



## **The Information Needs and Information Use of Malaysia's Members of Parliament**

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### **Abstract:**

The paper reports on an investigation into the information needs and information use among members of parliament (MPs) of Malaysia. Aspects of the information needs include several information variables, namely: purposes, type, topic / subject, and frequency of needs. While the aspects of information use examine the habitual use of libraries as well as type of materials used, frequency of use, sources of information, and preferred channel of use. The study also seeks to assess the extent of consultation with individuals and the use of modern technology to obtain information by the MPs, such as online databases, facebook, blog, and twitter.

A survey form with 14 items questions was sent to 200 MPs and 60 responses were obtained for data analysis. Findings indicate that the big majority of MPs (95%) needed information to help them to understand current issues. The majority (80%) read magazines and newspapers as sources of information, while 40% read corporate reports. The topics of their information need are dispersed over various fields, with the majority (55%) being Politics and Public Administration, followed by Education (41.7%), Business and Economics (40%). The majority of MPs (65%) consulted their friends for needed information, followed by 60% who consulted personal assistants and special officers. Only 6.7% consulted librarians. A big number of MPs have never used parliament library, university library, and the national library. Most of them obtained needed information by downloading from web sites (46.7%), and by purchasing (25%). Only 10% of MPs borrowed from the library. The MPs appeared to be active users of the Internet and social media, as 78.3% of them read online newspapers

and use Facebook daily, while 73.3 % and 55% use Twitter and Blogs respectively. Those who used online databases provided by the library are very small in number compared to the majority (more than 80%) who have never used them.

These findings suggest that new strategies are needed by the information provider such as the parliament library in the attempt to better serve the MPs in order that they have convenient access to quality information to fulfill their duty and commitment, necessary for policy making and legislative consideration.

**KEYWORDS:** Malaysia-Parliament Library, Members of Parliament-Malaysia, Members of Parliament-Information Needs, Members of Parliament-Information Use, Information Needs-Malaysia.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In a country that has a democratic system of government such as Malaysia, the significant role of elected representatives who formulate laws and policies that impact on all aspects of the citizens' lives cannot be underestimated. These representatives need to have access to quality information in all fields of undertaking before they can engage in meaningful debates and make informed decisions on matters that will be of benefits to the nation and its people.

Since there has been no current study on information needs and information use of these representatives or Members of Parliament (MPs) in Malaysia, it is timely that we conduct this study. It aims to discover the purposes of information, the type, and the subject of information needed by the MPs, in addition to identifying the type, the source, and the channel of their information use.

### **Background of Malaysia**

Malaysia is a federal constitutional monarchy in Southeast Asia. It consists of thirteen states and three federal territories and has a total landmass of 330,242 square kilometres separated by the South China Sea into two similarly sized regions, Peninsular Malaysia and Malaysian Borneo, comprising of the state of Sabah and Sarawak. Land borders are shared with Thailand, Indonesia, and Brunei, and maritime borders exist with Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines. The capital city is Kuala Lumpur, while Putrajaya is the seat of the federal government. In 2010 the population exceeded 28.4 million, with over 20 million living on the Peninsula.

Malaysia has its origins in the Malay Kingdoms present in the area which, from the 18th century, became subject to the British Empire. The first British territories were known as the Straits Settlements, whose establishment was followed by the Malay kingdoms becoming British protectorates. The territories on Peninsular Malaysia were first unified as the Malayan Union in 1946. Malaya was restructured as the Federation of Malaya in 1948, and

achieved independence on 31 August 1957. Malaya united with Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore on 16 September 1963, with Singapore being added to give the new country the name Malaysia. However, less than two years later in 1965, Singapore was expelled from the federation. Since independence, Malaysia has had one of the best economic records in Asia, with GDP growing an average 6.5% for almost 50 years. The economy has traditionally been fuelled by its natural resources, but is expanding in the sectors of science, tourism, commerce and medical tourism.

