

**A CASE STUDY TO IDENTIFY FACTORS AFFECTED THE OPTIMAL
UTILIZATION OF LIBRARY AT THE NAVAL AND MARITIME ACADEMY,
SRI LANKA**

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Abstract

This study focuses on investigating factors which affect optimal utilization of library facilities by the under-trainees of the Naval and Maritime Academy (NMA), Sri Lanka and it proposes suitable recommendations to Commandant of NMA to extend the utilization of library by the under-trainees. This research employed the use of 200 structured questionnaires distributed to 200 under-trainees attached to NMA as the main tool of collecting data. The findings of the study show that the utilization level of NMA library is very low and it also reveals that most of the under-trainees use electronic resources than printed materials. Therefore, the given opportunity to purchase a personal laptop with a dongle to access internet is directly affected the utilization of the NMA library. It was noted that the location and opening hours are not compatible with the requirements of the under-trainees. The researcher therefore recommends that adequate funding to be made available to the library to ensure the provision of electronic resources which is essential to improve the utilization of the NMA library as well as to allocate compulsory library hours in the time table of the under-trainees.

KEYWORDS Utilization, books, library usage, readers, evaluation, electronic resources

INTRODUCTION

Naval and Maritime Academy (NMA) situated in Trincomalee is the pioneer training establishment of the Sri Lanka Navy which grooms the young blood of the country as officers and sailors. It conducts training for both officers and sailors of the branches in Sri

Lanka Navy. Number of under-trainees at NMA consists of 165 OUTs (Officer Under-Trainees) and 2180 sailor under trainees. Most of them had purchased laptops from the welfare package in easy payment basis which was introduced by the Sri Lanka Navy in year 2007. Further, the under-trainees at NMA are officially allowed to use dongles to access internet facility.

The training pattern is different at the NMA. Both OUTs and sailor under trainees are required to undergo physical training and follow academic studies as well due to the system of the training at the NMA. Academic studies include classroom lectures, individual studies, group studies and research work. Training at NMA is entirely based on converting a civilian into an eminent officer or a sailor with a sound knowledge and better attitudes, which can be inculcated by providing high quality education. In that regard, the library plays a major role as illustrated in following diagram.

