Information Literacy and Research: A Study of School Children of Apeejay School, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai,

Vijayalaxmi. A. S,
Librarian, Apeejay Schoo,l Kharghar,, Navi Mumbai., Maharashtra
E-mail: vshivanigi@gmail.com

P G Tadasad,
Professor and Chairman, Department of Library and Information Science
Karnataka State Women's University, Vijayapura, Karnataka
E-mail: pgtadasad@gmail.com

Abstract:

Based on a study of 180 school children studying Class IX and Class X at Apeejay School, Khargar reports the their attitude towards information literacy and research. Observes their perceptions of research process, how they find information and whom they consult and also their perception of how they use library resources. Concludes that school librarians and classroom teachers should consider collaboratively developing assignments that include components encouraging or requiring students to actively seek help from their school librarians.

Introduction

In an information society, information literacy skills are quite essential characteristics of every member of such a society. The term "information literacy" refers to the set of skills required to identify information sources, access information, evaluate it, and use it effectively, efficiently, and ethically. Information literacy skills are beneficial to academic success of students particularly those in high school. But generally they lack such skills and thus there exists a gap in the expected and real information skills among the student community. As students come out from high schools, their perception of what information literacy means and how one can find and use information may be



enhanced if it encompasses more than the skills needed. The main goal is to acquaint students to develop skills. David.V. Loertscher (2009) recommended librarians move beyond finding and locating materials and, instead, become active in helping learners engage in higher-order thinking. Indeed the role of librarians in school libraries is at central stage, but also, the perception and attitudes of students toward librarians and libraries is also an important factor.

It is important for librarians and educators to understand high school students' perspectives on, how they seek help in finding information, and how they apply their information literacy skills. As they leave high school for higher education, a better understanding of the level of IL skills they possess and of how they have used library resources may help them, school librarians, and other educators work collaboratively to build an educated citizenry.

Many studies have been reported on the topic mainly in the developed countries. However a literature search reveals that a number of studies have been reported in the academic environment particularly universities and colleges in the Indian context. But such studies are lacking in the school environment. Karisiddappa and Rajgoli (2008) observe that research in this area in Asian countries such as India is still in its preliminary stages, as these countries have only recently become fully immersed in the information culture. The initiatives made by Govt of Kerala in developing information literate school community have been reported by Ajeemsha and Sudhier (2013).

The present study tries focus on high school students in a metro environment. There is a necessity to understand how high school students apply their information literacy skills when conducting research and how these students carry out their projects and assignments. A group of 180 high school seniors of Apeejay School, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra to complete an information literacy survey related to the research process were taken up with the following objectives.

1. To identify high school students' perceptions of the research process;
2. To map high school students' perceptions of where they find information and who they ask for help; and
3. To know high school students' perceptions of how they use library resources?

Methodology

Survey method of research was adopted to elicit the required data. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from the students of Class IX and Class X at Apeejay school Kharghar, Navi Mumbai. The questionnaire was based on the survey instrument designed by Kovalik, Yutzey and Piazza (2012) for a survey related to student perception of the research process. The survey consisted of twenty-eight Likert-type scale items with a score of 1 representing "Offten", 2 "Sometimes," 3 "Seldom ," 4 "Never." This activity of collecting the data was conducted in their weekly library period. In all a total of 180 students participated in the survey.

Apeejay School, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai, is a CBSE-affiliated school. The school was established in the year 2000 with 29 students. Today it has been rated one among Top 10 schools in Navi Mumbai with approximately 2300 students and 80 teaching staff. It follows Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) pattern mandated by CBSE with effect from October 2009. The school offers Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary courses from Nursery to class XII. As the school follows CCE pattern, students are given individual projects and group projects, which is compulsory for them to do the projects as per the CBSE guidelines. So this project was of great success, in finding how students do use the available information, evaluate and use it ethically.