The country is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural, which plays a large role in politics. The government system is closely modelled on the Westminster parliamentary system and the legal system is based on English Common Law. The constitution declares Islam the state religion while protecting freedom of religion. The head of state is the King, known as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong. He is an elected monarch chosen from the hereditary rulers of the nine Malay states every five years. The head of government is the Prime Minister. (Monthly Statistical Bulletin Malaysia, April 2012)

### **The Malaysian Parliament**

Malaysia practices Parliamentary Democracy with Constitutional Monarchy and His Royal Highness is the Paramount Ruler (Yang di-Pertuan Agong – King) who carries out his duties under the Constitution under the advice of the Prime Minister and the cabinet ministers. As the ultimate legislative body in Malaysia, the Parliament is responsible for passing, amending and repealing acts of law. It is subordinate to the King, under Article 39 of the Constitution. The Parliament of the Federation of Malaya held its first meeting on 11th September 1959.

Malaysia's Parliament consists of two main bodies: Dewan Rakyat (House of Representatives) and Dewan Negara (Senate). Dewan Rakyat consists of 222 (<http://www.parlimen.gov.my>) members of Parliament (MPs) elected from single-member constituencies drawn based on population in a general election which is held every five years or when the Parliament is dissolved by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong on the advice of the Prime Minister. Suffrage is given to registered voters 21 years and above, however voting is not compulsory. The age requirement to stand for election is 21 years and above. When a member of Parliament dies, resigns or become disqualified to hold a seat, a by-election is held in his constituency unless the tenure for the current Parliament is less than two years, where the seat is simply left vacant until the next general election.

The Dewan Negara (Senate) consists of 70 member senators (<http://www.parlimen.gov.my>). The senate is made up of 26 senators elected by the 13 state assemblies (2 senators per state), 4 are appointed by the King to represent federal territories (2 for Kuala Lumpur, 1 each for Putrajaya and Labuan). The other 40 members are appointed by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister. Senators must be 30 years or above, and are appointed to a three-year term for a maximum of two terms. The dissolution of the Parliament does not affect the Dewan Negara.

## **The role of Members of Parliament (MPs) in Malaysia**

MPs in the Malaysia are involved in policy formulation and enactment of laws on the floor of the House. It is critical that they can only carry out their function and duty on behalf of citizens who vote for them by equipping themselves with relevant information before and after being elected. They can gather information by themselves and through their research staff who can get assistance from the library. After winning an election, and having promised certain kinds of economic, social or political change, MPs must take on the leading role in implementing beneficial changes to their constituencies. MPs are also involved with Select Committees of the House or sub-committees which require them to study in depth certain national / regional issues that need to be resolved. MPs need to ask the right questions in the Parliament in order to make meaningful debates and contributions to the issues being discussed before policies are formulated to be implemented that will affect the society at large. These different roles played by MPs dictate that they be knowledgeable in many areas.

The pertinent questions are: How do MPs obtain information needed to carry out their duty? To what extent is the use of the Parliament library? and What are their sources of needed information?

## **The Parliament Library**

The Parliament of Malaysia Resource Centre was established with the main objective of functioning as a centre of excellence for reference for legislative, parliamentary, government and public administration matters that supports the research needs of Members of Parliament of Malaysia and their staff. The Parliament of Malaysia Resource Centre is continuously improving its services and resources to generate information and knowledge that meet the needs for both the Houses of Representatives and the Senate and to produce a society of knowledgeable and compatible Parliamentarians.

Services provided by the Resource Centre include referencing and borrowing facilities Parliament Special Collections include materials issued by the Parliament of Malaysia on legislative matters such as Hansard (verbatim report of the House Representatives and the Senate), Order papers, Votes Proceeding, Notice of Motion, Command Papers, Bills, Statute papers and Reports of Select Committees, all Malaysian laws such as Straits Settlement laws, Federated Malay State laws, subsidiary legislatures, acts, amended acts, enactments, ordinances, and government gazettes. Monograph and Journal Collection comprise various subjects such as on legislature, parliament, politics, constitution, governance, political parties, political figures, publications from parliamentary bodies and other issues related to the mission and vision of Parliament of Malaysia. Online newspapers and databases are such as NSTP e-media, LawNet, Mylib and Malaysiakini that provides legislative information, journals online, newspapers online and current articles. The Information Technology Room

provides computers with Internet connection where users can search for materials in the library through WEBOPAC (<http://webopac.parlimen.gov.my>).

