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New developments on the Turkish school library scene

H. INCI ÖNAL

The overall purpose of this article is to describe the history, growth and development of school libraries in Turkey from 1923 to 2004. For now and the foreseeable future, school librarians will be simultaneously working in the library of yesterday and deeply affected by the library of tomorrow. Changing information needs make it necessary to extend school library services to include new information resources. School librarians must help students understand their information needs and the resources and information technologies available. The research on which this article is based used the survey method. Data were collected through literature analysis, questionnaires, interviews and observation. Observations and interviews were conducted and 3000 questionnaires were distributed in 100 secondary education institutions in Ankara, Turkey during the academic year 2003–4. The research in this article explores the historical background and the current status, role and function of school libraries in providing information resources to help meet the information needs of students in Turkey. It is concluded that in order to optimally deliver information services in secondary education institutions, it is necessary to connect with and guide users by all means available, thereby providing endless possibilities for perpetual connectivity and human development.

KEYWORDS: information needs; information resources; school libraries; Turkey

INTRODUCTION

Rapid developments in the scientific, educational and socio-economic sectors have increased the demand for information throughout the world. School libraries in Turkey are trying to meet the needs of the educational community by improving their services and enhancing their resources. It is hoped that by taking advantage of information technology, systematic planning, effective instruction, information literacy and the like, these institutions will be able to enhance the accessibility of information sources.

Information sources have changed dramatically. Today, educational institutions can obtain information for both research and training from a variety of sources. They rely not only on books, textbooks, journals, references and notes, but on other materials as well, including but not limited to audio-visual materials and software on magnetic media or other forms of storage devices that are usually available in their environment, offices or libraries.

This article reviews development in school libraries in Turkey and has five sections as follows: historical background and structure of school libraries in the Turkish education system; progress achieved and recent developments; extending library services with new information resources; recommendations; and conclusions regarding the implications of this research for achieving new

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goals in Turkish school library services in the 21st century.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN THE TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

History tells us that Anatolia was the cradle of a number of the world's ancient civilizations, and that it was the first to establish and use libraries for secular, religious and educational purposes. School libraries in Turkey have existed as traditional institutions since the period of the Ottoman Empire. They were established with the aim of educating the child in his early years. Libraries, as they appeared in some schools between the 16th and 18th centuries, might be considered as the offshoot of the university (madrasa) library, since they were founded in the same manner (Cunbur, 1960; Soysal, 1966). The Turkish school library has a long history through several educational institutions at the elementary and secondary (mosque schools) and higher levels (madrasa and enderun). Each institution possessed its own school library governed by specific laws passed in the 1700s. The topics these laws covered included the capacity of the library, the purchase of books, collection development policy, personnel qualifications and other educational matters (Soysal, 1969: 18). After the establishment of the Ministry of National Education in 1857, the structure of the Turkish education system was reorganized.

The need to provide education for all was recognized at the beginning of Republican period, in the 1920s. Under the Law of the Unity of Education, which came into force on 3 March 1924 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, 1924), it became mandatory to take measures to unify both liberal and religious education in Turkey.

The government achieved tremendous progress in education. The increase in the number of students in primary schools, secondary schools and institutions of higher education was quite remarkable. Many schools at all levels were without libraries, or their school libraries lacked adequate collections, suitable buildings or spaces, proper organization, ease of access, adequate financial support and competent and sufficient staff. Although the first specific school library law was prepared in the 1700s, implementation of the laws was not treated as one of the vital parts of the national education policy. The laws governing the management and structure of the education system were changed, but the system was still affected by the past. Perhaps the greatest handicap to Turkish school librarianship was the lack of the relationship between school and library according to the existing laws. The presumption was that libraries at these levels were not truly functional but were rather merely traditional institutions based on an existing framework. The tremendous progress that occurred in

the educational system overall did not take place in school libraries.

