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Senior High School Students' Use of Library Resources and Services

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Abstract

Purpose – *School library plays an important role in meeting the information needs of students. Students of Senior High School require information to support their personal, study, and environmental needs. Therefore, to meet their needs, high school students conduct information seeking. This study aims to determine the information seeking behavior of high school students in Surabaya.*

Design/methodology/approach – *The method applied in this study is a descriptive quantitative approach. The samples of this study were high school students in Surabaya-East Java-Indonesia, selected by using multistage random sampling. The data collection was conducted through questionnaires. The sample size is 200 people.*

Findings – *The results of this study indicate that the students' major need of information relates to entertainment and following educations after graduating from high schools. The majority of high school students perform passive attention through magazines, passive search related to hobbies mostly done through magazines, active search by considering the accuracy as the criteria in choosing information sources, and continuous search through friends as a channel of information exchange.*

Research limitations/implications: -

Practical implications – -

Originality/value – *Based on these results, libraries at school should provide sources of information which suits with the students' needs, where magazines mainly support their needs, peers have important role on information sharing, and school libraries, specifically librarians and teachers, must be more proactive on asking their students to take benefit from libraries at schools.*

Keywords - *Information behavior, Information need, Information channel*

Paper type – Research paper

Introduction

School library acts as a means for students to meet their information needs. High school students own an information need to support their personal need, their carried role, as well as their environment. Hence, high school students perform information seeking.

Given the diverse information needs of high school students, coupled with various information channels, School library (as a facilitator in supporting the information needs of

high school students) plays a very vital role. It would be much better if the school library can meet the demands of contemporary information needs of high school students.

The existence of library has not received full attention in several schools, it is only a supplementary resource. Suwarno (2010) stated that the role of library is sometimes left out when people discuss about the information age and information society. It is based on the results of previous studies that high school students in Surabaya tend to use channels other than library information (Harisanty, 2009). It is acknowledged that all the information needs of high school students in Surabaya can be fulfilled by information channel other than the school library.

Responding to the factual dynamics I have mentioned above, it is necessary to know the behavior of high school students' information seeking in Surabaya in order to provide input for improving the quality of school library services. The reason for choosing high school students is because they are at the age of adolescence that have identity building characteristics so they need much information to support their development.

Method

This study applies a descriptive quantitative approach. The venues of the study were high schools (SMA) in Surabaya, East Java-Indonesia given the consideration that Surabaya is one of the largest cities in Indonesia. Thus, it is assumed that the freedom of obtaining some information is wide open. The sampling technique applied was a multistage random sampling. Therefore the data of the high schools in Surabaya were obtained from Education Department of Surabaya City. Then two random high schools were chosen from those data.

The number of sample members according to Sugiyono is often expressed by the sample size (2002: 79). According to Seymour Sudman (in Aaker, 1995: 393) "the sample should be large enough so that when it is divided into groups, each group will have a minimum sample size of 100 or more." Based on the statement above, the sample size is 200.

The data collection techniques applied in this research were: a) the primary data collection, which were collected solely by the author directly through questionnaires; b) the secondary data collection, which were obtained in the form that had been processed by certain parties; including data from related institutions; for example the high school data and the high school students data to be studied either through websites, brochures, or other publications, which were used for general description purposes and qualitative analysis. When the data had been collected, the subsequent step was processing the data.

Result and Discussion

The majority of the respondents were middle age teenagers. This condition suits with teenagers age whose ages are between 12 – 21 years old, which consist in detail from 12 – 15 years old as initial teenagers, 15 – 18 years old as middle age teenagers, and 18 – 21 years old as late adolescence. At these stages their development tasks include biological aspects, adult role acceptance based on society's customs and habits, emotional freedom gained from their parents and/or other adults, reaching their own views towards life, ability to make real their own identities, and handling participation in their own adolescence's culture (Monks, 2006:261).

Understanding towards types of information needed by respondents is important because their information needs will support information seeking behaviors. This idea is hand in hand with Kaniki (in Coetzee, 2000) who states that information need must be understood as a need correlated with the question about what kind of information needed and how someone meets and satisfies the need.