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are:

- (1) To identify the purposes of information needs of Malaysia's Members of Parliament (MPs)
- (2) To identify the subjects of needed information
- (3) To identify the sources of information and the extent of their use by MPs
- (4) To identify MPs' preferred channels of information.

## **METHODOLOGY**

A survey method using 14-item questionnaire as the instrument for data collection was deemed suitable after initial discussion with few MPs and their staff. At the time of the study, the House of Representatives consists of 222 MPs while the Senate consists of 70 senators. Unfortunately, owing to their heavy schedule, it was impossible to contact all of them. Therefore the survey form was delivered during May 2012 to only 200 individuals comprising the majority of MPs, senators, political secretaries, and special officers who normally assist the MPs in gathering needed information. After several attempts in obtaining feedback, a total of 60 responses could be used for data analysis. This gives us the response rate of 30 per cent.

Interestingly, Malaysian MPs' response rate appears to be within the same range when compared to those of previous studies in other countries. Mostert and Ccholla's study (2005) of MPs in South Africa obtained 23 percent responses, Thapisa's study (1996) in Botswana had 27 percent responses, and Marcella, Carcary and Baxter's study (1999) in United Kingdom obtained 34 percent responses.

## **FINDINGS**

Discussions on findings are presented under the following headings:

- Profile of respondents
- Purposes of information need
- Subject of needed information
- Individuals consulted for information
- Information sources
- Electronic information sources
- How information sources were obtained
- Frequency of library use

## **Profile of Respondents**

Data from 60 respondents were analysed using SPSS software version 19. The respondents comprise 40 MPs, 10 senators, 5 political secretaries and 5 special officers of the MPs. For convenience of reference, these respondents are considered as MPs in the study, as they are also the registered users of the Parliament library. The majority of respondents are male (50 responses – 83.33%) compared to female (10 responses – 16.66%). In terms of age, the biggest group (20 responses – 33.33%) fall between 36-40 years old, followed by the age group of 56-60 years old (10 responses – 16.66%). Both 41-45 and 51-55 age groups recorded 7 responses (11.66% each). Six respondents belong to the age of 61-65 years (10%). Both 31-35 and 46-50 age groups recorded 5 responses each (8.33%). Most respondents hold a Bachelor's degree (37 responses – 61.66%), followed by 31 Diploma holders (17.5%), 17 Master's degree holders (28.33%), and 5 Doctoral degree holders (8.33%). Most respondents had their academic major in Social Sciences (22 responses – 36.66%), while 20 respondents (33.33%) majored in Technology and Applied Sciences. Four respondents (6.66%) had their major in Political Sciences, three majored in Laws (5%), and one respondent majored in Medicine (1.66%).

### **1. Purposes of Information Need**

Respondents reported various purposes of their information need as shown in Table 1. Almost all respondents (95%) indicated that they need information everyday in order to understand current issues. This was followed by 73.3% respondents' need for upgrading their knowledge, while 61.7% need information to solve problems and 56.7% need an authoritative source of reference. Less than 50% of respondents (48.3%) reportedly need factual data for decision making everyday. Those who need it daily for preparing parliamentary debates make up 35%. Those who need information for research everyday make up 30%, while 40% need it weekly for research. As for answering questions in Parliament, those who need it daily (23.3%) are fewer than those who need it 2-3 times a week (28.3%). Similar result applies to the need for recreation: only 6.7% of respondents need information for recreation everyday while 35% need it 2-3 times weekly. A small number of respondents (15%) need information for business plan everyday and 28.3% of them never had a need for business plan.

