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The Relationship between School Resource Center Roles and Student Civilization in Digital Age

Shamila Mohamed Shuhidan

Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia., shamila@uitm.edu.my

Norizan Anwar

Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia., norizan8027@uitm.edu.my

Mayasari Abdul Majid

Librarians Association of Malaysia, mayasari.abdulmajid@gmail.com

Shuhaida Mohamed Shuhidan

Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia., shuhaida@tmsk.uitm.edu.my

Azma Asnawishah Abd Hakim

Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia., aas81@uitm.edu.my

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

Shamila Mohamed Shuhidan, Norizan Anwar, Mayasari Abdul Majid, Shuhaida Mohamed Shuhidan, Azma Asnawishah Abd Hakim, and Tamara Adriani Salim

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Shamila Mohamed Shuhidan

Author, Lecturer, Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia.

Email shamila@uitm.edu.my ([corresponding author](#))

Norizan Anwar

Author, Lecturer, Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia.

Email norizan8027@uitm.edu.my

Mayasari Abd Majid

Author, Librarians Association of Malaysia

Email mayasari.abdulmajid@gmail.com

Shuhaida Mohamed Shuhidan

Author, Faculty of Computer and Mathematical Sciences, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia.

Email shuhaida@tmsk.uitm.edu.my

Azma Asnawishah Abd Hakim

Author, Lecturer, Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam (UiTM), Malaysia.

Email aas81@uitm.edu.my

Tamara Adriani Salim

Author, Lecturer, Department of Library and Information Science, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia, Depok, Jawa Barat, Indonesia, 16424.

Email tamaraadrianisalim@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

School Resource Centers (SRCs) are also known as School libraries serve as a catalyst that encourages students to read by providing high-quality information resources, both printed and non-printed. However, previous studies found that SRCs need to align their roles with 21st century learning, to cope with digital era and to help students to develop lifelong learning. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the relationship between the roles of SRCs and student civilization in the education setting. This research applied the quantitative approach with online survey distributed using Google Form to collect data from respondents. The overall mean shows that the respondents agreed on all variables measured with the SRCs environment had the highest mean value of 4.4033, followed by SRCs collections. Further analysis show that SRCs collection, SRCs program, technology, SRCs environment and their LMT assistance toward student civilization are significantly determine relationship with student civilization. It is hope that 21st century SRCs would aid Malaysia's education reform and the development of civilization amongst students by reinventing the cultures of reading and knowledge practice in schools, encouraging students to take greater responsibility on their education, and preparing them for the information and digital age.

Keyword: School Resource Centre, Student, Civilization, Information, Knowledge, Digital Age

1. INTRODUCTION

School libraries play an important role in supporting teaching and learning in the school setting. As of today, education has undergone significant changes because of the integration of technology into teaching and learning, and this includes the manner in which students seek knowledge and resources. According to the International Federal Library Association (IFLA) (2015), *"a school library is a school's physical and digital learning space where reading, inquiry, research, thinking, imagination, and creativity are central to students' information-to-knowledge journey and to their personal, social, and cultural growth."* The term 'school library' is interchangeably

used all over the world. In Malaysia, school libraries are also known as school resource centers (SRCs) as they have a common purpose in supporting teaching and learning along with its focus of developing students to be an information-to-knowledge society for their personal, social and cultural growth and indirectly, civilization. The idea of civilization is prevalent in 21st-century learning with its purpose of enhancing human existence through various tactics, most notably the formation of a knowledge-based society. In Malaysia, the authorized body that manages SRCs is known as the Educational Resources and Technology Division (ERTD) or *Bahagian Sumber dan Teknologi Pendidikan (BSTP)* under the Ministry of Education (MOE). They are responsible to provide guidelines to all schools in managing their SRCs as all schools must have an SRC. SRCs serve as a place that generates knowledge and a literacy-based society in line with the development of Information and Technology (ICT) in 21st century education. Therefore, SRCs need to align their roles with 21st century learning to provide students with the information literacy skills that will help them develop life-learning habits which enable them to be knowledgeable and responsible citizens. SRCs are also responsible for providing and making it easy for teachers to prepare teaching and learning activities. This is especially true with the advancement of technology as students need to be assisted and guided when using online materials. However, limited budgets and unclear policies are among the challenges developing countries face in the development and management of effective SRCs (Shenho, 2019). According to Omenyo (2016) that many SRCs still provide outdated reading materials and inadequate library information resources. These reasons cause teachers to feel discouraged in asking