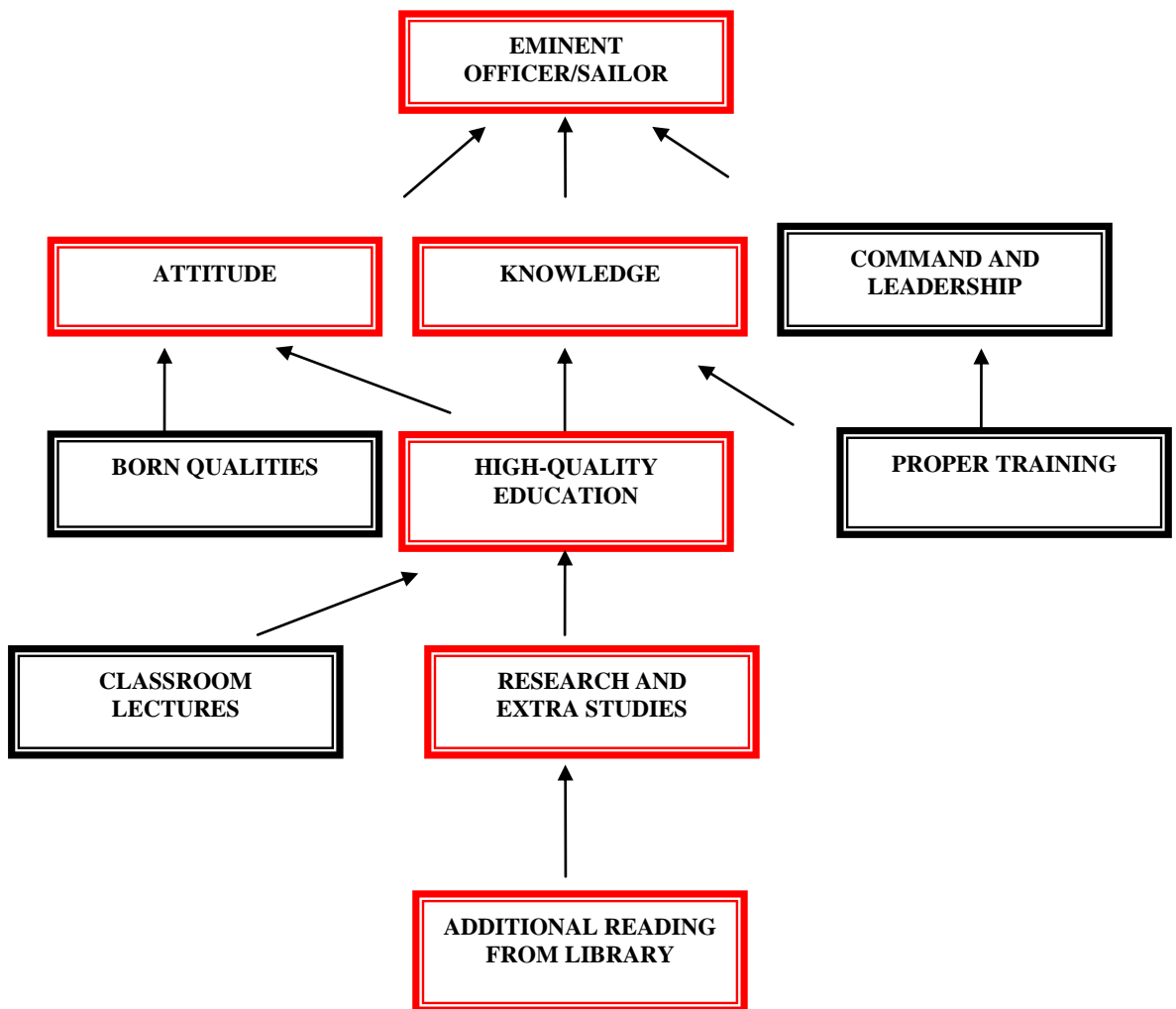
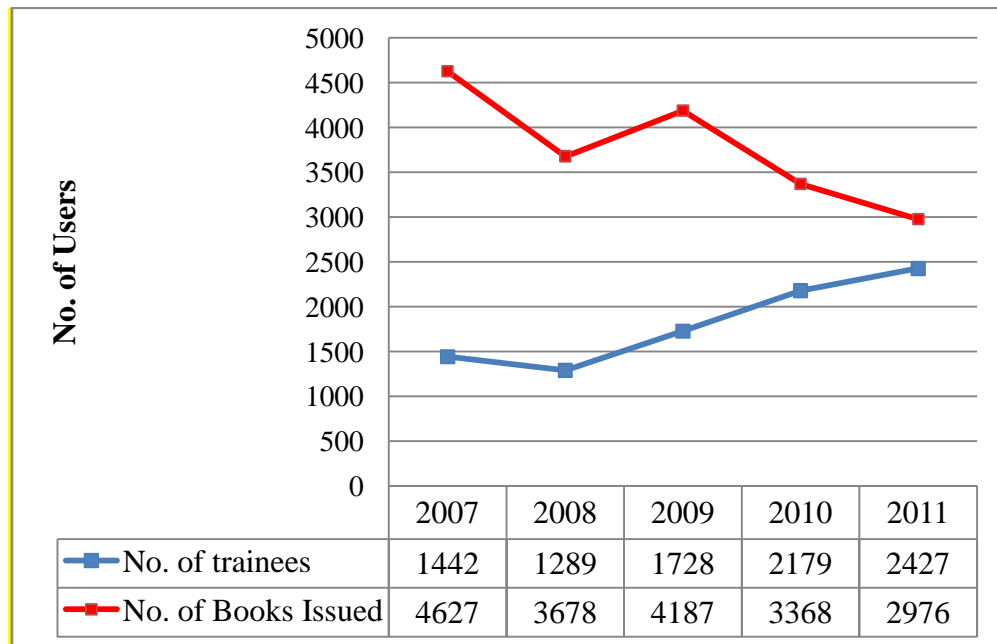


Figure 1: Relationship between a Library and an Eminent Officer/a Sailor

NMA is blessed with a good library in Sri Lanka Navy which is categorised as an Academic and Research Library. Officer under-trainees, sailor under-trainees, directing and administrative (officers and sailors) staff, officers and sailors of other establishments and ships in the naval dockyard and families of officers and sailors are the patrons of the library. NMA library is able to provide a conducive environment for the users by providing a fully air-conditioned, computerised, furnished library, which is equipped with adequate books for the required disciplines. Same as the other educational institutions, the library of the NMA is also established within their premises.

