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2018

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E-READING HABITS AMONG THE USERS OF COLOMBO PUBLIC LIBRARY, SRI LANKA: A SURVEY

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Abstract

Presently, there is a strong tendency among the reading community to use Print Sources and Electronic Sources for reading. The study which was completed involving 100 readers in Colombo Public Library, clearly proved that the readers have a comparatively stronger interest to use E- reading resources. According to the results of the study, they spend 1-2 hours per dayin using E-Reading sources.Moreover, it was clarified through the outcomes of the study that the library users show strong interest in E- Reading, for it is possible to collect information easily and quickly through the Electronic Sources and the capacity of information offered by such sources is relatively high.

Keywords: E-Reading Habits, Electronic Sources, Public Library Users, Colombo Public Library

Introduction

It is unarguably acceptable that the habit of reading has a long history in the story of human civilization and it walks parallel with the passage of time, that even today reading is considered the main medium of communicating information. Moreover, reading has the capacity to produce pleasure and tastefulness within the reader's mind.

Reading demands, no age difference. The first step of reading should be started from one's childhood and within his/her home itself. Moreover, a library becomes the best place to enhance the reading habits of a person. There, the public library plays a major role, as it offers the chance of reading for all the people equally and without a difference.The UNESCO manifesto on public library (1972) has defined ''Public Library'' as follows. The public library is a public institute which is alive and significant in developing peace & harmony, mutual understanding among nations.

Contemporary society has many users who have gotten used toread printed reading materials and that has made them to focus on the use of Electronic Media. This tendency to use Electronic Media is based on the facts such as the combination of modern technology with libraries and possibility of collecting more information through the Electronic Media.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to examine the influence of Electronic Media on the Reading Habits of the Public Library Users and to find how much time people allocate for E- Reading.

Literature Review

Sohail and Alvi (2011) reveal information about the reading habits of the users of Delhi Public Library, through their research paper on "Reading habits among the users of Delhi Public Library". Sohail highlights the fact that the readers are more interested in reading magazines and newspapers and the reading materials written in English. The study, further shows that the library is used by the readers to update their knowledge and lack of time has become a hindrance to the readers' use of libraries frequently. Moreover, in hisstudy, Sohail points out the fact that the reading habit of the Delhi Public Library readers is in a positive level and that they spend 2-4 hours per day, for their reading activities.

Abdul Karim and Amelia Hasan (2007) conducted a study entitled "Reading habits and attitude in the digital age." This study knows the reading habits and attitude of bachelor degree students of Its and Arts from International Islamic university, Malaysia. The IT student rely more on websites and they use electronic resources more than the Arts based students. (Sohail,2011)

Ramesh (2012), in his study on "E-Reading Habits of Public Library Users in Erode Corporation, Tamilnadu, India" discusses about the impact of Electronic Media on the reading habits of the readers.

Methodology

Only the public library users of the Colombo Public Library, Sri Lanka were taken into consideration in completing this study. Out of that, this survey involved specificallyone hundred (100) library users. The data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires, where investigator personally distributed the questionnaire and collected the responses on the spot. This facilitated in having hundred percent (100%) responses for the data analysis.

Results and discussion

Age wise distribution of Public Library Users.

The age groups of the Public Library users were examined and the study results showed that the readers in between the ages of 11- 20 use the library more often, compared to the other age groups. The percentage is 43%. The results indicateusage of library by the readers representing the age group of 21-30 and the readers representing the age group of 31-40, in percentages as 23% and 19% respectively. The percentage of the public library users above the age of 60 is 2%. The following diagram shows the above factors in detail.
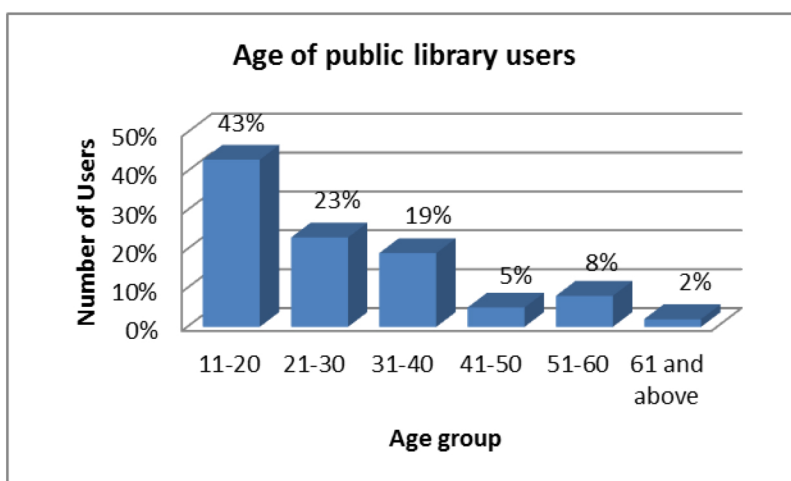

