance the library and information skills of their student, and make it a point to incorporate educational technology in teaching and learning process.

Abuzaid & Singh (2007) proved that the lack of qualified librarians as a main constraint for the student to access school library resources. A study by Tan & Singh (2008) showed that 81% of library and media teachers in Hulu Langat District, Malaysia needed more training in the information literacy instruction. The findings from this study also suggest that the library and media teachers are keen to see information literacy implemented, but they themselves may lack the necessary understanding and skills to do so.

In order to strengthen the educational system (KP /008/2 dated July 18, 2005) Ministry of Education Malaysia has always given due emphasis in the implementation of various programmes related to school resource centres. Consequently, based on the Ministry Education division warrant number b.41, each school was allocated a full

time Library and Media Teacher or a school resource centre coordinator (Ministry of Education, 2006). The appointment is expected to help improve management capabilities and leadership in managing school resource centre effectively. Basically a list of eighteen library and media teachers' duties listed on this circular as follows:

1. Planning and teaching subjects ranging from six to eight hours a week
2. Planning and implementing policies and annual programmes for school resource centre along with principal, school resource centre staff, teachers and students.
3. Planning and managing the school resource centre annual budget together with school curriculum committee.
4. Planning resource acquisition and building comprehensive, balanced and up-to date collection
5. Planning and implementing information literacy programme and services to support teaching and learning process.
6. Planning and managing the reading programme (NILAM programme) and acculturation of knowledge.
7. Planning, implementing and coordinating staff development programmes and in-house training programmes related to the school resource centre
8. Planning and managing the school resource centre promotional programmes.
9. Collaborating with teachers in the implementation of resource-based learning
10. Liaise and cooperate with State Educational Resource Centre/ Teachers Activity Centre/ public library to enhance services and programmes of the school resource centre.
11. Supervising and managing school resource centre's collection
12. Preparing and circulating the minutes of meeting of school resource centre
13. Regulating and monitoring the implementation of the school resource centre programmes
14. Performing the inventory stock checking of school resource centre's equipments.
15. Promoting and being a member of the library association
16. Conduct research/action research in relation to school resource centre services.
17. Providing reports and analysis of the school resource centre implementation development, management and finance programmes.
18. Submit annual data and report of school resource centre programmes to Department of Educational Technology through Teachers Activity centre and State Educational Department in October.
19. Carrying out other duties as directed by school management from time to time.

2. Literature Review

The richness and quality of the library provision depend upon staffing resources available within and beyond the school library (The IFLA/UNESCO School Library Guidelines, 2003). One of the main roles of library and media teachers for staff management in school resource centre should be that all staff members have a clear understanding of library service policy, well defined duties and responsibilities. The library and media teacher's main role is to contribute to the mission and goals of the school including the evaluation procedures and to develop and implement those of the school resource centre. In cooperation with the senior school management, administrators and teachers, the library and media teacher is involved in the development of plans and the implementation of the curriculum. The library and media teacher has the knowledge and skills regarding the provision of information and solution of information problems as well as the expertise in the use of all sources, both printed and electronic. Their knowledge, skills and expertise meet the demands of a specific school society. In addition, the library and media teacher should lead reading campaigns and the promotion of child literature, media and culture.

The support of the school management is essential if the school resource centre is to carry out interdisciplinary activities. The library and media teacher must report directly to the school's principle or deputy headteacher. It is extremely important for the library and media teacher to be accepted as an equal member of the professional staff and be entitled to participate in the teamwork and all meetings as the head of the school resource centre department. The library and media teacher should create an environment for leisure and learning which is attractive, welcoming and accessible for everyone without fear or prejudice. Everyone who works in the school resource centre should have a good rapport with students and school community.

The widespread use of Information Technologies (IT) has revolutionised the way information is generated, stored, acquired, accessed, retrieved and communicated. There is a swift change in information environment from 'human imperative to 'technological' one (Varalakshmi, 2003) . The library and media teachers profession

and education, which deal with information handling activities, are predominantly affected by these changes. The role of library and media teachers need regular revisions and changes to meet the challenges of information environment from time to time. . As such, the library and media teachers play an important role in generating IT based modules and courses, bringing changes in teaching-learning strategies, integrating education programmes with global activities in the field, and developing pedagogical guidelines for related practical component, with an aim to develop digital librarians.

Library instruction is the process of educating library users about how to access information effectively and independently (Abrizah Abdullah, et al. 2008). This includes formal instruction and various types of library activities. Library instruction is provided because it is assumed that library users are not able to use library facilities efficiently or effectively. Because the information system management and search tools are complicated, it is a role of library and media teachers to help school resource centre's user to find all the information they need, or they may waste time unnecessarily. Therefore, library instruction is essential and considered as part of the library and media teachers services. The success or failure of library instruction depends on the ability of library and media teachers to perform their role. Traditional library instruction focuses on educating library users on the availability of library resources and services by emphasising on searching skills and tools as well as searching strategies for information access. On the contrary, current library instruction focuses on the value of information gained (such as resources selection, database searching, and database searching techniques), information evaluation (especially information retrieved from World Wide Web), information usage, electronic citation styles, and techniques for analytical thinking.