Results

Characteristics	Number (Percentage	Characteristics	Number (Percentage)
Gender		Class	
Boys	91 (50.28%)	Class IX	90 (50%)
Girls	89 (49.82%)	Class X	90 (50%)
Social Class		Languages spoken	
GM	139 (77.63%)	Hindi	107 (66.88%)
SC/ST	26 (14.52%)	Marathi	27 (166.88%)
OBC	14 (7.82%)	Bengali	11 (6.87%)
Electronic gadgets		Punjabi	11 (6.87%)
Desktop	180 (100%)	Kannada	5 (3.13%)
Laptop	180 (100%)	Tamil	5 (3.13%)
Tablet	167 (93.29%)		
Smart Phone	180 (100%)		
Internet	180 (100%)		

Table 1: General Characteristics of Study Population

The study population consists of 180 students - 90 students from Class IX and 90 from Class X with English as medium of instruction. Of these 91 were boys (50.28%) and 89 were girl students (49.72%). Students belonging to GM category constitute more than three fourth of the group (N=139) with SC/ST (14.52%) and OBC (7.82%) constituting the remaining. Students speak different languages as their parents hail from different parts of the country. Major languages spoken by the children include Hindi (66.88%), Marathi (16.88%), Bengali (6.87%), Punjabi (6.87%), Kannada (3.13%) and Tamil (3.13%). It can also be observed that the students under study are all well acquainted with desktop, laptop, smart phone and Internet and a very few are not acquainted with tablets.

Perceptions of the Research Process

Item	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Mean
1: I have a clear focus for my topic before using the library	148	41	0	0	1.25
3: I like to find everything I need first and then read it	137	30	0	0	1.2
4: My thoughts about my topic change as I explore information	13	115	39	0	2.13
6: A focus emerges as I gather information on a topic	15	68	0	0	1.55
7: The information that I find at the beginning of a search is confusing and doesn't fit in with what I know	19	129	20	0	2.02
8: I take detailed notes from every source of information I look at	91	75	2	0	1.46
10 : A search is complete when I no longer find new information	40	92	10	0	1.81
13 : A search is completed when I find enough information	21	102	45	0	2.14
14 : The information I need is in unexpected places in the library	3	59	106	0	2.62

Table 2: Perceptions of the research process by high school students.

Results (Table 2) indicated that over 70 percent of the students who participated in this study had a clear focus about a topic before using the school library; 70% percent answered "Often" for item 1 ("I have a clear focus for my topic before

using the library"). However, they also indicated that their thoughts about a topic changed as they learn more about it; 63.8 percent answered "Sometimes" or "Seldom" for item 4 ("My thoughts about my topic changed as I explore information"). A large majority indicated that they are able to better clarify the direction of their research as they gather information; 37.7 percent answered "Sometimes" for item 6 ("A focus emerges as I gather information on a topic"). Students in this study also indicated that they become more interested in a topic over time; 58.6 percent answered "Seldom" for item 14 ("I become more interested in a topic as I gather information").

Of the students surveyed, 37.07 percent indicated that they prefer to find all resources before reading them; these students answered "Sometimes"" for item 3 ("I like to find everything I will need first and then read it"). However16.6% answered "Sometimes," for item 3, indicating that they do not use resources in this way. Only 10.5 percent of the students in this study indicated they find initial information confusing; these students answered "Often" for item 7 ("The information that I find at the beginning of a search is confusing and doesn't fit in with what I know"). More (70.6 percent) indicated they "Sometimes" find initial information confusing, and about the same number (11.1 percent) answered "Seldom" for item 7. In response to item 8 ("I take detailed notes from every source of information I look at"), over one-third of the students in this study (41.6 percent) indicated they "Sometimes" take notes from all resources. "Often" or "Almost Always" was selected by 50.5 percent. The only students (1.11 percent) answered "Seldom" or "Almost Never" for item 8.

In response to item 10 ("A search is completed when I no longer find new information"), 51.11 percent answered "Seldom" and an almost equal number (22.22 percent) indicated they "often" stop searching when they no longer find new information. 5.55 percent students answered "Seldom" or "never". A high percentage of students in this study indicated they stop searching once they have enough information; 49.4 percent answered "Sometimes" for item 13 ("A search is completed when I find enough information").