**Table 1: Purposes of Information Needs of MPs**

Purposes of Information	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 times / Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 times / Month (%)	Monthly (%)	Never (%)
Understanding Current Issues	95.0	-	-	-	5.0	-
Upgrade Knowledge	73.3	-	11.7	-	5.0	-
Problem Solving	61.7	26.7	-	-	5.0	-
An Authoritative Source and References	56.7	11.7	26.7	-	5.0	-
Need factual data before making decisions	48.3	16.7	18.3	3.3	8.3	-
Preparing for Parliamentary Debates	35.0	16.7	10.0	6.7	13.3	13.3
Research	30.0	8.3	40.0	5.0	13.3	-
Answering Questions in Parliament Session	23.3	28.3	3.3	16.7	3.3	20.0
Business Plan	15.0	11.7	11.7	6.7	16.7	28.3
Recreation	6.7	35.0	10.0	10.0	11.7	21.7

## 2. Subject of Needed Information

MPs' needed information varies in terms of subject and frequency of needs as shown in table 2. It is apparent that on a daily basis, most respondents need information in the area of Politics and Public Administration (55%), followed by Education (41.7%), Business and Economics (40%), Banking and Finance (36.7%). It is interesting to note that 35% of respondents need information on "Teenager", which is one of the topics given high priority by the government and the public currently. The topics least needed have to do with Applied Sciences and Technology and Aerospace, where the smallest number of respondents (8.3%) and 10.0% are found under Aerospace and Applied Sciences and Technology respectively. Among those who have never needed information, the highest

number of respondents (53.3%) are seen under Aerospace, followed by 30% under Transportation, and 26.7% under Islamic Banking. It is good to know that most respondents need information on critical topics of national concern, such as Social Security, Business Management and Administration, Natural Environment and Public Health, judging by the small number of the response, 'never' under these topics.

**Table 2: Subject of Needed Information**

Subject of Needed Information	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 Per Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 Per Month (%)	Monthly (%)	never (%)
Political Science and Public Administration	55.0	10.0	5.0	6.7	8.3	15.0
Education	41.7	8.3	8.3	15.0	18.3	8.3
Business and Economics	40.0	28.3	13.3		8.3	10.0
Banking and Finance	36.7	28.3	18.3	5.0	3.3	8.3
Teenager	35.0	16.7	25.0	5.0	8.3	10.0
Computers and Technology	33.3	25.0	1.7	18.3	11.7	8.3
Social Security	33.3	23.3	13.3	8.3	18.3	3.3
Entrepreneurship	30.0	30.0	11.7	13.3	6.7	8.3
Business Management and Administration	30.0	28.3	8.3	15.0	13.3	5.0
Religion	26.7	35.0	3.3	13.3	6.7	15.0
Woman and Children	25.0	20.0	18.3	11.7	15.0	10.0
Sports	25.0	16.7	15.0	3.3	20.0	20.0
International Relation	23.3	16.7	20.0	13.3	16.7	10.0
Language and Literature	21.7	13.3	6.7	16.7	31.7	10.0
Law and Constitution	21.7	25.0	25.0	8.3	10.0	10.0
Natural	20.0	28.3	11.7	21.7	13.3	5.0



Subject of Needed Information	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 Per Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 Per Month (%)	Monthly (%)	never (%)
Environment						
Urban and Rural Development	20.0	33.3	16.7	5.0	13.3	11.6
Public Health	18.3	26.7	10.0	23.3	18.3	3.3
Water Resources – Energy	15.0	11.7	31.7	6.7	15.0	20.0
Islamic Banking	15.0	13.3	8.3	11.7	25.0	26.7
Tourism and Leisure	15.0	21.7	23.3	18.3	21.7	-
Agriculture	13.3	15.0	26.7	8.3	20.0	16.7
Transportation	11.7	1.7	25.0	28.3	25.0	30.0
Applied Sciences and Technology	10.0	3.3	20.0	25.0	21.7	20.0
Aerospace	8.3	1.7	5.0	3.3	28.3	53.3

### 3. Individuals Consulted for Needed Information

When it comes to consulting individuals to obtain needed information, it was discovered that the majority of respondents (65%) consulted friends, followed by 60% consulting special officers and personal assistants. A number of 38.3% respondents consulted with their community. Surprisingly 33.3% respondents consulted family members, while 26.6% have never done so. Among those who have not been consulted, religious advisors top the list (41.7%), followed by international consultants (36.7%) local consultants (35%), reporters (30%), district chiefs (28.3%), librarians (26.7%), legal advisor/ research officer (26.6%). It is interesting to note that librarians, trade union, and non-government organisations (NGO) obtained 6.7% responses for daily consultation, while reporters had 5% responses, which is the least number of respondents. Full details are shown in table 3.