To create an information literate person, library and media teachers should be more aware of the importance of information literacy, and integrate it into instructional programs. (Aalst et al. 2007,; Chuang 2003) library and media teachers play an important role as a leader in allowing people to take advantage of opportunities in the knowledge-based society, which is a foundation of successful information usage. As information literacy instruction is a learning process that focuses on learners learning how to learn, the role of teachers should change from instructors to coaches or mentors. A library and media teacher, as an information expert, plays an important role in passing on information literacy to students, since they themselves are sources of information. Their direct responsibilities include developing students' information literacy skills by coordinating with classroom teachers or instructors. Some methods are stand-alone courses, course-related library instruction sessions, course-integrated projects, and independent learning toolkits for online tutorials. (Dalrymple 2002). The responsibility for information literacy instruction in schools is usually entrusted to the library media teachers. The quality of this instruction depends, in part, on the capability of these teachers (Tan and Singh, 2008).

International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) (2006) claimed that it has been demonstrated that when librarians and teachers work together, students achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problem-solving as well as information and communication technology skills. . The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens (Abuzaid and Singh, 2008).

3. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of Library and Media Teachers in Malaysia. This is considered important as the library and media teachers are expected to shoulder a heavy responsibility of producing information literate students. In order to accomplish the study, the following research questions are formulated based on the research objectives.

1. Are library and media teachers carrying out tasks based on list of duties provided by Ministry of education?
2. To what extent does the library and media teacher version survey support the proposed list of duties provided by Ministry of education?

4. Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of library and media teachers and to suggest ways of enhancing their role for efficient and effective service delivery. This study covered current list of duties provided by Ministry of Education for library and media teachers. This research was limited to a sample of library and media teachers from Terengganu, Malaysia. Terengganu state comprises both urban and rural areas, and is thus fairly reflective of the variation in the country.

5. Methodology

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of library and media teachers, from their own perspective based on

listed of duties for library and media teachers provided by Ministry of Education..An anonymous survey was sent to the 50 library and media teachers in the Terengganu, Malaysia. A follow-up reminder was sent, and 50 respondents, or 100%, completed the questionnaire. There were thirty closed ended question and a open 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 questionnaire for the respondent had three sections. Section A was deal with demography issues such background of the respondent, and also solicited information on the age, sex, educational level and length of service of the respondent. Section B of the questionnaire covered questions on the role of library and media teachers. The questionnaire ended with an open question to solicit the other role of library and media teacher. The data was statistically analysed to using spss v19.

6. Results and Discussion

Out of 50 respondents, 78% of respondents were female, while the rest were male, a fact fairly reflective of the teaching population in Malaysia which is predominantly female (Kamal M.A &Normahbinti Othman, 2012). Slightly over 58 % of respondents were library and media teachers at primary level, 36% at secondary school whereas 3 respondents not mention about it.

Table 1 shows the main bulk of the respondents (38%) had eleven to fifth teen years of teaching experience, 36% respondent had more than 16 years' of teaching experience. It appeared that a majority of the respondents had adequate teaching experience and were probably in a position to provide good feedback regarding their work as library and media teacher's position.

Table 1: The relationship between the gender and teaching experiences of the respondents

	Teaching experienced				Total
	0-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16 years or more	
Gender male	1	2	3	5	11
female	1	9	16	13	39
Total	2	11	19	18	50

In terms of library qualifications, 6% were without any school resource centremanagement training while 90% of them attended the basic School ResourceCentre Basic Management Course and 2% of them attended the three month SchoolResource Management Course. Another 2% of them had the advanced School Resource Center Management Course. It is interesting to note that at least 94% of the library and media teachers had some form of training in library scienceknowledge, even though almost half of those trained had very basic training only.

The analysis also showed that 82.0% of the library and media teachers had letter of appointment from State Education Department and the rest were appointed by school authority. In order to strengthen the educational system (KP /008/2 dated July 18, 2005) Ministry of Education Malaysia has always given due emphasis in the implementation of various programmes related to school resource centres. Consequently, based on the Ministry Education division warrant number b.41, each school was allocated a full time Library and Media Teacher or a school resource centre coordinator (Ministry of Education, 2006). The appointment is expected to help improve management capabilities and leadership in managing school resource centre effectively.

Based on Ministry of education circular in 2005, the numbers of teaching hours for library and media teachers are within six to eight a week (Ministry of education, 2005). The result of the study showthat the numbers of teaching hours for library and media teachers are ranging from 16 to 20 hours (40%). Only one respondent have teaching hours between six to eight hours. Although there is a clear circular instruction from the government about the position of library and media teachers, many schools are not able to carry out the purpose of this instruction due to the lack numbers of teachers. Thus the library and media teachers unable to perform the tasks entrusted to them effectively.