Perceptions of where to find information and who to ask for help

Item	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Mean
2 : I find it helpful to talk to others about my topic	107	58	2	0	1.4
5 : The library has the information I need	9	154	4	0	1.96
9 : I ask the librarian for direction in locating materials in the library	142	26	0	0	1.17
11: All sources of information I need are found in the online	23	139	6	0	1.92
12: I talk to people who know about my topic	99	56	13	0	1.5
15: I become more interested in a topic as I gather information	77	85	6	0	1.58
16: I make several trips to the library to research a topic	148	20	0	0	1.12
17: I am successful in using the library	153	15	0	0	1.1
18: I ask the librarian for advice on exploring a topic	164	4	0	0	1.03
19: I ask the librarian for assistance in identifying materials	150	18	0	0	1.13
20 : I need materials other than books	75	89	4	0	1.61

Table 3: Perceptions of where to find information and who to ask for help.

From table 3 it can be interpreted that over three fourth the students in this study indicated that the school library has the information they need for research projects: 85.5 percent answered “Sometimes” for item 5 (“The library has the information I need”). However, only about one-third (77.2 percent) of the students answered “Sometimes in response to “All the sources of information I need are found in the online catalog” (item 11).

Over half of these students indicated they do make multiple trips to the library when they have a research project; 82.2 percent answered “Often” for item 16 (“I make several trips to the library to research a topic”). A much smaller number

indicated they do make multiple trips; 11.11 percent answered “Sometimes” for item 16.

In response to item 15 (“The information I need is in unexpected places in the library”), 47.2 percent answered “Sometimes.” An almost equal number indicated information is where they expect; 42.7 percent answered “Often” for item 15.

A half number of students in this study find it helpful to talk to others about their research topics; 59.4 percent answered “Often” for item 2 (“I find it helpful to talk with others about my topic”), with only 33.2 percent not finding it helpful, answering “Sometimes” for this item. The majority of students in this study, 55 percent, indicated they “Often” talk to people who know about their topics (item 12). For this same statement (“I talk to people who know about my topic”), “Sometimes” was selected by 33.11 percent; “Seldom” was selected by 7.2 percent.

However, these students do to ask the school librarian for advice on research topics; 91.1 percent answered “Often,” and 2.2 percent answered “Sometimes” for item 18 (“I ask the librarian for advice when exploring a topic”). Also, students do ask for help in locating materials in the library; 78.8 percent answered “Often,” and 14.4 percent answered “Sometimes” for item 9 (“I ask the librarian for direction in locating materials in the library”).

Similarly, many participants (83.33 percent) are likely to ask for help in identifying resources to use; they answered “Often” in response to item 19. In response to this item (“I ask the librarian for assistance in identifying materials”), Approximately three fourth of students (85 percent) indicated they were only “Often” successful in using the library (item 17). In response to this item (“I am successful in using the library”), close to twenty percent indicated they were “Sometimes” (8.33 percent).

Perceptions of how they use library resources

Item	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Mean
21: I use the library to gather information on my own, not connected to an assignment by a teacher	33	108	27	0	1.97
22: I have difficulty finding information on a topic	14	99	55	0	2.25
23: Researching a topic takes more time than I anticipate	34	58	76	0	2.26
24: I use the library when I want to select the books to read	69	73	26	0	1.75
25: I use multiple types of sources for my project (eg., books, journal articles, websites)	12	130	26	0	2.07
26: I use more than one library to research a topic	6	84	85	0	2.45
27: I use the indexes in the back of the books to find information on a topic	2	75	91	0	2.51
28: Projects and assignments add to what I learn in a course	165	3	0	0	1.02

In response to item 21 (“I use the library to gather information on my own, not connected to an assignment by a teacher”) over 60 percent of the students in this study indicated they “Sometimes” (15 percent) “Seldom' or “Often” (18.33 percent) use the library unless they are working on a school-related assignment. Only 7.7 percent of students in this study indicated they have trouble finding information on a research topic answered “Often,” and 30.5 percent answered “Seldom”, and 55 percent of students answered “ Sometimes” for item 22 (“I have difficulty finding information on a topic”). When responding to item 23 (“Researching a topic takes more time than I anticipate”) the majority of students in this study, close to 42.2 percent, indicated that research “Seldom” ,(32.2 percent), “Sometimes” ,(18.8 percent) “Often” takes more time than they had anticipated.

