Pattern of Rural Library Usage among Rural Youth in Malaysia

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the pattern of rural library usage among rural youth in Malaysia. Data for the study were collected via questionnaires and based on a multi-stage cluster sampling, a total of 400 villagers from four districts in Malaysia was selected as the respondents. The analysis performed confirms that the majority of rural library visitors were mainly students and housewives and it was discovered that the internet services offered by the rural libraries were fully utilised by rural youth. Based on the results, it was be concluded that the rural library remains relevant to the rural communities for local development and could ensue as a centre for lifelong learning. It was the researcher's hope that this study could assist the concerned parties in their decision making whether to upgrade or maintain the rural libraries for the purpose of future community development and continue to contribute to the the local communities.

Key words: Rural library, library usage, rural youth, community development, rural development

INTRODUCTION

Various attempts has been made by the government to reduce the existing information gap between the urban and the rural communities. One of them was by implementing the rural library. The rural library or locally known as "Perpustakaan Desa' is a small library located in the most crowded rural residence. It is also a small branch or a centre that provides library services to meet various needs of the local community. The purpose of rural library is to facilitate and to encourage reading habits among the rural community by providing reading materials and various resources as they live far from the city centre.

Among the main objectives of the rural library establishment are to cultivate reading habits among the rural population; to provide useful reading resources to the rural communities; to provide educational resources for students and to arrange recreational activities related to the rural communities (Zainab *et al.*, 2004). In order to fulfil these objectives, a number of services are offered at the rural library such as reading materials, book borrowing, referencing, ICT related resources (computer, internet, scanner and printer) and appropriate activities for children and adults.

Until the end of December 2011, a total of 1,179 rural libraries were built throughout the country as described in Table 1 since it was first introduced in 2000. The highest number of rural libraries was recorded to be in the State of Sabah and Sarawak due to its' widespread land and rural areas. The rural libraries in Malaysia serve as an agent of social reformation because it provides guidelines in terms of learning and skills to the local communities such as basic skills, youth and family education. Most of the rural libraries involved reading campaign programs such as storytelling and read out loud designated for young people.

The importance of rural library is to provide information, bridge the digital gap and provide services that are necessary to the local communities living in rural

Table 1: Number of rural libraries in Malaysia

States	No. of rural libraries
Johor	92
Kedah	92
Kelantan	37
Melaka	57
Negeri Sembilan	73
Pahang	64
Perak	78
Perlis	38
Pulau Pinang	82
Selangor	70
Terengganu	88
Sabah	198
Sarawak	207
Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan	3

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area to enjoy library facilities. Rural library also operates as a liaison medium between the government and the community in the realization of a society that loves to read. Nowadays, there is also a 'door to door' service provided that will raise awareness of reading even though no transport to come to the library. Groups targeted for 'door to door' are a group that is far from the library, people with no transportation, people who are sick and disabled. Their motto is to allow unfortunate individuals to enjoy reading without any obstacles. Moreover, the door to door program can foster brotherhood and bond between the library officers and the villagers with the intention to foster reading habits.

Although, the Malaysian government have provided sufficient facilities and services to the rural communities, there were several youth who were reluctant to use the services provided by rural library and one of the main reasons is due to the existence of internet which is similar with Piirto (1993)'s findings. Even though some of the rural libraries have provided and are equipped with ICT facilities such as computers and internet services, the problem still exists. The fortunate youths who could afford their own internet service prefered to surf the internet at home which was easier and required less effort and time used compared to visiting the rural library.