Research Problem

When analysing the relationship between number of under-trainees at NMA and their library usage pattern, it is observed that even though number of trainees has gradually increased, their library usage has declined in the past years. It is clearly illustrated in Figure 2 below.



(Source: Records of the Training Support Section and Library)

Figure 2: Average Number of Under-trainees at NMA and Number of Books Borrowed from Library

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are as follows.

- To investigate the different factors which affect the utilization of NMA library by under-trainees.
- To propose suitable recommendations to Commandant-Naval and Maritime Academy (CN&MA) to extend the utilization of library by under trainees.

Methodology

A preliminary data survey was conducted to identify the problem. In order to build up the framework of this research, at the initial stage observations, records at the NMA library were studied and interviews/telephone conversations were conducted with some key officials at NMA. This consultation had helped to understand the existing problem. After identifying the problem, advanced preliminary data survey and a secondary data survey had been carried out by administering close-ended questionnaires among under trainees at NMA. Questionnaires in English were given to officers and questionnaires in Sinhala were distributed among trainee-sailors.

The selection was made using stratified simple random sampling method to improve the representativeness of the sample while reducing sampling error. 100 numbers of OUTs and 100 number of sailor under trainees attached to NMA had been employed for this study.

The primary and secondary data were initially processed manually. That process included data collecting, classification and grouping. Then a master work sheet was prepared by using Microsoft Excel and data were further analyzed using the same and based on that, tables and graphs were prepared.

In view of collecting data in secondary measures, a survey was carried out by referring books and records in NMA library, training programmes and time tables at the Training Support Unit at NMA.

Review of Literature

There were numerous books published and researches had been carried out on library science which covers many aspects. But this review is solely focused on utilization of library. Even though most of the studies were carried out to identify the level of awareness and utilization of the facilities and resources supplied by their libraries, this study attempts to identify the factors that affect the library utilization as a whole.

Raza, Upadhyay, and Noor (2011) identified the level of awareness and use of library resources and services by the students of management institutes of Aligarh. They had found that most of the students were aware of resources and services, but most of the students used them to consult their course material. They also found that most of the students seek assistance of library staff while searching a document and were satisfied with their issue system. Onifade, Ogbuiyi and Omeluzor (2013) also had examined the use of library resources and services among postgraduate students in Babcock University Library, Nigeria, but found that the majority of the postgraduate students do not use the library regularly. The students who visit the library are to consult research materials. They used more internet sources and their major challenge was lack of time, and they were also averagely satisfied with the library services.

The very nature of utilization of a library depends on many factors. Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1997) in their research on "Prevalence and reasons for university library usage" studied 522 university students to find out how often students use their library and why. At the same time the researchers wanted to develop a general profile of college student library users. The researchers found that students who used the libraries most tended to be those who lived the nearest to the academic library, who preferred to study alone, and who had the lowest levels of library anxiety. In addition, these students tended to visit the library to study for a test, to read current newspapers, to read their own textbook, or to meet friends.

Olorunsaye and Adetunji (2012) did a study at the Lead City University Library focusing on the utilization and challenges of Information Communication Technologies facilities for information access and management. The findings of their study show that the utilization level of LCU library ICT facilities for information access and management

waslow. Further, their analysis shows that the majority of the students perceptibly prefer to stay outside the library to use the university information technology via the V-SAT and Local Area Network to enhance their holistic education for social, economic, cultural development and self-reliance through their wireless personal laptops than coming to the library to use the provided ICT facilities information for access. The majority of the respondents noted that the advent of the Internet has negated their need to sit in any library for research or education need. The research finding shows that the use of I.C.T facilities for information access and management in the library would have been of good use if not for the inhibiting factors listed in the paper. Useful recommendations were given to eradicate the perennial challenges militating against the use of ICT facilities for information access and management.

Results and Discussion

Since all the respondents had given questionnaires, the overall response was 100%. Therefore, the survey results showed that 50% of the respondents are officers whereas the other 50% of them are sailors. The analysis of the data had been done on the following aspects to meet the stated objectives.