The responses from students in this study were approximately evenly split when indicating if they use the school's library to select books to read (item 24). Approximately one-third indicated “Often” (38.3 percent) using the library to select books to read. In response to “I use the library when I want to select books to read” (item 24), “Sometimes” (40.5 percent) select library books to read, and

the remaining students in this study indicated "Seldom" (14.4 percent).

For item 25 the majority of students in this study indicated they "Sometimes" (72.2 percent) use a variety of resources for research projects. In response to item 25 ("I use multiple types of sources for my projects (e.g., books, journal articles, websites)") less than ten percent of the students indicated they "Often" (6.6 percent) or "Seldom "(14.4 percent) use multiple resources.

Study participants indicated they maximum use only the school library when doing research; students indicated that they use more than one library when doing research; 93.3 percent answered "Often" and 44.4 percent answered "Sometimes" and 45 percent answered for "Seldom" for item 26 ("I use more than one library to research a topic").

Over half of the students in this study indicated they find indexes in books helpful when looking for information about a topic; 50.5 percent answered "Seldom" and 41.6 percent answered "Sometimes" on item 27 ("I use indexes in the back of books to find information on a topic"),

In response to item 28 ("Research assignments add to what I learn in a course") 91.6 percent answered "Often." And 1.6 percent of the students answered " Sometimes " adds to what is learned in a course.

Discussion

Perceptions of the Research Process

The study population in this study were students belonging to upper-middle-class families studying in a school having a well established library culture, and the library being managed by full-time library professional. The school finances access to numerous informational resources. Due to these characteristics, this population has a record of relatively high academic achievement; the participants also had access to high-quality multiple types of information resources.

Participants appeared to understand that a library is a place to obtain information; Students always read a quote written outside the library that " Library – Power house of Knowledge – Where the information can be Inquired , Acquired and Inspired" . They realise these words as they do their research processes. In the beginning of the research activity they visit the library with their concerned teachers, and with the help of librarian and their teachers they start discussing their topics. students visit the library after they had identified a

research topic and they used information gathered in the library to learn more about their topics, Majority of the participants did not have difficulty understanding information about their topics, Therefore, providing techniques and strategies to help students select appropriate information and then use that information effectively may help students refine their critical thinking skills, is an important component of information literacy.

Note taking is another component of information literacy. Through note taking students begin to make sense of the information they gather and, subsequently, use the information. Large number of participants tended to take detailed notes from every source of information they found; students tend to be selective in which resources they feel are important and, thus, worthy of note taking; students do feel that note taking is valuable ; resulting in them taking notes on all the information they find. Being aware that students may approach note taking in multiple ways suggests that teachers and school librarians may want to differentiate instruction related to how best to use resources and provide alternative note-taking methods.

Participants in this study are likely to end their search for information when the information became repetitive or when they felt they had found enough information. These findings suggest that students rely on project or assignment requirements and guidelines when completing research projects.

Creating projects may lead to a better understanding of how librarians can help in the research process. For example, explicit expectations that students will seek help from the school librarian to develop a research strategy, assess the quality of resources, and write annotations. Students may then come to view the school librarian as a “research intervention specialist” whose assistance can be sought at any time and not only when a particular assignment must be completed. Fostering a more comprehensive view of the school librarian's role may lead to an increased use of librarians not only by students in high school but also when they transition to college.

Perceptions of Where They Find Information and Who They Ask for Help?

Results of survey indicated that majority of participants used the library to find information. However, a majority indicated that they typically made only one trip to the library for a research project. Although some participants did use the school library, they tended not to ask for help from librarians when locating

materials, getting advice when exploring a topic, or identifying appropriate materials. The instructional role school librarians can play in supporting students in all aspects of the research process. Librarians, perhaps through whole-class instruction (whether in the library or classrooms), should consider providing clearly focused information literacy instruction so students become more aware of how librarians can facilitate the research process. So the School Librarian should be an all rounder such as , instructor, facilitator, mind reader and so on. Librarian plays an vital role in school Libraries.

Participants indicated that sometimes they find their research materials online, and they sometimes talk to the people who know about their topics. Librarians serve as a critical link to high-quality and relevant resources. The importance of having school librarians is paramount. If students have multiple opportunities to interact with librarians throughout their school years, they have a higher comfort level about approaching the school librarian with research questions by the time they move into high school.