students to use SRCs because these places cannot provide the relevant information services required for the curriculum designed (Shandu et al., 2014). Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the relationship between SRCs roles and student civilization in the education setting.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous studies have shown that the roles of an SRC is to provide information resources that enhance students' information-seeking skills, contribute to the establishment of a conducive atmosphere, and give encouragement to students to do effective reference. Students can practice lifelong learning through the learning of information-seeking skills which can enable them to be ready for the learning process and compete in the real-life working environment in the future.

2.1 SRC Collection

SRC collections can be defined as the total accumulation of books and other items belonging to a library which are catalogued and organized for ease of access and consist of several other smaller collections such as references, circulating books, serials, government records, rare books, special collections, and many more (Reitz, 2004). Information resource development is very important to meet users' need. Therefore, the system consists of processes needed for the creation of interrelated information resources. These systems require years of preparing and constructing to provide useful and balanced information resources fit for a library (IFLA, 2019). Previous studies (Gildersleeves, 2012; Gretes, 2013; Yusuf, 2014; Krashen, 2004;

Lance & Kachel, 2018) claimed that one of the reasons students prefer to come to SRCs is the availability of information resources. To make sure that SRCs' scheduled programmes are integrated with schools, the information services provided must be available within and outside of the school. Afolabi (2016) stated that the provision of accessible SRCs stocked with sufficient media tools is intended to facilitate successful teaching and learning practices, improve the behaviors of students, and inspire students to achieve the required academic results.

2.2 SRC Programs

The American School Librarians Association or AASL (2016) promotes the view that a successful SRC that organizes different SRC programs plays a crucial role in preparing students for active living in an information-rich society. For example, in Malaysia, the strongest point of SRC programs is highlighted when they are combined with information literacy activities (Yushiana & Norhiyah, 2011). This is supported by Sun (2015) who showed that certified Library Media Teachers and quality SRC programs have a significant and measurable impact on students' success. Another example of good SRCs was shown a study done by Aithal (2016) in which well-organized libraries in Philadelphia are found to be equipped with internet hotspots that are paid for by donors. Each of these hotspots hosts several computers with Internet access and research materials. In addition, online courses are offered at these hotspots. The hotspots are available almost everywhere, from community centers to local churches. Accelerated Reader programs that are conducted by most school libraries in Western countries and most of the international school in Malaysia is

another supportive program that enhances reading skills amongst students. To support the government's initiative for reading programs, Scholastic Malaysia donated 125,000 books to over 2,500 SRCs registered for this campaign as an addition to their SRC collections ("Scholastic's READ 2013 achieves literacy milestone during 1Malaysia Reading Camp.", 2013). In the context of Malaysia, libraries focus on improving their services by offering a wide range of programs for users. For instance, a research skills program offered in the library training room is aimed for users to work in groups to integrate and share ideas on how to source relevant information.

2.3 Library Media Teachers

In Malaysia, 'Teacher-Librarians' or 'School Librarians' are known as Library Media Teachers (LMTs). Yusuf's (2014) stated that qualified library staff or LMTs are important to facilitate services in SRCs. LMTs are expected to enhance the resources of libraries, contribute to the SRCs, and work with teachers to enhance the standard of learning and teaching. LMTs should aim to work with libraries to improve facilities for children and young people in each group (Mayasari et al.,2020). In Thailand, Wimolsittichai (2017) found that even though rural SRCs are in poor shape, with the help of LMTs, rural students may gain information and improve both their motivation and academic performance. Therefore, the focus on equipping SRCs with professional staff and allocating focused SRC responsibilities to LMTs are evident necessities (Kamal & Normah, 2012).