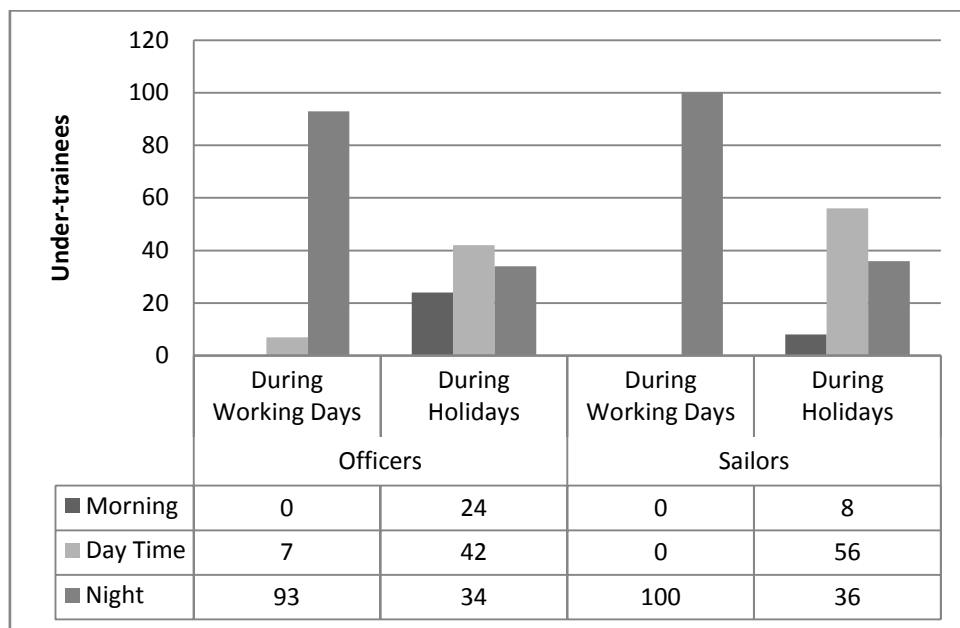


Figure3: Time that Under-Trainees Can Engage in Reading

According to the Figure3,93 officers and all the soldiers (96.5% of the sample) stated that they do not get adequate free time for reading during their training periods and they get free time for reading only during night on working days. This is confirmed when compared the library opening hours against the under trainees’ general timetable given below. Not like the other academic training institutions, training institutions attached to a military organization don’t provide any free time slots in their scheduled timetables for library use.

Week Days

Time in hours																										
8.30	9.00	9.30	10.00	10.30	11.00	11.30	12.00	12.30	13.00	13.30	14.00	14.30	15.00	15.30	16.00	16.30	17.00	17.30	18.00	18.30	19.00	19.30	20.00	20.30	21.00	2.30
L	I	B	R	A	R	Y		O	P	E	N	E	D													
	T	R	A	I	N	I	N	G		S	C	H	E	D	U	A	L	E	D							

Table 1: Under-trainee’s Timetable

This scenario changes during weekends and on public holidays. 16% of respondents said that they can engage in reading during the morning,49% of respondents said, during day time they can do reading and 35% of them stated that night is the most convenient time to do reading. During weekends and public holidays the library is opened from 8.45hrs to 12.45hrs, but still on Saturdays trainees are unable to use the library due to their scheduled training programme.

The results of the study also confirmed that all the under-trainees get an opportunity to visit the library for reading only in their leisure time, which is not compatible with library opening hours. Therefore, it is very important to identify the way they spend their leisure time and findings are tabulated in the Figure4 below.

Most of the OUTs 1st preferred way of spending their leisure time is browsing internet (42%) and also 34% out of the OUTS who’s 1st preference is not browsing internet also stated that their 2nd preference of spending their leisure time is browsing internet.