Nowadays information is everything. For a better youth development, it is important to expose the young generation with adequate information and through the right channels. Rural library is one of medium for information channels that has been established by the government which offered several potential benefits in terms of varieties of information sources, knowledge and entertainment, internet access, arrangements of social and cultural activities, a place of relaxation, technology, social support and cultural proximity. According to past studies, there were a number of factors that could influence the use of rural library services such as demographic factor, relevancy, sustainability, positive attitude, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, government support and subjective norm (Omar *et al.*, 2012a, b). Despite the governments' effort in establishing rural libraries, it is important to know the amount of people who use the services provided by the library and how it has been used. In answering the questions, this study will identify the pattern of rural library usage among rural youth in Malaysia. In line with the objectives of a previous study on community informatics and community development in the United States done by Pigg (2005), this study also aimed to further elaborate the findings with this research. The study also wants to discover whether all facilities and access has been fully utilized by the users in order to achieve socio-economic development but in this context among the rural youth community in Malaysia.

Review of related studies: Youth is an important group in Malaysia and they are considered as the future leader of the community. Their role as an information disseminator among the community will ensure that the information cycle process will benefit the socio-economic development within their rural area. In certain development programs such as the Rural Internet Centre and Rural Information Centre, youth are among the main target groups. According to the Malaysia Youth Council, youth are those whose age ranges from 15-40 years old which is in line with Act 668 Youth Societies and Youth Development Act (2007). A research conducted by the Institute of Youth Research and Development (IPPBM) (2011) in 2010 from the overall population, 42.5% was constituted by youth which suggested youth as the key player in a country's development. In additional, the study had found that among top five demands of youth, information and knowledge were included and this reflects the relevancy of information source centres such as the existence of rural library in their community. Furthermore, according to the IPPBM (2011), they revealed that 79.7% of youth used computers and about 74.3% of them used the internet and this age group was recorded as the heaviest users of ICT. Ahmad (2010) both agreed that youth and ICT is an ideal combination. Involvement of ICT and technologies in rural librariy services are a good strategy because it can attract more youth to use the services provided. The researcher added that a library and an ICT service combination can be seen as a catalyst to overcome the digital divide between the rural and the urban communities.

Based on a study done by Shaifuddin *et al.* (2011) regarding rural youths' perception of information sources and rural library services, the majority of rural library group users in Malaysia were students. Extensions on the findings by Shaifuddin *et al.* (2011) they found that besides reading books, the users often visit the rural library to seek for information eitheron how to further theire ducation or on career development, other than that the uses were more on how to use the computer and the internet. Library services have benefited the rural youth in helping them make important decisions and also in acquiring a new knowledge. Regarding on the importance of rural library, it was ranked fourth after the internet which was the main preference for information seeking.

According to Shaifuddin *et al.* (2011) also some of the main problems that hindered rural youth to use and visit the rural library were the lack of time, knowledge and they have other options of information access which was significant to Ahmed (2010)'s findings. Meanwhile, Holt (1995) had a different view on why the local people did not use rural library services such as lack of physical access, cultural and linguistic diversity, unequal levels of social and educational background and motivation. The rural youth preferred a digital medium kind of information access. The researcher did recommend providing the rural youth with access to information both in the form of printed and e-Formats which was also the main focus of this study. This provision was to ensure that they have options when searching for their information needs to offer free services, to provide computers with internet network and to increase the awareness on the activities or events conducted can really overcome several problems that has been raised in the study.

The services and activities offered to rural communities are related and still relevant that brings the importance of rural library in a community development. According to past literature, there were several factors that made rural libraries relevant and could influence the use of rural library services. In his conceptual study on library roles and the future generation needs in terms of rural library services, Samsuddin discovered that there were five factors explicitly; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); relevant activities and resources; rural youth negative perceptions towards rural library; operation hour and language barrier. However, amenities such as ICT services, relevant activities and the provided resources needed to be address first (Omar *et al.*, 2014). Nowadays, to attract more youth to visit and to use library services really needs ICT involvement in terms of applications and services. In his study also, some suggestions for improvement were highlighted and indirectly it could assist the related parties in developing the rural libraries in Malaysia. He anticipated that rural communities would fully utilize the facility as much as possible and were not limited to youth and children only. It is believed that a rural library will help and benefit students in achieving better educational results and possiblymore scholars from the rural areas would come back and contribute to the development of their respective regions.