Between 1924 and 1959, several foreign researchers and scholars were invited to Turkey. They made contributions to the development of Turkish school libraries (Önal, 1995). In 1952, John Dewey presented his report emphasizing the urgent need to provide libraries in schools. He saw school libraries as essential to the growth of science, and the success of their service as necessarily tied to the development of the Turkish education system (Dewey, 1952). In 1952, Lawrence S. Thompson noted the deplorable condition of school libraries in Turkey and made recommendations (Thompson, 1952b). The Turkish school library system proposed by Thompson reflected aspirations and efforts to organize the library as a reading, reference and materials centre as an intrinsic part of the entire educational process (Thompson, 1952a: 17). John Ruffin in 1956 noted that although there had been some developments and improvements, basic weaknesses still existed. He wrote: 'There is much work to be done to revitalise or rehabilitate school libraries in Turkey' (Ruffin, 1956: 22).

The recommendations and decisions discussed in these reports made important theoretical, organizational and institutional contributions to the school librarianship movement in Turkey. The ideas of such researchers and scholars have been of continuing importance in helping us understand and shape current developments.

In 1930, 1959 and 1961, the Ministry of National Education set up different committees to consider the need for innovations, to reshape school library programmes and to propose new conceptions for this field (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, 1930; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Maarif Vekaleti, 1959; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1961). The committees' proposals were embodied in the recommendations entitled 'Reports on school library programmes in Turkey'. However, for various reasons, the new and revised programme schemes were never implemented. The amendment of the School Library Standards Act was postponed. Nevertheless, the need for more fundamental and far-reaching revisions and educational reforms remains, and it is thought that new committees will be appointed in the near future.

Researchers, scholars and committee members were optimistic about library development and saw a future 'full of promise'. They believed that, when guided by modern reforms, a well-equipped school library under the management of a trained librarian would be the vital organ of the school.

PROGRESS ACHIEVED AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Today, every school has a library. However, although they are generally called school libraries, they do not

necessarily meet the standards required of a modern school library. Sometimes, in the form of a few shelves of books, 'libraries' can be found in the teachers' lounge, the principal's office and the corridors as well as in the classrooms. However, some attempts have been made to improve the library facilities in certain schools.

In Turkey, the first courses on school librarianship were delivered by Ruşen Alaylıoğlu in 1953 at the Gazi Education Institute to pedagogy and literature students (Göndem and Alaylıoğlu, 1954: 12). After 1960, the Ministry of National Education arranged school library courses for individuals in different categories, such as teachers, librarians, library personnel and students (Ersoy, 1965). Turkish language or literature teachers have often taught library studies to students, and have been sometimes assigned to act as the school librarian.

In the Republican Period, Turkey received its the first school library legislation (School Libraries By-law) in 1959 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Maarif Vekaleti, 1959), which was then revised in 1976 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1976).

In 1981 an organizational system went into effect within the Ministry of National Education, in which a School Libraries Branch was created within the Department of Publications. The Branch was to have the following responsibilities:

1. technical and administrative management and supervision of the national school library system;
2. selection, acquisition and preparation of a standard collection;
3. development of programmes with the aim to improve library services and the training of library personnel.

There has been little professional activity in the area of educational use of libraries in Turkey. In order to fill this gap and make library use part of the educational curriculum, a new course was proposed for secondary school students by the author of this paper in 1995. The course was entitled 'Information-using skills and school libraries'. It has been very useful when taught by librarians.

Since 1999, secondary school libraries in Turkey have begun to follow the principles of the School Library Manifesto that was developed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in consultation with the IFLA Section on School Libraries and Resource Centres and the International Association of School Librarianship and endorsed by UNESCO.

Finally, on 22 August 2001, with the Ministry of National Education legislation numbered 24501, school library legislation developed further. The school library legislation reflects a change of emphasis, with a focus on programmes and student learning via new media. It begins with school librarians' working requirements for information literacy and focuses on student achievement

as the bottom line (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2001).

The Turkish Librarians' Association (TLA) is in the process of restructuring. The School Libraries Working Group (SLWG), later renamed the School Librarians Istanbul Group (SLIG), has been developing within the TLA since 2000. It has come up with preliminary suggestions for a structure that would make it a more effective and efficient professional organization of school librarians. Through the efforts of school librarians across the nation, SLIG was officially organized on 22 June 2002.