This findings appear to confirm previous research that people will consult with individuals whom they trust and have confidence in the latter's ability to give them relevant information. In this respect, many respondents seem to have no confidence in the librarian's ability to provide them with needed information, in the same manner as reporters, consultants, research officers, and even family members. Apparently, a study

conducted among university students (Mohd Sharif 2008) found similar phenomenon, that many students have never consulted the university librarians because they thought that the librarian would not be able to help them with their information need. Hence some initiatives from librarians are needed to correct such perception from non-users of librarians as information provider.

**Table 3: Individuals Consulted for Needed Information**

Individual consulted for information	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 Per Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 Per Month (%)	Monthly (%)	Never (%)
Friend	65.0	10.0	5.0	8.3	6.7	04.0
Special Officer	60.0	8.30	10.0	5.0	1.7	15.0
Personal Assistant	60.0	16.7	3.3	3.3	5.0	11.7
Community	38.3	6.7	16.7	11.7	11.7	15.0
Family	33.3	16.7	6.7	3.3	13.3	26.6
Media Advisor	25.0	20.0	20.0	5.0	6.7	23.4
Legal Advisor	18.3	13.3	3.3	23.3	15.0	26.6
Research Officer	18.3	21.7	11.7	15.0	6.7	26.6
Religious Advisor	13.3	13.3	13.3	1.7	16.7	41.7
Chief of District	11.7	13.3	21.7	10.0	15.0	28.3
Professional Organization	10.0	28.3	6.7	16.7	31.7	06.6
Chief of Village	10.0	13.3	28.3	11.7	18.3	18.4
International Consultants	10.0	11.7	18.3	13.3	10.0	36.7
Local Consultants	10.0	23.3	6.7	20.0	5.0	35.0
Non-Government (NGO)	6.7	23.3	20.0	18.3	18.3	13.3
Trade Union	6.7	6.7	11.7	18.3	33.3	23.3
Librarian	6.7	16.7	5.0	18.3	26.7	26.7
Reporter	5.0	16.7	8.3	10.0	30.0	30.0

#### 4. Information sources

From the listing of 10 various formats of information source, the majority of respondents (85%) indicated that they used magazines and newspapers daily as their sources of information (table 4). Other types of materials used were corporate reports which were used 40% daily, conference proceedings 26.7%, government reports 25%. Encyclopedias, journal articles and books were used by 23.3%, and 13.3% respectively. Dictionaries and theses were used least on a daily basis, 6.7% and 3.3% respectively. It is logical to see that theses and dissertations were used more on a monthly basis (30%) than on a daily basis (3.3%) and have never been used by 20% of respondents. Surprisingly some respondents have never used books (11.6%), government reports (13.3%), or encyclopedias (15%) as their information sources.

**Table 4: Type of Information Sources**

Type of Information Sources	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 Per Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 Per Month (%)	Monthly (%)	Never (%)
Magazine	85.0	6.7	3.3			5.0
Newspaper	85.0	6.7	3.3	-	-	5.0
Corporate Report	40.0	25.0	18.3	6.7	10.0	-
Conference Paper and Proceeding	26.7	16.7	25.0	20.0	11.7	-
Government Report	25.0	8.30	28.3	15.0	10.0	13.3
Encyclopedia	23.3	15.0	23.3	3.3	20.0	15.0
Journal Articles	13.3	48.3	10.0	13.3	15.0	-
Book	13.3	18.3	16.7	23.3	16.7	11.6
Dictionary	6.7	8.3	16.7	23.3	45.0	-
Thesis and Dissertation	3.3	8.3	16.7	21.7	30.0	20.0

#### 5. Electronic Information Sources

With regard to electronic information sources, majority of respondents (78.3%) used equally online newspapers and Facebook to obtain information, followed by 73.3% who used Twitter, and 55% who used Blogs daily. The use of wikipedia, non-government web sites,

and government web sites accounted for 45%, 38.3% and 36.7% respectively. E-books and online magazines equally make up 20%, while articles from online journals were used by 11.7% respondents. The lowest rate of use appeared to be that of all online databases; only 5% of respondents used them and 83.3% or 85% reported 'never used'.