Human being's information need is divided into three contexts, personal need, social role owned, and environment (Wilson, 1981). The varieties of a person's information need, in which every person has more than one information needs and every person's information need is different, so that it cannot be avoided that every person defines their information

needs based on certain situations they belong to. Moreover, Muperon adds that educational backgrounds and environments are the main factors which influence a person's information (Bystrom, 1999). Table 1 provides data on the respondents' information needs.

Based on Table 1 above, it shows that almost all respondents need information that relates to entertainment, with its percentage reaches 88% and information about further education after graduating from high schools, with its percentage 52%. There are only a few respondents who need information about research, which reaches only 8%. Major respondents do not need information about public policies; its percentage is 93.5% and only small respondents do not need entertainment information, whose percentage is 12%.

Respondents' information need of entertainment is a need to relax themselves from emotional pressures or a need to escape from stress (*escapist needs*), and a passion to look *diversion* (Yusup, 1995). Therefore, this need is used to release them from daily fatigue.

Information need of further education after graduating from high schools is also the biggest need needed after information about entertainment. According to Monks, teenagers who live in cities who come from well-educated or wealthy families commonly are hoped (by their parents) to continue their education in universities or other high education institutions (2006:287). Oftentimes students continue their education with the hope that they will get 'special things'. They have high hopes when they continue their education. Thus, they seek for information from various sources to meet this information need. The students' options toward further education they are willing to enroll are customized with the jobs they are willing to get in the future. According to Holland's personality theory (*personality type theory*), efforts are important so that a person's career option is appropriate with his or her personality (Santrock, 2003:484). When a person finds a career that is suitable with his or her personality, the person will enjoy the job and work at the same field longer than those who work in the work fields that are not suitable with their personalities. Furthermore, Eli Ginzberg adds with her *developmental career choice theory*, which states that children and adolescences pass through three career option stages: fantasy, tentative, and realistic (Santrock, 2003:483). Ginzberg argues that until 11 years old a kid is still in his or her fantasy stage on choosing his or her career. From 11 to 17 years old a teenager is in tentative stage of their career development and in their 17 and 18 years old to early 20s they are in their realistic stage of choosing their careers. In an investigation done by Grotevant & Durrent, with the data taken from 6,029 high school students from 57 different districts in Texas, the result shows that students have less accurate information toward two career aspects, education requirements they will need to be able to involve in their dream careers and vocational interest that relates to their career options (Santrock, 2003:485). Thus, in their adolescence age students need enhancement on choosing careers that are suitable with their future hope because this is what defines further educations they will get after graduating from high schools. In this case school libraries are very helpful on meeting this type of information need. When they lack of information they will fail on pursuing their higher education. Based on a research done by Boyer about bachelor degree students in America, *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching* states that almost half of student candidates for bachelor programs in their research mention that choosing universities and higher education is a confusing thing because there are no clear standards on making their decisions (Santrock, 2003:264). Many senior students in colleges and universities choose to close their eyes when they choose their degrees. When they enroll to universities or colleges that dissatisfy their options they decide to change their major or institutions, or even drop out from their education due to (sometimes) incorrect reasons.

Respondents' information need about public policies is the least chosen option. It does so because respondents do not need any information about government policies. According to probing results, they do not want to be confused with public policies. According to the respondents, for example, if the government has a policy to increase the price of gas and oil, the respondents just ask for the money for buying vehicles' gas from their parents. Therefore, they have normal response toward policies made by government as well as operational aid given by government to education system.

The existence of information need supports students to seek for information finding. According to Wilson (2000) there are four behaviors of information seeking: passive attention, passive search, active search, and continuous search.

Finding information with passive attention can also be referred to as the search for information that is not intentional, but the absorption of information is still possible to take place. The number of respondents performing passive attention was 140 or 70% out of 200 respondents in this research, while the number of respondents indicating no activity of passive attention was 60 respondents.