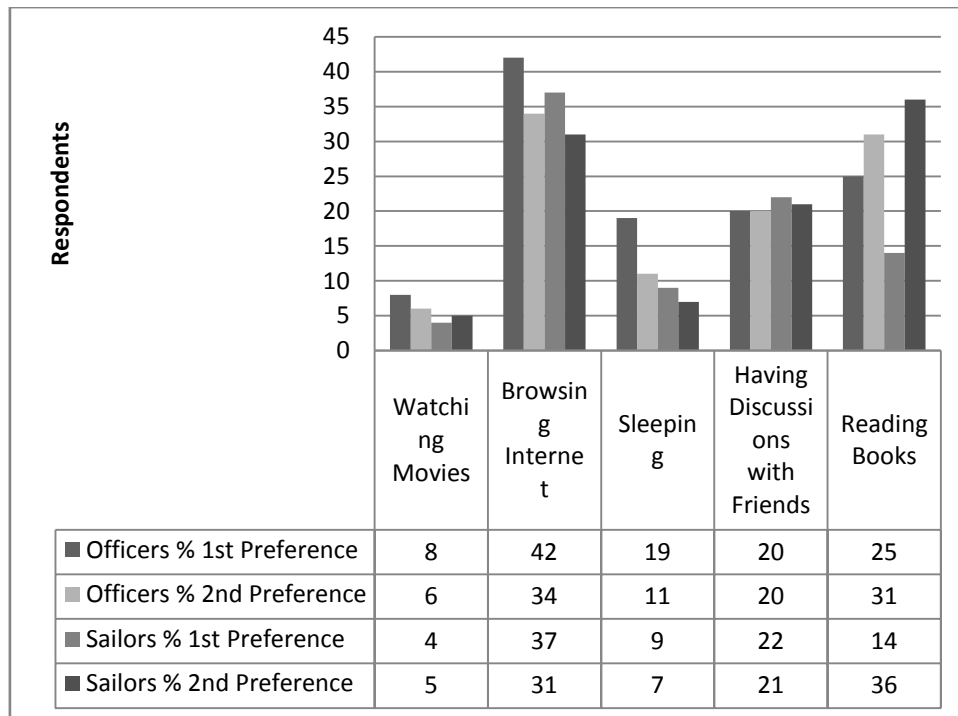


Figure 4: Leisure time activities of the under-training

Since 25% of OUTs selected reading as the 1st preferred way and OUTs whose 1st preference not quoted as reading but out of them 31% selected reading as the 2nd preferred way of spending their leisure time. It can be concluded that reading is the 2nd most popular way of spending leisure time of the OUTs.

Among the sailors, 37% of them prefer browsing internet while 22% prefer to have discussions with course mates and reading falls into the 3rd place with 14%. When considering the 2nd preference of spending leisure by the sailors, reading became the 1st with 36% while 31% of sailors preferred browsing internet and 21% preferred to have discussions with friend as their 2nd preference way of spending their leisure time. As per the findings they also confirmed that browsing internet is the most preferred way of spending their leisure time. Therefore, browsing internet could be identified as the most popular way of spending OUTs at NMA leisure time.

According to Figure 5, the majority (51.5%) of under trainees (47% of OUTs and 56% of sailors) selected their popular way of spending free time as gaining knowledge “To built-up close relationships with peers”.

