

Public Library User's Reading Habits: a Study

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Abstract

The study sought to consider reading habits among public library users. Reading is an art of interpreting the printed tools and written words. Reading is considered a stepping stone to success, not just in schools but also throughout the adult life of an individual. Also, it is regarded as a process, a mode of thinking, a kind of real experience and involves many complex skills: the ability to perceive printed words, to skim for information and then perhaps read intensively. With adult readers, it is also found that reading contributes significantly to job success, career development and ability to respond to change. A public library is a library for the general public. That is accessible for a child to adult and there are no age barriers. Public libraries exist in many countries across the world and are often considered an essential part of having an educated and literate population. This study aims to understand the nature of reading in general, focused on user attitudes towards reading habits. Also indicated that the purpose of reading, preference of language, preferred from of the library collection, assistance from the library staff in the use of resources and services is necessary to users meet their information requirements. Study was conducted in Uva province, Badulla District selecting the main public libraries at Badulla and users of those selected institutions. 120 Questionnaires were distributed among users of two main public libraries using the simple random sampling technique, respondents' rate was 98.3%. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software, Figures and Tables were used to present the result of the findings. The findings showed that majority of the respondents acknowledged the importance of reading their subject textbooks, novels, Newspapers and Newspaper supplements. Further, the data suggest that although the availability of digital reading materials were prominent, users like to read print books than electronic materials. Preferred language of reading was mothertongue. Also the data depicts that the most feverable place of reading among users as their personal space. The majority of the respondents showcased that the public library and the staff ware more userfriendly and supportive in providing the needy reading materials. This research findings suggest that it is necessary to imrove the use of automated library services which are more easier to reach in modern library systems, Also it provdes more learning spaces for future readers, this includes use of scientific, academic reading contents.

Keywords: Reading habits, Library users, Library resources, Public libraries, User studies