Research results show that of the students who had accidentally gained information in the library, most of the information gained were from the magazines. Magazines contain the latest news covering various aspects of human life. Magazines are typically published weekly, bi-weekly or even monthly. When viewed from the contents, magazines can be distinguished as popular, semi-popular, and scientific. Popular magazines are fun while semi-popular magazines usually contain particular articles of interests. The examples of semi-popular magazines are *Trubus* and *InfoKomputer*. Scientific magazines are often referred to as journals. Journals include a variety of cutting-edge researches that discuss the result of a particular discipline. These types of magazines are often demanded by the scientists. The example of journal is *Journal of Educational Research* (published by the Research Institute of the University of Malang) (Darmono, 2007: 65).

In addition to magazines, students utilize supporting books as much as 35% and textbooks as much as 27.9%. According to Darmono (2007: 65) book is a written publication that discusses certain information presented in at least as thick as 64 pages not including the cover page; published by a particular publisher or institution, and there is an author who is responsible for the content of the book. Textbooks are books that have been outlined by the government while supporting books are enrichment books that have received a recommendation from the government to be used at schools, as well as supporting materials for students on certain areas.

Passive search occurs when an individual feels that the type of search that he does accidentally turns out to be relevant to his needs. The number of respondents performing passive search was 120 or 60% out of 200 respondents in this research, while the number of respondents indicating no activity of passive search was 80 respondents.

Research results show that most respondents often inadvertently found information in the library which was in accordance to their needs in the form of a magazine with a percentage of 36.6% and then the supporting books and textbooks amounting to 31.7 %.

The majority of respondents found the information in the library accidentally and then it turned out that this particular information is in accordance to their hobbies. The source of information being used to fulfill their information need was magazine.

Active search is commonly conducted by individuals having information needs. Most respondents compared some books or sources when searching for information with a percentage of 64% or 128 out of 200 respondents in this research, while the number of respondents who did not compare some books or sources when looking for information was 36% or 72 respondents.

Based on survey results stated that most of the respondents chose accuracy as the information source criteria with the highest percentage of 58.6%, and 28.9% respondents chose the suitability of the title as their criteria. Only 8.6% of the respondents chose year of publication as the information source criteria, and 3.9% respondents chose the authorship.

Based on information compliance consideration show that in finding the compliance of the information respondents who considered the title covered a percentage of 35%, and then those who read the review in the back cover of the book covered a percentage of 35% while those who referred to the table of contents covered a percentage of 30%.

The behavior of the respondents regarding the development of the latest information displays that 73.5% of respondents always kept up with the latest information. The other, 26.5%, did not keep up with the latest information.

Continuous search is only possible when the active search has become the basic framework of ideas, beliefs, values and the like. Of the 200 respondents, 97% or 194

respondents shared the needed information with others, while the number of respondents indicating no activity of continuous search was 6 respondents.

Information sharing partner of respondents when exchanging information displays that the majority of respondents chose friends as sharing information partner with a percentage of 98.5%. Only a small percentage chose librarians and teachers as sharing information partners.

The type of information seeking conducted by respondents stated that 51% of the respondents information seeking type was searching for information when needed it while the remaining 49% had the tendency to search for information although it is not needed yet because they believed that such information would be beneficial.

The behavior of the respondents after getting information show that the majority of respondents chose to continue searching for more detailed information needed to complete the information reached a percentage of 74% while the remaining 26% chose to stop doing the search and use the information that had been obtained.

The follow-up activity conducted by the respondents toward the obtained information stated that around 66,5% of the respondents chose to analyze the information obtained in advance before using it while 33.5% of those respondents chose to directly use the information obtained.

The result of Stereinova and Susol research (2005) identified that there are two groups or typologies of information users based on the characteristics of information seeking behavior. The two types of information users are as follow: 1) *Strategic type*, this type of information user is characterized as pragmatic; processes information horizontally, and prioritizes low price and high speed access electronic publications; 2) *Analytic Type*, this type of information user has the characteristic of processing the information deeper, questioning the importance of prestige and conducting review process in choosing the publisher. Thus, most of the information user type of high school students in Surabaya is analytic type.