**Table 5: Electronic Information Sources**

Use of electronic media	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 Per Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 Per Month (%)	Monthly (%)	Never (%)
On-line Newspaper	78.3	5.0	5.0	8.3	-	3.3
Face book	78.3	13.3	5.0	-	3.3	-
Twitter	73.3	6.7	6.7	-	-	13.3
Blogs	55.0	25.0	6.7	13.3	-	-
Wikipedia	45.0	25.0	1.7	8.3	15.0	5.0
Non-Government Websites	38.3	50.0	6.7	-	5.0	-
Official Website of Government	36.7	51.7	6.7	-	5.0	-
E-Book	20.0	18.3	21.7	-	21.7	18.4
On-line Magazine	20.0	43.3	20.0	5.0	3.3	8.3
Articles from electronic journals	11.7	40.0	21.7	6.7	15.0	5.0
Database -Law Net	5.0	10.0	-	-	-	85.0
Database-EBSCO	5.0	6.7	-	-	-	88.3
Database BLIS	5.0	6.7	3.3	-	-	85.0
Database MASTILink	5.0	5.0	=	1.7	-	88.3
Database-Bond	5.0	5.0	-	1.7	-	83.3
Database-SIRIMLink	5.0	5.0	1.7	-	5.0	83.3

## 6. How Information Sources Were Obtained

In accordance with the heavy use of electronic sources in table 5, most respondents (46.7%) obtained information by downloading from web sites everyday as shown in table 6. Those who purchased their own materials comprised 25%, borrowed from the library made up 10 %, and those who borrowed from friends only 5%. It is clear that most active transactions were done online everyday and few times weekly; only 1.7% respondents did the downloading on a monthly basis. Such frequent online behaviour is consistent with findings in other studies regarding the frequency of online use. Among those who obtained books by borrowing from the library, the majority of them (41.7%) did so few times monthly, and 31.7% borrowed once a month. It is interesting to note that 33.3% respondents have never borrowed from friends.

**Table 6: How Information Sources Were Obtained**

How information is obtained	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 Per Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 Per Month (%)	Monthly (%)	Never (%)
Download from websites	46.7	28.3	15.0	8.3	1.7	-
Own Purchase	25.0	23.3	20.0	21.7	10.0	-
Borrow from the library	10.0	3.3	13.3	41.7	31.7	-
Borrow from friends	5.0	5.0	13.3	16.7	26.7	33.3

## 7. Frequency of Library Use

In terms of the extent of library use, the majority of respondents (41.7%) used the Parliament library once a month, followed by 38.3% who used the state public library once a month. On the contrary, majority of respondents (70%) reported their use of digital libraries : 15% everyday, 30% few times a week, 6.7% once a week or few times a month, and 11.7% once a month. Those who have never used digital libraries made up the smallest group (30%) compared to those who have never used university library (83.3%), national library of Malaysia ( 71.7%), state public library (48.3%) and parliament library (38.3%). Table 7 shows details of respondents' use of libraries.

**Table 7: Frequency of Library Use**

Library Use	Frequency					
	Everyday (%)	2-3 Per Week (%)	Weekly (%)	2-3 Per Month (%)	Monthly (%)	Never (%)
Digital Library	15.0	30.0	6.7	6.7	11.7	30.0
Parliament Library	3.3	1.7	3.3	11.7	41.7	38.3
University Library	3.3	-	-	8.3	5.0	83.3
National Library of Malaysia	1.7	-	-	15.0	11.7	71.7
State Public Library	-	-	-	13.3	38.3	48.3

## DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Some of the findings from this study are noteworthy of highlighting. First and foremost, is the fact that very few MPs in Malaysia use the library. This phenomenon is similar to what was reported by Watt (2010) whose paper suggested that some MPs seemed to be able to function without the use of information from the library. However, from our study it cannot be said that they do not need information. In fact their information needs appear to be dispersed into several areas and their preference for information sources has moved into the digital era of online sources, most often outside the library, beyond the boundary of traditional libraries.