2.4 Technology in SRCs

Technology which appears in the form of devices can provide convenience to users when using SRCs (Small et al., 2010). Research conducted on the information literacy skills required by secondary school students to conduct Project Based Learning (PBL) for the History subject found that students are highly engaged in the creative use of different knowledge sources, particularly when it involves digital technologies that enhance learning (Halida et al., 2014). The Ministry of Education (2019) of Malaysia has emphasized on the demand for computer-aided information technology teaching methods. This approach relates to the utilization of networked content-enhancing programs along with the use of cognitive skills to find knowledge based on active involvement by students with the help of multiple outlets such as books, journals, newspapers, digital sources, and the Internet. Online Public Access Catalog is a gateway to growing SRCs' information resources of relevant books. All library users should master the system. While it is important to pay attention and invest in technological devices, the provision of a general book search service is as important as the development of electronic services (Mayasari et al., 2020).

2.5 SRC environment

SRCs were built for the sake of school communities. To ensure that these people come to the SRCs, spaces in the SRCs play an important role as they help ensure that users feel relaxed and enjoy learning experiences in the SRCs (Mayasari, et al., 2020). Austin ISD Libraries (2020) asserted that when an SRC provides a welcoming and

stimulating space for learning, it positively impacts literacy, life-long learning, and student achievement. The learning spaces in an SRC include its layout, venue, seating arrangement, availability of information, temperature, and lighting (Folorunso & Njoku, 2016). Ginika (2017) added to this notion by saying that learning spaces in an SRC include all situations, individuals, objects and activities affecting the SRC that can have a positive or negative effect on the use of the SRC. SRCs must therefore be able to create the most effective spaces for students to do preparation, research and study. Wardana et al. (2019) stated that SRCs are multidisciplinary and equitable learning spaces in which all topics and related materials are represented. Several requirements such as providing adequate reading places and active participation are needed to create the ideal SRC.

2.6 Student Civilization

The term "civilization" comprises a wide range of features, according to Targowski (2019), including religious beliefs, conventions, technology, etiquette, and knowledge. The term civilization is used in this research to describe the level of knowledge at which an SRC acts as a knowledge hub by providing a diverse collection of materials in a welcoming learning environment to support 21st-century educational practices. A civilization approach to education needs be created in the school context to have an impact and be practiced in education and society (Targowski, 2011). Westerners who regarded themselves as cultural referees had focused on reading and literacy as the hallmarks of civilization in the early twentieth century, and this became the prevailing concepts of "civilization." For students to be

holistic learners in a civilized society, SRCs therefore play the vital role of aligning this need with the requirements of 21st-century skills by not only through the offering books, but also by creating a culture of reading and providing excellent programs such as information literacy courses for students' use. SRCs also aid in the development of students into more civilized people by creating knowledge-based individuals who appreciate and value the importance of information and preservation of knowledge for future references. Students will also apply the knowledge gained and practice the wisdom obtained in their lives. SRCs provide reading materials in a variety of formats and guide students in developing information literacy skills necessary for accessing resource-based learning and dealing with the real-world digital learning environment (Powell, 2017; Shamila, 2013).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to examine the relationship between SRC roles and students' civilization. To achieve such an aim, the quantitative approach was applied as the research method. Quantitative data collection techniques may include experiments, surveys, content analyses, and existing statistics (Neuman, 2014). In line with the constraints posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, this study made use of an online survey platform which is Google Form to collect data from respondents. The survey was conducted in the English language. A plain language statement was attached with the survey to clearly explain the purpose of the study.

The conceptual framework was derived from previous literatures and models where the independent variables are the roles of SRC: SRC collections, SRC programs, SRC technology, LMT roles, and SRC environment. On the other hand, the dependent variable is student civilization. Therefore, eight sections were included in the online survey (Sections A - H). Section A required information on respondents' demographic information; Section B acquired respondents' view regarding the usage of School Resource Centers (SRCs), Section C required respondents to indicate their opinion regarding education civilization, and Sections D till H asked about the roles of SRCs, namely SRC collections, SRC programs, SRC technology, LMT roles, and SRC environment. In Sections C to H, respondents were required to respond to the questions using a Likert Scale which levels are defined as 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree.