Stereinova and Susol (2005) also stated that the general characteristics owned by each type of information user can affect the condition of a person when they interact with the source and the channel of information. Strategic type users possess the following characteristics: a) They search for information from many sources and access it more frequently. Information behavior and information use is represented by a positive attitude and thought over the information sources. Their behavior is pragmatic, goal-oriented and context-oriented depending on the specific context of how the document information will be used. The seeking of information for this group is not always understood by spending a lot of time, money and maximum effort. b) People with this type prefer to use the document or information that has been organized well, the document that is simply prepared, the sources that have a good reputation and also the information that has a more secured and reliable quality. c) The motivation that drives this type of user is external motivation. d) This type also prefers the ease of access to the information source, and then follow the information systems available. This type is also more likely to experience stress during the process of information seeking, experience uncertainty and anxiety which reflect his difficulty in coping with the situation of information retrieval that is not predictable. e) This type is also more likely to put an end to the seeking of information as soon as possible, and make a decision when you first come across the information sought.

While Analytic type users possess the following characteristics: a) They are more analytical, more in-depth and more open. b) They are usually looking for new ideas, and choosing to search information from a source that has never been known before. c) When conducting information seeking, they combine a variety of ways in accessing and using many sources including printed and electronic forms. d) They tend to analyze the meaning of any information more deeply toward all the information they have acquired. e) The users of this type are eager to spend more money and have more (diverse) difficulties or obstacles in the process of information seeking. f) The users of this type also use different combinations between formal and informal sources and usually plan every information seeking that will be conducted. g) Their information seeking is based on their own internal motivation. h) They tend to be more patient and able to organize their time more efficiently. i) According to them,

building an understanding toward the problem is important. They then develop a conceptual model over particular topics. j) They are more confident, constructive, and positive when coping with stress during the process of information seeking. k) Their information seeking activity is driven by their natural curiosity (not external motivation) and open-minded perception.

The information processing activities undertaken by the respondents after using the information that had been obtained show that the 89.5% of respondents chose to save the information after using it. 10% of those chose to accumulate the information. Only a small percentage who chose to discard the information after using it.

Conclusion

Most of the respondents were in their 17 years of age, in their middle adolescence. The most information need related to entertainment. Information need about further education after graduating from high schools was also the highest need after information about entertainment. Respondents' information need about government policy or public policy was the least option.

The majority of respondents stated that they often got inadvertently information in the school library (passive attention). The widely used sources of information were magazines. In addition to the magazines, students utilized supporting books and textbooks. There were many respondents who also conducted the passive search to get the information by accident in the school library that fit the needs of the respondents. The type of information required was related to hobbies and the sources used to meet the information needs were magazines. Most respondents conducted comparing activities toward some books or sources when looking for information with a percentage of 64% while the other 36% did not conduct comparing activities toward some books or sources when looking for information. Most of the respondents claimed to communicate/exchange information with a friend over the information needed. Only a small percentage chose librarians and teachers as sharing information partners.

Based on the results of the study, there are some suggestions the researcher wants to give: 1) the results of this study shows that teachers have an important role to motivate their students on searching for information. Therefore, it is important to create cooperation between teachers and libraries, for example by giving assignments which could be solved through library or provide motivation to benefit libraries. Of course libraries' staffs must be proactive also on supporting the activity, for example by preparing information sources and facilities to support the education activity. 2) The low utilization of librarian services as a means of meeting information need shows that the image of librarians for high school students in Surabaya is only those who keep books; most students have not completely believed librarians' skills on meeting their information needs. To solve this problem a library must supply its librarians with various competences which support their work as an information professional 3) Most of the respondents lack of information on accessing school libraries correctly. It is shown by students who commonly access the information by right away looking for the information they need from library shelves. It does so because they are not familiar with the provided sources of information in a library. Thus, promotions and trainings on finding and using information sources in school libraries are important. 4) The meeting of information need could not be freed from school policymakers' influence. Therefore, it is important for school policymakers to consider on adding allocation of fund on providing library's collections and other facilities for supporting students' information need.

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