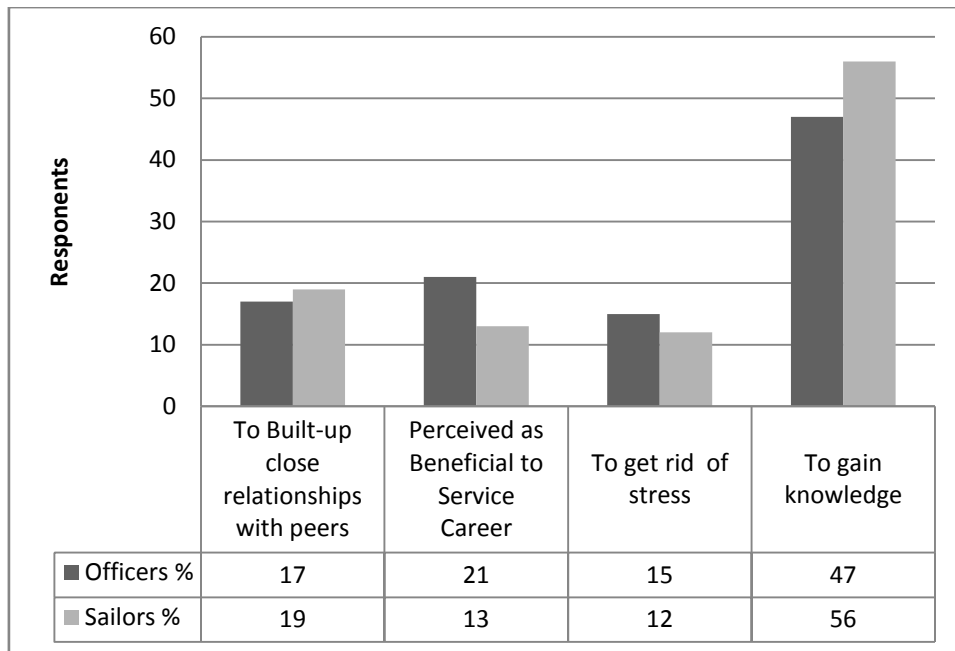


Figure5:Reasons to select the most popular way of spending free time

Figure 4 shows that 19.5% under-trainees preferred reading as the 1st preference and 33.5% of under-trainees preferred reading as 2nd preference activity. Therefore, it is important to identify the way they getting their reading materials and information gathered from the survey is shown in the Figure 6 below.

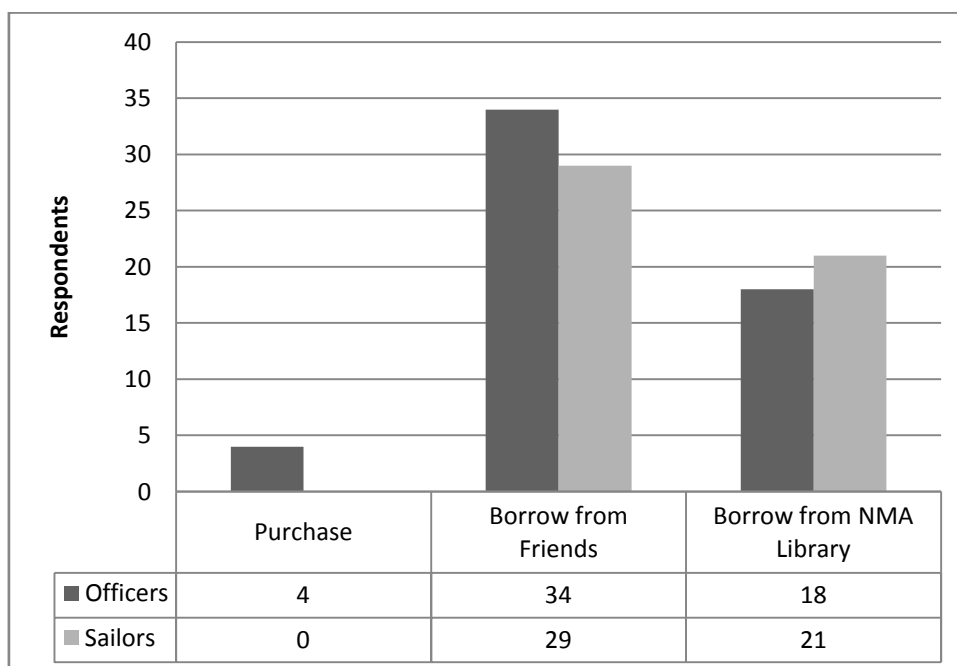


Figure 6 : Method of Getting Books for Reading

Out of 106 whose 1st and 2nd preference is reading books, only 4 officers purchase books, 63 borrow books from friends and 39 borrow from the NMA library. This may be due to the lack of time to visit the library.

Location of the library, awareness of availability and the attitude of staff are the other mostly common factors which can be influenced to the library utilization. Therefore, the impact on those variables identified by posing four questions to the entire sample shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8 below.