Convenience sampling is the most used sampling method (Acharya, 2013). Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability or non-random sampling where members of the target population who meet certain practical criteria such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, and willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study (Etikan et. al, 2016). For this study, the online survey was distributed to a selected type of secondary school in Malaysia. The schools' names remain unidentified for ethical purposes. The respondents' age ranges from 13 to 17 years old. The respondents for this research are considered to have been exposed to and experienced the phenomena under investigation. The data collected were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS Version 28.

4. FINDINGS

This section discusses the related findings as aligned with the research objectives.

There are two main objectives:

- a) To measure the level of SRC roles and student civilization
- b) To examine the relationship between SRC collections, SRC programs, SRC technology, SRC environment, LMT assistance and student civilization

4.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic data of respondents showed that out of the 560 respondents, 325 are females and 235 are males. The respondents were aged between 13 to 17 years old, with a majority, 221 of them being 14 years old. Most respondents, 457 answered that the purpose of them going to the SRC is to do assignments, followed by reading materials available in the SRC, and to access the Internet. As for the frequency of visiting SRCs, 228 respondents chose sometimes, followed with 162 respondents who come every day, 148 respondents who come twice a week, and 56 respondents coming once a week. Majority of respondents with 447 respondents relied more on friends, followed by subject teacher at 290 respondents, and LMTs at 252 respondents with regards to assistance in seeking information for academic purposes in school setting.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

This study conducted a reliability analysis to ensure that the scale of the instrument used is reliable. All variables were found to be above the recommended cut-off value which is 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) as shown in Table 1. Therefore, the scale of the instrument used in the study is considered highly reliable.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

| Variable | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|----------------------|--------------|------------------|
| Student Civilization | 7 | 0.890 |
| SRC Collections | 5 | 0.856 |
| SRC Programs | 5 | 0.848 |
| Technology | 4 | 0.739 |
| SRC Environment | 6 | 0.854 |
| LMT Assistance | 7 | 0.923 |

4.3 Research Objective 1: To measure the level of SRC roles and student civilization

The overall mean, standard deviation and skewness values were recorded for each of the variable measured in this study. Using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 where 1 is for strongly disagree and 5 is for strongly agree, the overall mean showed that the respondents agreed to all the variables measured, i.e., student civilization, SRC collections, SRC programs, SRC technology, SRC environment, and their teachers' (LMTs') assistance. Meanwhile, the overall standard deviation was reported to have a minimum value of 0.66099 for SRC environment and a maximum value of 0.79743 for teachers' (LMTs') influence. All variables skewness are negative skewness where the

value of skewness < 0. (Table 2)

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis

| Variable | Overall Mean | Overall Std Deviation | Overall Skewness |
|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Civilization | 4.2066 | 0.66366 | -0.893 |
| Collection | 4.1393 | 0.72750 | -0.932 |
| Program | 4.0204 | 0.76662 | -0.643 |
| Technology | 4.0567 | 0.73122 | -0.566 |
| Environment | 4.4033 | 0.66099 | -1.377 |
| LMT Assistance | 4.1000 | 0.79743 | -0.920 |

4.4 Research Objective 2: To examine the relationship between SRC collections, SRC programs, SRC technology, SRC environment, LMT assistance and student civilization

The study found that the relationship between civilization and SRC collections, SRC programs, SRC technology, SRC environment, and LMT assistance are positively strong. Table 3 shows the correlation values, r for each of the variable.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis

| Independent Variable (IV) | Dependent Variable (DV) | r | Relationship |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------|
| Collection | Student Civilization | 0.690 | Positive strong relationship |
| Program | | 0.684 | |
| Technology | | 0.646 | |
| Environment | | 0.635 | |
| LMT Assistance | | 0.703 | |

Table 4 shows the summary matrix of research objectives, hypotheses, results (i.e. mean and correlation value, i.e. r), and decision of the study.