Secondly, the results showed that a big majority of MPs in Malaysia use electronic sources available online to fulfill their information needs and upgrade their knowledge. The high rate of obtaining information from online newspapers, Facebook, Twitter and blogs is consistent with their primary need for information on current issues. Conversely they also indicate a need for reliable sources of information; yet their use of research information available in journal articles, and theses / dissertations was very low. The fact that electronic databases were also not used by the majority of respondents indicates the mismatch between information need and sources of information to fulfill their needs.

Thirdly, the high rate of using Twitter and Facebook (45%) and e-mailing (38.3%) as a means of communication by respondents is indicative of their preferred medium of obtaining information, albeit without regards to the quality aspect of information. Hence it is logical to see that they also expressed the need for reliable and authoritative sources of information.

Fourthly, the fact that the 'librarian' was hardly consulted, and the library was hardly used by most respondents should signal a danger sign for librarians, in particular the librarians at the Parliament library.

### **Transformation Plans for The Parliament Library and Librarian**

Within the above context, the librarian should assume a new role, that of an information entrepreneur; an entrepreneur in the real sense of one who turns problems into opportunities. What opportunities have presented themselves from the above findings? It is apparent that MPs need reliable and authoritative information, yet they obtain it from the popular sources such as newspapers, Facebook, Twitter, blogs which are not associated with reliability and credibility. An entrepreneur-librarian can fill in the information service gap by providing them with ready-made information from reliable and credible sources to be delivered by the most preferred medium by the MPs.

The entrepreneur- librarians cannot operate behind closed walls of the library. They must be on par with their MPs in terms of getting to know their needs and how best to fulfill them. Establishing trust and confidence in the librarians' competency to assist the MPs in their information search is critical to ensure their sustained position in the Parliament. The librarians need to aspire to be an important and key player in contributing to the progress of the informed Parliament and information-rich MPs. The librarian needs to have pride in this important role in the Parliament.

The entrepreneur- librarians will keep themselves up-to-date on all issues debated in the Parliament. They are proactive as they will anticipate the topics and forms of needed information and assemble relevant materials for MPs' use on a regular basis. They must not expect MPs to visit the library; instead, the information from the library's reservoir must go to the MPs. As the majority of MPs are active users of the Internet, Twitter, Facebook and Blogs, librarians should optimise on these new media to channel needed information to MPs. Librarians need to acquire new skills to make them competent in using the new media and keep up with their customers.

The low usage and high number of "have never used" online databases are a matter of concern, in particular when a huge sum of financial allocation is spent on databases' subscription. Further studies should be carried out to identify factors contributing to MPs' low and no usage of online databases. Entrepreneur-librarians can work out new strategies to make their information services and the digital library part and parcel of information use of MPs on a daily basis.

### **Limitation of the study**

As this study did not manage to obtain responses from the majority of the MPs, findings cannot be considered representative of all MPs in Malaysia. It appears to be a case study of 60 MPs in Malaysia and the findings can be used as the preliminary indicators of what can be

improved upon in the instrument for data collection in the future study. Further study should be carried out to have a sample size that represent various sectors of the MPs and to solicit more concrete information on the specific services they would like to have from the library.

## Conclusion

This study has identified the subjects and purposes of needed information that can be used by librarians to prioritise their services and coverage to suit the various needs of MPs. It has also pointed out the preferred sources of information, the means to obtain them and the frequency of information use. The traditional role of libraries as acquiring, cataloging and providing circulation services to users ought to be changed to that of providing convenient and timely access to relevant information and repackaging of needed information. The entrepreneur-librarian can play a more proactive role in the provision of information based on the identified subject matters of MPs' needs, the preferred sources of information, the frequency, the delivery channel, and the purposes of information needs. Librarians can contribute significantly to the making of informed citizens and informed representatives in the parliamentary system of Malaysia if they embark on a transformation process in line with the changing nature of their customers.

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