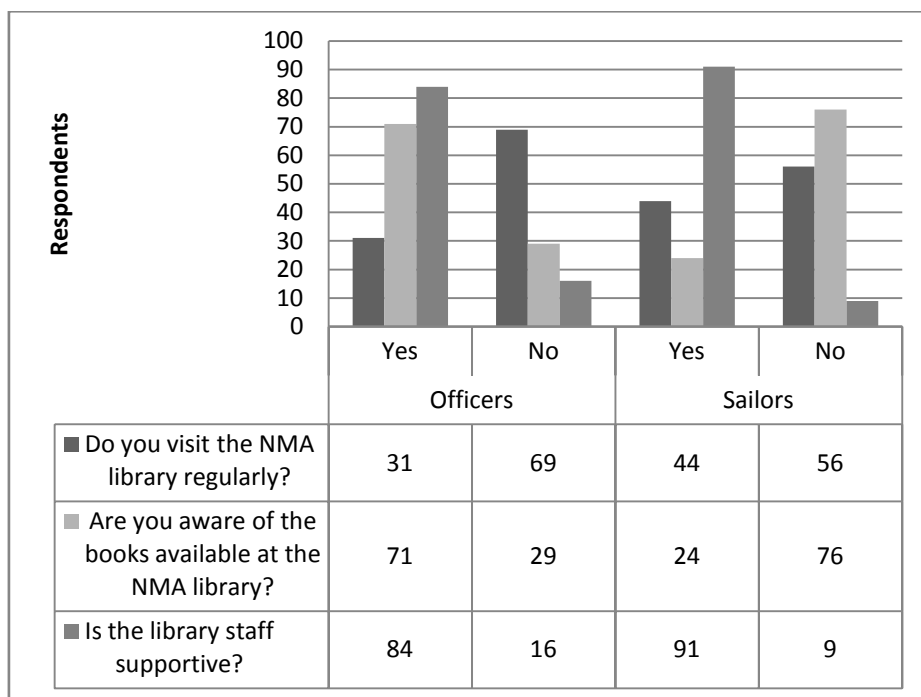


Figure 7: Other factors Influenced to the library utilization

71% of officers were aware about the availability of books and 84% of them were satisfied with the support rendered by the library staff and 69% of them were not regular visitors of the NMA library. 91% of the sailors were satisfied with the support given by the library staff, but most of them were not regular visitors of the NMA library and also they were not aware about the availability of books available at the library.

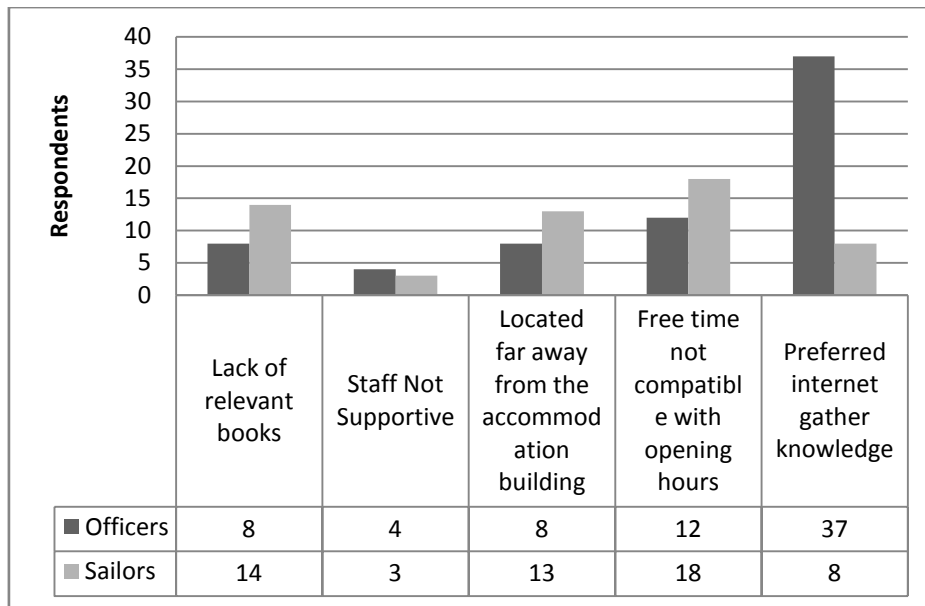


Figure 8 : Reasons for not Visiting the NMA library

Reasons given by the 125 trainees (69 OUTs and 56 Sailors) who are not regular visitors to the library were shown in the Figure 8 above. 37 out of 69 officers said that they preferred to browse internet to gather knowledge rather than reading a book. But out of 56 sailors 18 were not comfortable with the library hours, 14 were not aware with the availability of books and 13 of them think that the location of the library is far away from their accommodations.