The First SLIG National Conference and Exhibition was held on 5 July 2003, in Istanbul. Many conference programmes, including several sessions on recent school library research, were organized by TLA and SLIG. This was the first important collaborative effort on the part of school librarians in Turkey.

As can be seen from the above, basic changes in school librarianship in Turkey have been introduced, but it can be said that they have some serious problems, such as a lack of policy, resources, qualified librarians, adequate budget and proper facilities and buildings. The role, status and position of secondary school libraries need to be re-examined with the objective of providing quality library service within the existing context.

Having received positive feedback, the Turkish Ministry of National Education has made plans for the future. In the coming years, it will give special attention to educational policy regarding reform of the school library system.

EXTENDING LIBRARY SERVICES WITH NEW INFORMATION RESOURCES

Using a wide variety of information resources and developing new skills during the education process are very important tools for fostering learning styles. The study detailed in this section provides guidelines for school libraries as they attempt to incorporate new information sources into their services, as well as suggestions for further research.

The research

Historically, libraries have played key roles in societies. Today, students and schools have many information resources and new media as alternatives to those provided by libraries. The role of libraries is changing, and challenges include facing user demands for services, meeting information needs, and providing a range of print, non-print and electronic learning resources. The blurring of boundaries between educational institutions and libraries with user-centred services raises new questions about information resources, information needs and the role of school libraries. Many of these are important questions for current and future services. This

study asked questions relating to perceived needs and awareness and use of services as they actually existed at the time of research. More precisely, the essential research questions may be stated as follows:

1. What have been the quantitative and qualitative developments in the school library field in Turkey from the founding of the Republic until today?
2. Which information needs, information resources and school library services do students perceive as important?
3. How are students meeting their information needs, through the school library or by other means?

The first question concerns general information. The second and third ones relate to specific information about how information resources and media materials are being used in the school library or other places.

Methodology

The research design for determining the quantitative and qualitative developments in Turkey from the founding of the Republic until today was based on information collected and reported by the Ministry of National Education from 1923 to 2004.

The research was based on the survey method. Data were collected by utilizing four techniques: literature analysis of national and international information resources to evaluate information about school library developments in Turkey; questionnaires given to students to determine their information needs and obtain a profile of information resources used by them in the school library or other places; interviews with administrators, teachers, library workers and students to explain research objectives and procedures; and observations of students, schools and libraries to see and understand actual student behaviours.

Stratified sampling was used as the sampling technique. This technique enabled us to obtain greater precision in our sampling by using information about all types of schools and their students. The research methods books that provided practical and theoretical insights for this study were very useful (Berger, 2000; Bickman and Rog, 1998; Busha and Harter, 1980; Hafner, 1998).

Observations and interviews were conducted and 3000 questionnaires were distributed in 100 secondary education institutions in Ankara during the academic year 2003–4. In the spring semester of 2004, the number of secondary education institutions in Ankara was 636. Secondary education institutions include general, vocational and technical education institutions, both public and private. In using stratified sampling, we took the secondary education institutions as the target population and for purposes of the research divided them into three subcategories which covered all of the types of schools. These subcategories strata were determined

based on the Turkish education system. The sample size for each stratum was calculated, as follows: 73 high schools (15 percent of 481), 15 private high schools (18 percent of 82) and 12 vocational-technical high schools (16 percent of 73). The research covered, on average, 16 percent of the secondary education institutions in Ankara through stratified sampling. Simple random selection was used in each stratum. Each school was represented in the research sample by 30 students. The total student population of 3000 included: 2,190 public high school students, 450 private high school students and 360 vocational-technical high school students. The research sample was of sufficient size to generalize the results of the survey to the larger student population and to Turkish secondary education institutions overall (Berger, 2000; Bickman and Rog, 1998; Busha and Harter, 1980; Hafner, 1998).

Survey instrument

In the academic year 2002–3, the questionnaire was piloted on a small group (337 students from 11 schools: seven high schools, two private high schools, two vocational-technical high schools). The results of this pilot study were reviewed and revised, but not included in the actual research sample results.