Table 2: Number of Teaching Hours

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 6-8 HOURS	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
9-15 HOURS	17	34.0	34.0	36.0
16-20 HOURS	20	40.0	40.0	76.0
MORE THAN 20 HOURS	12	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In response on how many teaching hours is appropriate for library and media teachers, the results in Table 3 were obtained. The majority of the respondents indicated that the appropriate teaching hours for them is between six to eight hours (34.0%) and ranging from nine to twelve hours (32.0). however 8% of respondents not response for this question.

Table 3: Appropriate teaching hours for library and media teachers

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid less than 6 hours	2	4.0	4.3	4.3
6-8 hours	17	34.0	37.0	41.3
9-12 hours	16	32.0	34.8	76.1
13-15 hours	9	18.0	19.6	95.7
16-20 hours	2	4.0	4.3	100.0
Total	46	92.0	100.0	
Missing System	4	8.0		
Total	50	100.0		

The further analysis proved that library and media teacher who taught at primary school had more number of teaching hours compared to their colleague from secondary school. For instance ten respondents from primary school had more than 20 teaching hours. In the contrary a respondent from secondary school had more than 20 teaching hours.

Table 4: The correlation between level of school and number of teaching hours

	Number of teaching hours				Total
	6-8 HOURS	9-15 HOURS	16-20 HOURS	MORE THAN 20 HOURS	
level of school secondary school	0	10	7	1	18
primary school	1	5	13	10	29
Total	1	15	20	11	47

An analysis of the mean scores for each of the 17 duties (based on a scale of 1 to 2, where 1 represented 'implemented', and 2 represented 'not implemented') showed that the mean in 17 of the duties to be slightly above 1 except for three duties which are planning resource acquisition and building comprehensive, balanced and up-to date collection, planning and managing the reading programme (NILAM programme) and acculturation of knowledge, Supervising and managing school resource centre's collection. The mean score for these three specific tasks are exactly 1.00, are represented implemented by the entire respondent (Table 5).

When respondents were asked about the other tasks entrusted by the school management to them, there are their responses:

1. English, science, mathematics or other subject teacher.

2. Sport house teacher
3. Hockey, football or other sport trainer
4. Class teacher
5. Secretary of co-curricular department
6. ICT teacher
7. Committee of school discipline
8. Advisor of clubs or societies
9. Head of subject panel
10. Treasure of Parents Teacher Association (PTA)

The further analysis shows that at least five other duties were entrusted to library and media teacher. Library and media teacher at primary school had more other duties compare to whose at secondary school.

Table 5: Mean score for the tasks of library and media teacher

Lists of duty	Mean	Standard deviation
Planning and implementing policies and annual programmes for school resource centre along with principal, school resource centre staff, teachers and students.	1.0833	0.27931
Planning and managing the school resource centre annual budget together with school curriculum committee.	1.1042	0.30871
Planning resource acquisition and building comprehensive, balanced and up-to date collection	1.0000	0.0000
Planning and implementing information literacy programme and services to support teaching and learning process	1.4800	1.44618
Planning and managing the reading programme (NILAM programme) and acculturation of knowledge	1.0000	0.00000
Planning, implementing and coordinating staff development programmes and in-house training programmes related to the school resource centre	1.2553	0.44075
Planning and managing the school resource centre promotional programmes.	1.6531	0.48093
Collaborating with teachers in the implementation of resource-based learning	1.3400	0.47852
Liaise and cooperate with State Educational Resource Centre/ Teachers Activity Centre/ public library to enhance services and programmes of the school resource centre.	1.1600	0.37033
Supervising and managing school resource centre's collection	1.0000	0.00000
Preparing and circulating the minutes of meeting of school resource centre	1.1042	0.30871
Regulating and monitoring the implementation of the school resource centre programmes	1.0208	0.14434
Performing the inventory stock checking of school resource centre's equipments	1.1224	0.33120
Promoting and being a member of the library association	1.4200	0.49857
Conduct research/action research in relation to school resource centre services.	1.7143	0.45644
Providing reports and analysis of the school resource centre implementation development, management and finance programmes.	1.1000	0.30305
Submit annual data and report of school resource centre programmes to Department of Educational Technology through Teachers Activity centre and State Educational Department in October.	1.1000	0.30305

7. Conclusion

The study revealed that all schools in Malaysia not employ full-time and adequately trained professional school librarians and often teachers without proper professional library or information science training manage their

school resource centre. As these teachers are also expected to take full teaching load and other tasks assigned by their school management, they have limited of time to the school resource centre.

The role of information and knowledge professionals including the position of library and media teachers has been fast changing. Also, the demands for new competencies for information and knowledge professionals were changing. In response to these uncertainties and pressures, these professionals are expected to be equipped with new sets of capabilities in order to effectively perform in specialised domains (Rehman, 2008).

Evidence from the results of studies shows the impact of school library programmes on academic performance provide support on the need for professionally trained and credentialed school library media specialists. For this to materialise, support from the principals, teachers, and supporting staff is essential. The need to move towards knowledge society will not be easy unless there is a shift in the national education agenda.. Such move must also be in parallel with the school resource centre policy which should be geared towards the success implementation of this concept to enable the creation of an information literate society, which is not an option anymore.

8. References

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