A research was done by Wijasuriya (1985) on examining the development of Malaysian library services and the problems it encountered in delivering services to the public. The study found low levels of usage, limited outlets, poor reading habits and the lack of reading materials such books in the public library were the problems encountered. About 30% of the books were out-dated and irrelevant, especially in terms of school textbooks. However, the researcher added that within time, the amount of literacy rate in the country will increase and it may lead to an increase in reading habits. This is when the public library would become demanding and fulfil the needs of the community in the future. It is true, the literacy rate in rural area nowadays has increased and simultaneously it will foster reading habits among them.

Another study done by Anwar and Supaat (1998) about information needs of the rural community in Malaysia which they have gathered among their several studies on rural information needs. About three Malaysian villages without rural library services were selected and analysed on their most seeked information were on religion; family relations; current affairs; information on health and education purposes. These information needs from the rural community were identified to be driven by several reasons such as fulfilment on updated information, to solve problems, self-development to create a better family relations and job purposes. Although, advanced technologies were being used as a source of information nowadays, there still exists rural communities who prefer the traditional ways. Radio and television, friends and neighbours, printed materials such newspapers, relatives who live in the city and reference channels or services (library) are still relevant and are a trusted source for delivering freshly newsfeed. A total of 93.4% of the results which is the majority of the rural community showed a positive feedback and were interested n using the rural library services if it is provided. To establish the rural library, the location must be considered and in line with the needs of the local community or more specifically the target group.

In her study in Northern Italy, Corradini (2006) focused on the library usage and services which included data on experiences, expectations and perspectives of youth as the respondents. The findings of the study showed that the users used the services specifically and purposely to gain the latest information and to conduct group discussions. Besides the benefits in using library services, there were several reasons that has affected a library usage such as the environment of the library were uninteresting and cold, solemn and rigid, old-fashioned and boring, the collections were too old and it lacked of suitable sources in fulfilling youth needs and interests. This finding could be undertaken to enhance and develop library services that are closer to the needs of youth as the main target group. The researcher also stated that the sources provided by the library should be up to date. In line with Corradini (2006), apart from offering more and

new library services or activities, for sure the services should be 'heard' and 'seen' by the target users and it must be intensively publicised. Additionally, a bonus point as the researcher suggested was to establish good relationships with the school, parents and other external stakeholders.

Smith had done a study to investigate why rural libraries should attract youth to use its' services. The purpose of the study was to comprehend the needs and interests of youth and at the same time to discover the process for implementation and maintenance of the effort. To improve the rural library services, it was agreed by the other previous studies that has been discussed, it was imperative to identify the needs and interests of youth by discovering related factors that impinged the usage of rural library services. Besides identifying, their needs and interestthe provision must provie up to date sources and services that satisfies and attracts youth users, it should involve a consistent monitoring and youth involvement in the planning process. Sometimes the monitoring regularities were not conducted properly due to limited number of staffs, limited budget and others. The researcher also stressed on the competency, knowledge and skills of the staff were equally important with relevant trainings and courses, thus in return giving better services to the users.

Vavrek (1995) added that people refused to use the library services because they were not aware of its existence and the services offered. To encourage and motivate the community in using the rural library, the reading culture and reading habits among rural youth must be enhanced and strengthen. Although, updated knowledge and information is highly demanded by the communities, there are still among the rural community who refused to visit the library due to outdated reading sources (Vavrek, 1995).

The problem with inappropriate activities and inadequate content of the rural library books may affect the visitors physically and prevent them from using the services provided. In the West or Africa, an agriculture information might not be suitable for most of the local farmers. This problem arised from irresponsible management who lacked research and survey of information on the needs of their local community (Nyana, 2009). The statistics of rural library visits and usage are important, it has a significant impact in a research to ensure that the sources and the activities provided will fit and are suitable to the local community needs. As the traditional library services were book oriented and people-oriented instead of information-oriented, users would easily feel bored and started to ignore the existence of a library. Rural library

should be essential to the rural community survival needs and should be able to fulfil their entertainment needs. Rural youth may be attracted to new reading materials such as novels and updated education related articles, if the rural library can provide such services and facilities, it will attract more youth to visit and use the rural library.