Figure 1: Age wise distribution of Public Library Users

Gender wise distribution of the Public Library Users

The data regarding the gender based classification of the public library users is shown in Table 1. The Table clearly indicates that the majority of users are males, representing 54% while only 46% of the users are females.

Table 1: Gender wise Distribution

Gender	No of Respondents (%)
Male	54%
Female	46%
Total	100%

Frequency of Library Visits by the Public Library Users

The frequency of the users' visits to the Public Library was also studied. The following diagram clearly indicates the details with regard to the above fact. Majority of the users responded that they visit the library once a week. It was 37%. The percentage of the

users who visit the library twice a week is 34%. While, 15% of the respondents visit the library once a month and as a habit 14% of the users come to the library daily.
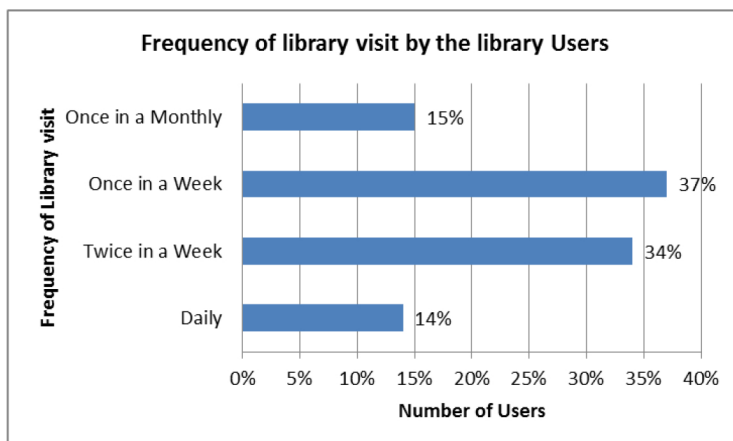
Frequency of library visit by the library Users

Frequency of Library visit	
Once in a Monthly	15%
Once in a Week	37%
Twice in a Week	34%
Daily	14%

Number of Users

Figure 2: Frequency of Library Visits by the Public Library Users

Daily- time allocation of the Public Library Users for E-Reading

The diagram below clarifies about the daily time allocation of the Public Library Users for E-Reading. Majority, which is 46% responded that they spend one hour per day, while 30% of the respondents spend more than 2 hours per day for E-Reading activities. Moreover, the study results showed that 16% of the users spend exactly 2 hours for E-Reading and 8% spend only half an hour for that.
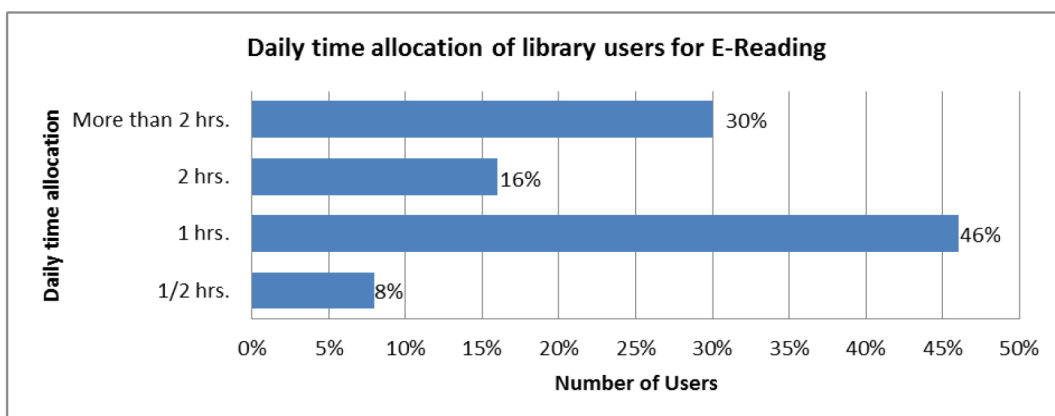
Daily time allocation of library users for E-Reading