Although the majority of participants in this study felt they were successful in using the library. Some students indicated that they take utmost help of the teachers and the librarian in identifying library materials, advice of the librarian and also in finding of the appropriate materials other than books in the library. Librarians and teachers need to be mindful of students who do not feel successful. These findings also point to the importance of librarians fostering a helping role rather than a disciplinary role in school libraries.

What Are High School Seniors' Perceptions of How They Use Library Resources?

Participants were positive about their ability to use the library to find information on a research topic, indicating that they do not have difficulty in that regard. In addition, as they searched for information they used indexes in books. However, the majority reported using the library only when they had a specific assignment requiring them to do so, and only few of them selected recreational books from the school library collection.

School librarians, teachers, and school administrators may want to further investigate the implications of these findings. If students are relying solely on resources in the school library for project works, then access to varied and high-quality research resources gains importance. High school students in this study indicated that research took more time than they originally anticipated, perhaps

because the majority use sometimes multiple types of resources (books, journal articles,) when doing research projects. Participants also indicated they thought research assignments were a positive aspect of their courses and contributed to what they learned.

Conclusion

High school students in this study were successful in using library resources to locate information related to research projects with the help of Librarian and their teachers.. Engaging in the research process helped them learn more about their respective research topics and enabled them to become more specific about aspects of a topic they wanted to investigate further. These students became more aware that research takes time and that multiple types of resources with varying perspectives should be included in research efforts. Participants used these documents to guide them in determining how many and what types of resources they should use to complete projects and assignments.

These findings suggested that, school librarians and classroom teachers should consider collaboratively developing assignments that include components encouraging or requiring students to actively seek help from their school librarians.. Having students write annotations for each source necessitates that they read each source critically instead of simply trying to collect information. If students see the librarians collaborating with teachers, students begin to regard the school librarian as a collaborator, not a stranger.

School librarians should seek opportunities to get to know students personally, as these opportunities may be an integral part of learning and internalizing information for many students. Building a learning environment in which school library space is used for clubs and other student groups and activities will help increase the personal time librarians can spend with students beyond academics. For example, the school library can host book and poetry clubs, writing groups, and technology activities.

Students' perceptions of school librarians—and how these perceptions affect learners' willingness to ask for help—may be a function of the librarian's many roles. First and foremost, the school librarian is a teacher whose role is to help students develop mastery of information literacy skills. However, this role is often compromised by the librarian's role as a manager of a learning space that must accommodate multiple kinds of users, from teachers giving “timed writings” to

students working in groups on class projects. Developing a culture in which the school librarian can trust the students and teachers to be attuned to what is going on in the library and to respect those activities is a challenge.

In the future, researchers may want to investigate how assignment requirements and grading for research-related projects or assignments support mastery of the research process and how these documents can be structured to best encourage student interactions with school librarians. Through these interactions, students could experience first-hand how librarians can help. Researchers may also want to examine the many roles school librarians have as teachers and managers and how these roles interact and affect the helping role. School librarians and teachers need to continue to work together to design learning experiences in which the librarian is an integral part of the learning process so students have direct and ongoing interactions with librarians. As a result, students could gain more thorough understandings of the many roles of librarians and how librarians can help them become information literate and confident lifelong learners

References

1. Ajeemsha, S and Sudhier, K G Pillai (2013). National policy on information literacy in school curriculum: Kerala's initiatives. ***SRELS Journal of Information Management***, 50(1), 47-59

2. Karisiddappa, C R and Rajgoli, I U (2008). In Search of **Information Literacy** Programmes and Practices: Survey of Selected Institutions at Bangalore, ***DESIDOC Journal of Library and Information Technology***, 28(2), 28-38

   Kovalik, Cindy; Yutzey, Susan and Piazza, Laura (2013). Information Literacy and High School Seniors: Perceptions of the Research Process. ***School library research: Research Journal of the American Association of School librarians***, 16, 1-26

3. Loertscher, David (2009). “The Front End Load of Student Research.” ***Teacher Librarian***, 36 (4): 42–43.