Nagata *et al.* had found that there were three patterns of common user groups in using the library which were the learners group, extended user group and place and PC (computer) use group. The researcher studied on a students' patterns in academic library use and their learning outcomes. They had conducted three focus group interviews and three surveys in Japanese and Finnish universities from 2004-2006. The learners group would use the library for research purposes and the materials in-house such as books and journals. The extended use group were more likely to read, do assignments, chat, rest and just filling their free time. Meanwhile the PC user group would use the PCs, the discussion room, the carrel and the canteen.

It seemed that the lack in promoting library services and the activities provided, current/updated services and reading sources, (resources and services) (Wijasuriya, 1985; Vavrek, 1995; Omar *et al.*, 2012a, b) youth involvement in planning, uninteresting and the lack of sources (Corradini, 2006) were the common factors that could decrease the numbers of rural youth involvement in rural library. However, the analysis on the rural library pattern usage in this study will lead to which action should be taken such as the consistent monitoring systems and the importance to acknowledgethe needs and interests among the rural youth community to the related parties (Vavrek, 1995; Anwar and Supaat, 1998; Corradini, 2006; Omar *et al.*, 2012a, b).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was quantitative in nature, whereby a questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool. Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to randomly select four areas of data collection, namely Lumut (Perak), Marang (Terengganu), Jelebu (Negeri Sembilan) and Kundasang (Sabah). Each of the areas was represented by 100 respondents (100 respondents×4 areas = 400 respondents). The sample size was determined based on the prerequisite for the statistical analyses. At least 300 cases were needed in order to run the factor analysis. The data collection took 5 months to complete (from February 2014 to June 2014). The data collection process was carried out by trained and experienced enumerators monitored by the research team. The data collected were

analysed using SPSS whereby descriptive analyses such as frequency, percentage and mean score were performed in order to describe the general findings of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results displayed in Table 2 shows the demographic profile of the respondents in this study. The table shows that 63% were female and 37% were male respondents. It was consistent with the previous research on the difference between genders regarding attitude towards rural library services among youths in Malaysia (Yusoff *et al.*, 2013). Most of the respondents were those aged 20 years and below (46%) followed by those aged 21-30 years (23%) and those aged 31 years above (31%) which have recorded a mean score of 24.9. Most rural library users aged 20 years and below were still studying and attended school. It was found that they often spent their free time visiting the rural library, either after school on weekends or during school holidays. Various activities were carried out when they were in the rural library besides completing assignments and doing school exercises they would search for information and this was in line with findings by Anwar and Supaat (1998). The existence of the library is very important and provides the needs of youth who are living in rural areas because they lacked of entertainment. Other than functioning as a place to hang out with friends for a group study and

Table 2: Demographic factor

Factors	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Gender			
Male	148	37.0	-
Female	252	63.0	-
Age (years)			24.9
<20	184	46.0	-
21-30	93	23.2	-
>31	123	30.8	-
Races			
Malay	297	75.0	-
Dusun	103	25.0	-
Education level			
Never been to school	3	0.8	-
Primary school	14	3.5	-
PMR	112	28.0	-
SPM/SPMV	175	43.8	-
Skill certificate/STPM	43	10.8	-
Diploma	33	8.3	-
Degree/Master/PhD	20	5.0	-
Employment status			
Working	135	33.8	-
Not working	265	66.2	-
Income (n = 135)			RM1,415.44
<RM700	27	20.0	-
RM701-RM1500	79	58.5	-
>RM1501	29	21.5	-
Number of household			
1-3	62	15.5	-
4-6	208	52.0	-
>7	130	32.5	-

discussions, they could also use the internet facility provided (Corradini, 2006). Unfortunately, not all rural youths living in rural areas were lucky enough to be able to subscribe to the internet or purchase a broad band like the youth in the city. With the availability of facilities such as the rural libraries, 1Malaysia Internet Center and 1Malaysia Wireless Village Services nearby their residence, it benefits them in a lot of ways and offers opportunity to facilitate the rural community with good facilities and services (Omar *et al.*, 2012a, b).