Table 4: Summary Matrix

| Research Objective | Hypothesis | Mean | | r | Decision |
|---|--|----------------|--------|-------|---|
| | | Variables | Mean | | |
| To measure the roles of SRC and student civilization | - | Civilization | 4.2066 | - | Agree to each variable measured, i.e. civilization, SRC collection, SRC program, technology, SRC environment and their LMT assistance |
| | | Collection | 4.1393 | | |
| | | Program | 4.0204 | | |
| | | Technology | 4.0567 | | |
| | | Environment | 4.4033 | | |
| | | LMT assistance | 4.1000 | | |
| | | | | | |
| To identify the relationship between SRC collection, SRC program, technology, SRC environment and LMT assistance and student civilization | SRC collection is significantly related with students' civilization | - | | 0.690 | Positive strong relationship |
| | SRC program is significantly related with students' civilization | | | 0.684 | Positive strong relationship |
| | Technology is significantly related with students' civilization | | | 0.646 | Positive strong relationship |
| | SRC environment is significantly related with students' civilization | | | 0.635 | Positive strong relationship |
| | LMT assistance is significantly related with students' civilization | | | 0.703 | Positive strong relationship |

5. **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

SRCs exist to provide educational resources to support 21st century teaching and learning. However, previous literatures have shown that there are challenges and issues in managing SRCs. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the relationship between SRC roles, namely SRC collections, SRC programs, SRC technology, LMT roles, and SRC environment and student civilization.

The overall mean shows that the respondents agreed on all variables measured for Research Objective 1. The SRC environment had the highest mean value at 4.4033, followed by SRC collections. These two variables seem to be the most important SRC roles for students. The finding on SRC environment is consistent with Mayasari, et al., (2020) who mentioned that SRC environment should offer physical and virtual places to students to boost their learning motivation and performance. The SRC environment supports learning spaces, and environment includes objects and activities that can have a positive or negative effect on the use of the SRC (Ginika, 2017).

As for the Research Objective 2, the results of the study found that SRC collection, SRC program, technology, SRC environment and their LMT assistance toward student civilization are significantly determine relationship with student civilization.

Therefore, all hypotheses are supported, i.e. positive strong relationship in this study, with LMT assistance show the strongest relationship. Although the students claimed that they rely more on friends for assistance in seeking for information in the SRC for academic purposes, but to build their knowledge and civilization in education, the students agreed that they need LMTs' assistance as guide to look for quality information with the value of r , 0.703 from the finding results. This finding also supported by Wimolsittichai (2017) found that even though rural SRCs are in poor shape, with the help of LMTs, rural students may gain information and improve both their motivation and academic performance. SRC collections and SRC programs are both significantly related to student civilization. Previous studies (Gildersleeves, 2012; Gretes, 2013; Yusuf, 2014; Lance & Kachel, 2018,) claimed that one of the reasons why students prefer to come to SRCs is the availability of collections and information resources. However, the study by Mayasari, et al., (2020) found that students need updated and current collections and materials to solve and complete their assignments. Quality collections and information are significantly correlated with student civilization as they are used to grow students' knowledge who then apply it to their daily lives. According to Afolabi (2016) the accessible SRCs collections with sufficient media tools may improve the behaviors of students and inspire them to perform better in the required academic results.

As a result, it is hoped that 21st century SRCs would aid Malaysia's education reform and the development of civilization amongst students by reinventing the cultures of reading and knowledge practice in schools, encouraging students to take greater

responsibility on their education, and preparing them for the information and digital age. To survive in this environment, the modern civilization has forced everyone to adapt their behaviors and lifestyles to the new normal. The rapid evolution of globalization as fueled by technological advancements has made all sectors of the society, including education, more difficult to comprehend and regulate. A civilization's goal is to make life better for humans. The concept of "civilization" is becoming more popular since the beginning of the twenty-first century. To practice sustainable civilization, it is vital that humans' manage information and knowledge on technological advancement to ensure that it does not threaten our wellbeing. Government and Ministry of Education should support the changing roles of SRCs agenda by giving a clear direction and policy. The changing roles of SRCs not only support teaching and learning amongst students but also prepare them to be civilized citizens in this challenging world.

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