Daily time allocation	
More than 2 hrs.	30%
2 hrs.	16%
1 hrs.	46%
1/2 hrs.	8%

Number of Users

Figure 3: Daily- time allocation of the Public Library Users for E-Reading

Mostly liked information sources

Moreover, the study focused on finding the information sources that are mostly liked by the respondents. The results proved that 51% prefer to use Electronic media, while 49% prefer to refer the printed sources. Above mentioned data can be seen clearly through the diagram below;
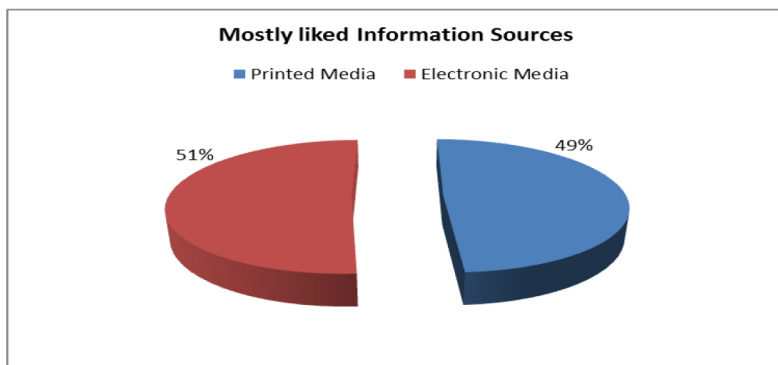
1185

Figure 4: Mostly liked Information Sources

Usage of Electronic Resources for E-Reading

The following diagram provides the details about the Electronic Resources used by the users in order to engage in E-Reading activities. Most of the Public Library users use internet facilities. The percentage is 94%. 81% use television, while 72% use radio as their electronic resource. Using E-Newspapers as the electronic resource for E- Reading is done by 68% of the respondents. The percentage of the respondents using CDs as the resource is 52% and 26% of the respondents use E-journals. In addition, 15% of the users mentioned that their electronic resources are the E-books.
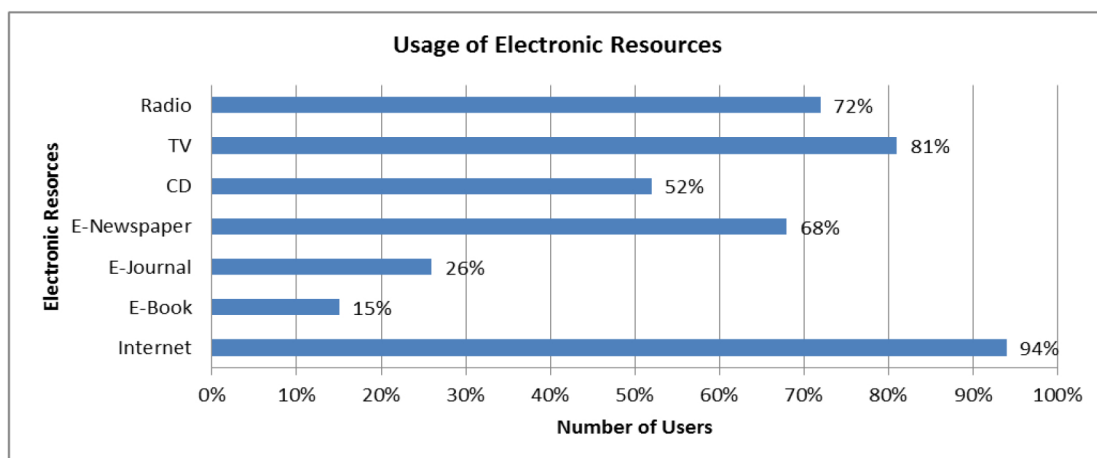