With regard to ethnicity, a total of 297 Malays (75%) and 103 Dusuns (25%) participated in this study. Dusun is the collective name of a tribe or ethnic in the state of Sabah of North Borneo. Collectively, they form the largest ethnic group in Sabah and they are defined by the constitution to be one of the seven Bumiputera groups. In this study, about a quarter of the respondents were from the Kundasang Ranau District, Sabah. Pertaining to education level, 43.8% of the respondents had achieved SPM/SPMV, 28% had achieved PMR/SRP, 10.8% had obtained a skill certificate/STPM and 8.3% had achieved a diploma. The respondents apparently had the knowledge and ability to use the facilities provided at the rural library as the majority of them have obtained the SPM education level. The literacy issues in rural areas no longer became a major problem due to the government's efforts in ensuring the illiterate youth are under constant monitoring and priority. The existence of the rural library is also one of the government's efforts in improving the literacy within rural communities. According to Omar *et al.* (2012a, b), besides ensuring continuous delivery of information, many high impact projects for the rural community have been introduced particularly on ICT.

Approximately two-third of the respondents (66.2%) were unemployed and the average mean of household income was RM1,415.44 a month among a total of 135 employed respondents. In addition, more than half of the respondents (58.5%) had a household income of between RM701-RM1500 monthly followed by more than RM1501 (21.5%) and then less than RM700 monthly (20%). The findings obtained in this study disclosed that those who did not work were mainly students and full-time housewife. The findings were consistent with the results of previous studies (Shaifuddin *et al.*, 2011), rural library visitors were mainly students and housewives. As housewives, they had a lot of free time in the afternoon after managing their children and completing the housework. During free time they would pay a visit to the rural library and spent time with their friends who were also housewives for a casual reading such as magazines and others. Apart from reading in the library, they also came to the library with the intention to borrow reading

materials such as novels and cookbooks. With the establishment of this rural library, indirectly it could increase social activities among the rural communities including housewives as an example by sharing recipes or share current news with each other. This in turn could strengthen the existing interpersonal relationships amongst them and become a friendly and a united community. Furthermore, housewives could improve their household income if they were leveraging the available reading material such as recipe books and fashion magazines by getting ideas to produce their own products and sell it to the local market or via online. As for the students, visiting the rural library could evade them from wasting their time from doing useless things such as hanging out, illegal racing and drug-taking. Their presence in the rural library can be monitored by the local community, especially by the housewives because they knew each other's children within their community. This is when the community involvement occurred among the locals. Community involvement is to be said a form of voluntary action through which individuals take the opportunity and social responsibility (Tosun, 2000). For students whose families cannot afford subscribing the internet broadband, this facility is their chance to fully utilize the internet for various purposes. In unison, the facilities provided could increase the competency among students in terms computer and internet usage, getting the latest and more updated information, assisting them in completing tasks and school assignments, providing opportunities for graduated students with skills and

employment exposures, infusing a space to socialize and communicate with peers or family members who were far at distance through a variety of mediums and applications such as Emails, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Tweeter and others (Anwar and Supaat, 1998).

In terms of of household members, 15.5% were identified to have between 1-3 household members, 32.5% of the respondents have >7 household members and a total of 52% household with a range of 4-6 members. Currently, it was observed that rural communities have started to have a thorough family planning which the majority of the respondents' household numbers were between 4-6 members. Formerly, rural communities often had a larger family member of >7 people.