As the survey instrument, the questionnaire used for this study was based on the 2003–4 academic year survey. In June 2004, the author analysed the 2003–4 academic year survey results to ensure that it sufficiently addressed students' use of print, non-print (audio-visual) and electronic resources. The purpose of the survey instrument was to answer the research questions cited at the beginning of this section. In addition, it was intended to give a sense of the degree to which students were using resources other than those in the school libraries.

Procedures

Information was provided by the Ministry of National Education during this study. The student survey questionnaire was administered to the sample population to between September 2003 and June 2004. Students from secondary education institutions were the school library users surveyed in this study.

Data were gathered through the questionnaire which had been pilot tested and then revised. The number of respondents totalled 3000 students; 100 secondary school libraries participated. The questionnaire was administered by the author. All of the questionnaire forms were then examined and evaluated. By doing a pilot study first, and then developing a questionnaire that was easily understood by the respondents, it was found that all 3000 completed questionnaires were usable. Interviews and observation techniques were also very useful in evaluating research results and school library services.

Sample characteristics

For the purposes of this study, secondary education includes all general, vocational and technical education institutions that provide at least three years of education after primary school. Secondary education aims to give students a minimum level of common knowledge, to make them acquainted with individuals' and society's problems and the search for solutions, to help them acquire the necessary awareness to contribute to the socio-economic and cultural development of the country and to prepare them for higher education, for a vocation, for business and for life in line with their interests, skills and abilities. School libraries serve as key resources for their users. All of the students who participated in this survey had been library users in their schools. They were answering the survey questionnaire on a voluntary basis.

Of the 3000 students, 58.7 percent (1761) were girls, and 41.3 percent (1239) were boys. 53 percent of respondents (1590) were aged 13–14, 36 percent (1080) were aged 15–16, and only 11 percent (330) were aged 17 and older. The majority of the respondents in the sample were relatively young library users (aged 13–14).

Most respondents were first-year students in secondary school (53 percent, 1590 students). At the time of the survey, 35 percent (1050) of those who responded were second, and 12 percent (360) were third (final) year students in secondary school. The school years parallel the age groups.

87.8 percent (2634) of students were living at home, while 12.2 percent (366) were staying in school dormitories. Only 21 percent (630) of the students were working in their families' businesses. In contrast to this situation, 14.2 percent (426) had no source of support from their families' income. This group was supported by scholarships from government institutions and voluntary organizations.

Fifteen private high schools had at least one, and in some cases two or more school librarians. None of the other schools had professional librarians; instead, they had one or two employees who were responsible for their libraries. All of the librarians working at private schools were graduates of library and information science departments, the others were secondary school graduates.

Results of the survey data

The results of the study are presented below, as answers to the three research questions presented earlier in this section.

Research question 1

What have been the quantitative and qualitative developments in the school library field in Turkey from the founding of the Republic until today?

To provide an answer to this question, the

information provided by the Ministry of National Education was analysed.

At all types and levels of schools under the Ministry of National Education, the aim is to increase the quality of education and success of the students, to increase the capabilities of the personnel and the teachers and to develop their vocational skills, to provide more efficient and productive utilization of resources and to use technology efficiently in education. The Turkish education system for all individuals in all locations and settings is taken as the basis, and the framework of national goals and policies concerning information technologies is summarized as follows: 'to keep pace with the information era, to raise individuals who think universally and act nationally in order to become an information and technology society, to support each stage of the Turkish education system with technology-based education in order to increase the competitive power of society' (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2003: 29).

The education system defined in the Basic Law of National Education includes three subsystems, namely 'formal education', 'non-formal education' and 'special education'. Formal education is the regular education of individuals in a certain age group at given schools on the same level with programmes prepared for definite purposes. Formal education includes pre-primary education, primary education, secondary education and higher education (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 1973).