Figure 5: Usage of Electronic Resources for E-Reading

Use of CD's by the Public Library Users

Examining about using CD's to get day today information by the Public Library users was also given focus. Out of the 100 respondents, 58% use CDs with educational content, while 38% use Music CDs. It was also clarified that 33% of the respondents use Dance, Drama and Film CDs and 26% use Sports CDs. The diagram no 6, illustrates the above data.
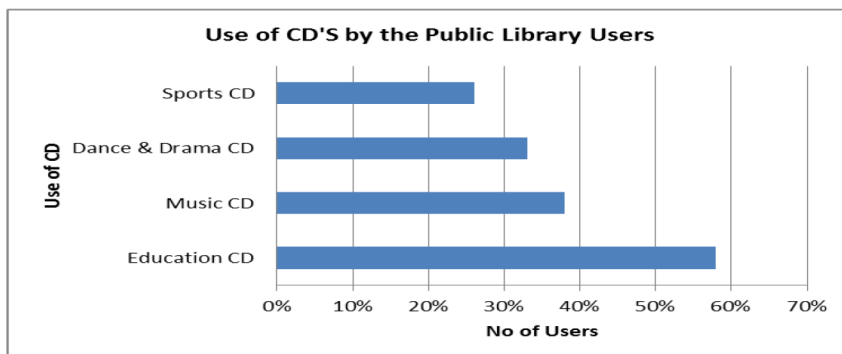
Figure6: Use of DC's by the Public Library Users

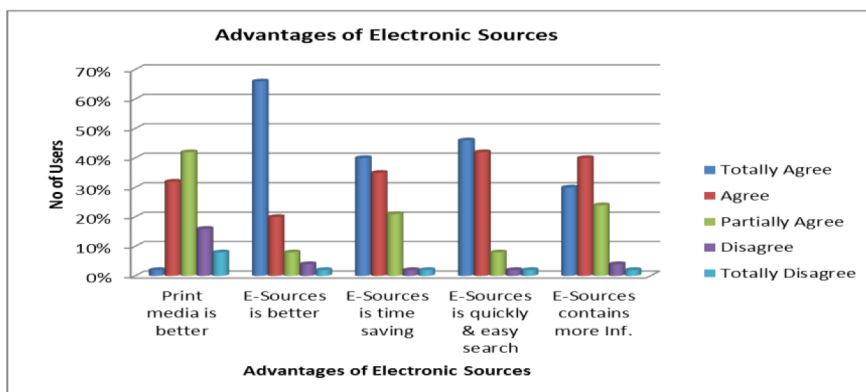*Advantages of using Electronic Sources over Printed Sources*

Figure 7: Advantages of using Electronic Sources over Printed Sources

According to the above figure no 7, "Partially Agree" was the response given by majority of the respondents for the statement: "Printed sources are better". The percentage was 42%. "Totally Agree" was the response given to the statement; "Electronic sources are way betters that the others". The percentage was 66%. 40% of the respondents have "Totally Agreed" with the statement: "Electronic sources save time", while majority of the respondents have "Totally agreed" with the statement saying "Electronicsources help the users to collect information quickly and easily". It was 46% as a percentage. 40% of the respondents have selected "Agree" as the response for the statement: "Electronic sources contain more information."

Conclusion

The conclusions taken at the end of the analysis of the data collected in relation to the study on E-Reading Habits of the Colombo Public Library users are as follows;

➢ Majority of the Public Library users represent the age of 11-20.

1187

➢ The Public Library is mostly used by males.

➢ Majority of the users visit the library once a week.

➢ It was clear that the majority of the users allocate one hour per day to engage in E-Reading activities.

➢ The study revealed the fact that most of the users prefer to use Electronic resources.

➢ Among the Electronic resources used for E-Reading, using Internet facilities received the major place.

➢ The study revealed that majority of the users employ Education CDs to collect information.

➢ Majority of the Public Library users further responded that using Electronic Sources for E-Reading is the better way to take and they moreover agreed that using Electronic Sources can save time and allow them to access with the necessary information quickly as well as easily. In addition, these sources contain comparatively high amount of information, according to the respondents' point of view.

The study proves that the users' preference for E-Reading is considerably high. Moreover, it can be recommended to adopt more electronic resources in accordance with the user necessities, which will enhance the preference of the users to visit the library in order to engage in more E-Reading activities.

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