The findings on the pattern of rural library visit among the rural youth in Malaysia were stated in Table 3. The table sums upthe frequencies of rural library visits in a week, most of the respondents visited 2-3 times a week (46.8%) followed by once a week (30.7%) and the rest would visit the rural library 4 times or more in a week (22.5%) which recorded a mean score of 2.56. It shows a positive library visit patterns and could bethe evidence that the existence of the rural library is still relevant for the community in rural areas (Omar *et al.*, 2012a, b; Anwar and Supaat, 1998). Different findings by Shaifuddin *et al.* (2011) had claimed the reasons for users to face problems in visiting their local library was due to the geographical or standards of living factors would give different results.

Table 3: Patterns of rural library visit among the rural youth in Malaysia

Patterns	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
How many times would you come to the rural library in a week?			2.56
Once	123	30.7	-
2-3 times	187	46.8	-
4 times and more	90	22.5	-
The duration of times spent at the rural library during weekdays (n = 370) (h)			1.72
Less than an hour	174	47.0	-
Between an hour to 2 h	135	36.5	-
2 h and more	61	16.5	-
The main time coming to rural library during weekdays (n = 370) (h)			
Between 8.00-11.59 a.m.	124	33.5	-
Between 12.00-5.00 p.m.	246	66.5	-
The duration of times spent at the rural library during weekend (n = 314) (h)			1.88
Less than an hour	128	40.8	-
Between an hour to 2 h	111	35.4	-
2 h and more	75	23.9	-
The main time coming to rural library during weekend (n = 314) (h)			
Between 8.00-11.59 a.m.	126	40.0	-
Between 12.00-5.00 p.m.	188	60.0	-
The duration of times spent at the rural library during school and semester holidays (n = 314) (h)			1.98
Less than an hour	128	40.9	-
Between an hour to 2 h	102	32.6	-
2 h and more	83	26.5	-
The main time coming to rural library during school and semester holidays			
Between 8.00-11.59 a.m.	117	37.3	-
Between 12.00-5.00 p.m.	197	62.7	-
Coming to the rural library			
Individually	233	58.2	-
In group	167	41.8	-

In terms of duration of the time spent at the rural library, the time was categorized in three different situations, namely weekdays, weekend and school/semester break. It was recorded that all three situations stated that the respondents would spend time at the rural library for less than an hour at most with 1.72 mean score on a week day, 1.88 mean score on a weekend and 1.98 mean score on a school/semester break. Meanwhile, the main time for the majority of the respondents to visit the rural library were between 12.00-5.00 p.m. regardless if it was during a weekday, a weekend or a school/semester break. In the morning most of the respondents were busy with various tasks and responsibilities such as work and school. This was because the user group consisted of housewives and students. In line with the findings by Shaifuddin *et al.* (2011), the majority of the rural library group users in Malaysia were students. Although, Corradini (2006) found that the youth would use the library to gain recent information and to conduct a group discussion with colleagues. However, in this study, the respondents chose to visit the rural library individually (58.2%) more than going as a group (41.8%), this was possibly due tobeing more comfortable alone and thus easier to move around. Otherwise, they would visit the rural library separately and meet the others to conduct a group discussion as they had made previoud appointment.

However, based on the findings on reading patterns at the rural library among the rural youth in Malaysia shown in Table 4, almost half of the respondents (47%) borrowed books once in a week and followed by twice in a week (27.7%) and recorded a mean score of 1.46. In terms of the number of books borrowed, almost half of the respondents borrowed 1-2 books in a week (49.8%) followed by >2 books borrowed in a week (36.5%) and others that did not borrow any books (13.8%). The mean score for the number of borrowing books from rural library was 2.70. In terms of the duration of borrowing books, about 36.4% respondents would borrow books for 1-3 days, 49.8% borrowed books for 4-7 days and 13.8% of the respondents did not borrow any books. Findings on the type of sources read by the respondents, it was found that magazines were the highest (71.3%) preferable type of source at the rural library and followed by the novel (69.8%), the newspaper (62.3%), the cooking book (51.5%) and educational materials (48.3%). From the data collected, it shows that the interest and literacy in reading among the rural communities was no longer a concern. It was found that the majority of rural library visitors had high motivation in reading but even less interest in education materials. The rural library was not merely a place to learn but also a place for the community to feel leisure and perform recreational activites which was in-line with Nagata findings that found besides the