A general question was included as the last question to get under-trainees' views on steps that the authorities should take to encourage under-trainees to use the library more effectively. The responses are printed in Figure 9 below.

65.5% of under-trainees suggested introducing compulsory library periods according to the weekly timetable as their 1st preference, 12% of under-trainees think that the library should be relocated near the accommodation building, and 22.5% stated that reschedule library hours convenient to under trainees will encourage under trainees to use library. None of them agreed to ban using dongles as a suggestion to improve the library utilization.

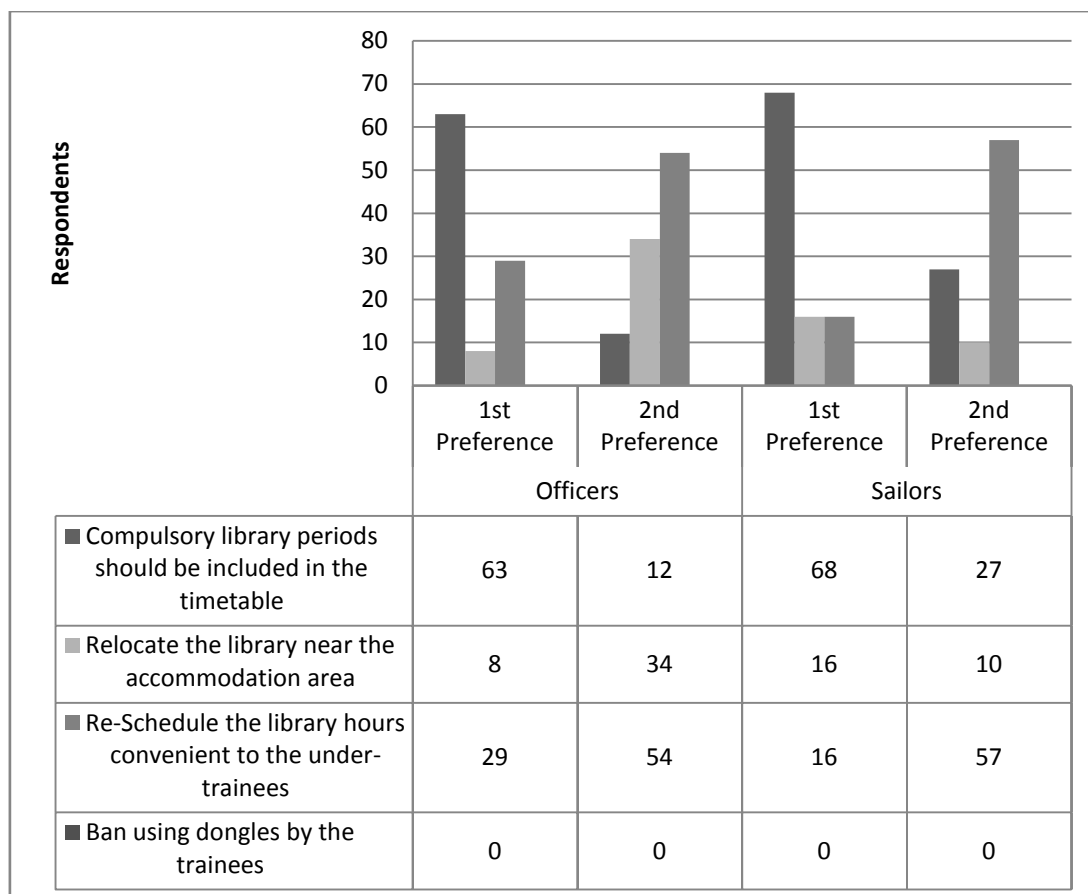


Figure 9: Suggestions received from the Under-trainees to improve Library Utilization

Conclusion & Recommendations

The results of this study clearly shows that most of the trainees prefer to use internet instead of using printed materials to satisfy the information needs of the under trainees. At the same time, this study has identified that mismatch of library opening hours and under-trainees free time which is one of the main reasons for underutilization. Therefore, the administrators of the NMA have to take appropriate actions to adjust the time-table according to the library opening hours. Younger generation should be encouraged to use modern technology rather than making them using only printed materials. Therefore, the NMA library must pay more attention on e-resources than printed materials. Introducing

compulsory library periods to under trainees in weekly time table might be a solution for the problem.

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