Table 4: Reading patterns at the rural library

Patterns	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Frequency of borrowing books from rural library in a week			1.46
None	53	13.3	-
Once	188	47.0	-
Twice	111	27.7	-
Three times and more	48	12.0	-
Number books borrowed in a week			2.70
None	55	13.8	-
1-2 books	199	49.8	-
>2 books	146	36.5	-
Duration of borrowing books			5.92
None	55	13.8	-
1-3 days	106	36.4	-
4-7 days	160	49.8	-
Type of sources read (novel)			
Yes	279	69.8	-
No	121	30.3	-
Magazine			
Yes	285	71.3	-
No	115	28.7	-
Newspaper			
Yes	249	62.3	-
No	151	37.8	-
Cooking book			
Yes	206	51.5	-
No	194	48.5	-
Educational materials			
Yes	193	48.3	-
No	207	51.7	-

'learners group', there were also the 'extended use group' and the 'place and PC use group' among library user.

Table 5 demonstrates the findings on pattern of ICT tools usage at the rural library and it could be seen that the internet was the highest ICT tool usage (89.5%) among the rural youth respondents in this study. The rest of other ICT tools used by the respondents were computers (79.3%), a printer (57.5%), a photostat machine (52.8%), a scanner (30%), a telephone (24%), a television (11.8%), a radio (8.5%), a VCD/DVD player (7.5%) and a fax machine (5.7%). Apart from providing books or reading materials, the rural library also provides other services and facilities such as ICT tools for users known as the 'place and PC use group' (Nagata *et al.*, 2006). The highest internet usage showed that the rural communities were IT literate and as evidence that method for information searching and reading habits among youth have changed drastically, the youth prefered to read electronic materials compared to the printed materials. The findings were significant with Shaifuddin (2011)'s results, the youth users prefered to get information through other channels such as the internet instead of using traditional sources in the library. It could be said that the amount of trainings to ICT exposure in formal or informal learning at schools have successfully reduced the gaps between the rural and the urban communities. Most of the users of rural library which consists of youth will obtain benefits and advantages of the services provided. It socio-economic development of the local communities,

Table 5: Patterns on ICT tools usage at the rural library

Patterns	Frequency	Percentage
Using printer at the rural library?		
Yes	230	57.5
No	170	42.5
Using Photostat machine at the rural library?		
Yes	211	52.8
No	189	47.3
Using scanner at the rural library?		
Yes	120	30.0
No	280	70.0
Using telephone at the rural library?		
Yes	96	24.0
No	304	76.0
Using fax machine at the rural library?		
Yes	23	5.7
No	377	94.3
Using radio at the rural library?		
Yes	34	8.5
No	366	91.5
Using TV at the rural library?		
Yes	47	11.8
No	353	88.2
Using VCD/DVD player at the rural library?		
Yes	30	7.5
No	370	92.5
Using internet at the rural library?		
Yes	358	89.5
No	42	10.5
Using computer at the rural library?		
Yes	317	79.3
No	83	20.8

based on Omar *et al.* (2012a, b) analyses, certainly the information offered was the main benefit offered.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the rural library remains relevant and left a good impression on the development of the community. Rural communities were able to enjoy the facilities and services that were more or less as similar to those in the cities through the existence of rural library. As a community center, the library is responsible for providing and disseminating the latest and updated information to the local community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A recommendation that could be taken into considerations besides encourage reading habits and provide facilities as a community center to rural areas, the rural library can also act as a center for lifelong learning. Rural library could assist local communities in terms of exposure and provide a proper channel for their needs and desires. Examples such as the provision of information on business or job opportunities could help them in terms of upgrading their lives within the rural areas. Moreover, it is hoped that the relevant agency can upgrade or maintain the rural libraries so that it can survive and continue to contribute to the development of the local communities in the future.

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