The general structure of the formal education system can be explained as follows. Pre-primary education includes the optional education of children between 36 and 72 months, who are under the age at which compulsory primary education begins. The purpose of pre-primary education is to ensure children's physical, mental and sensory development, to prepare them for primary education and to ensure that Turkish is spoken correctly and well. The purpose of primary education is to ensure that every child acquires the basic knowledge, skills and habits to become a good citizen, and is prepared for life and for the next education level in line with his/her interests and skills. Primary education is compulsory for all children, boys and girls, and is given free of charge in public schools. Primary education institutions are schools that provide eight years of uninterrupted education. Secondary education had been described in the methodology section above. Higher education includes all educational institutions at all levels that offer a programme of at least four semesters after secondary education. The purpose of higher education is to further develop students in line with their interests and skills, in conformity with the country's science policy and in consideration of the qualified manpower needs of society at various levels (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2003; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1983).

The purpose of non-formal education is to provide education services in line with the general purposes and basic principles of national education, along with or apart from formal education, to people who have never received, are at any level of, or have left at any level of, the formal education system (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2003; Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Gençlik ve Spor Bakanlığı, 1983).

Educational services are provided in special education schools to children and young people in five groups: the visually impaired, the hearing impaired, the orthopaedically impaired, the mentally impaired and children with long-term illnesses. When appropriate, children from among all of these groups are integrated into regular schools and benefit from special education classes and supportive education. Students receive education and teachers serve at the special education schools and institutions in the context of either formal or non-formal education (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2003).

Educational activities of public (free), private (with fee) and voluntary organizations are all subject to the control of the Ministry of National Education to ensure their suitability with regard to the national education goals.

Since the establishment of the Republic, there have been tremendous increases in the number of schools, teachers and students in all types of education and at all levels of the education system. Moreover, important advances were made in the nationwide distribution of educational opportunities. The advances are indicated by the following statistics:

- In the various types and at the various levels of education, there were 5100 schools in 1923, with this figure increasing more than tenfold to 53,874 as of 2004. There were no non-formal education institutions in 1923; in 2004, there were 8644.
- There were 361,500 students in 1923; this number increased by a factor of 54 to become 19,437,566 in 2004. There were no students at non-formal education institutions in 1923. In 2004, the number of students at non-formal education institutions was 3,451,515.
- In 1923, 12,200 teachers were employed. This number increased by a factor of 58 to reach 710,900 in 2004. There were no teachers at non-formal education institutions in 1923. In 2004, the number of teachers at non-formal education institutions was 57,750 (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2004).

In recent years, books and educational materials have been prepared based on national goals and policy concerning information technologies so as to provide contemporary, scientific knowledge and experience. More importantly, students have been taken as the focus, with the emphasis shifted away from memorizing and

toward promoting active learning. These educational materials comprise textbooks and workbooks for students, guidebooks for teachers, and various materials for the use of both groups. Experts from a number of fields have been brought together to work on increasing the quality of educational materials in terms of scientific content, language and explanation, educational design, visual design and measurement and assessment. Those materials that have not been approved by the Ministry of National Education may not be used in schools. Students may not be required to buy materials prepared by an organization that does not fall within the scope of official institutions and organizations. Books and educational materials produced by the Ministry of National Education are distributed free of charge to educational institutions at different levels, and their school libraries, according to their contents. The growth in the number of new books and educational materials that have been submitted to the Ministry of National Education for inspection and found suitable in form and content by the ministry's inspection committee is indicated in Table 1.

As shown in Table 1, the number of books and educational materials in Turkey has increased more than nine times over the short period from 1997 to 2004. This means that a total of 13,868 titles has been approved by the Ministry of National Education. During the same period, however, the number of materials in school libraries increased at a slower rate than did user needs. In order for students to be able to gain research skills in a school library, its collections must be sufficiently large and enriched with new publications. Book donation campaigns have been organized and books, cassettes, films and slides have been provided by various sources to enrich school libraries. From time to time, seminars have been organized in order to teach students the efficient use of library resources.

Table 1. Growth of number of new books and educational materials in Turkey, 1997–2004*

| Year | Number of new books and educational materials in Turkey, 1997–2004 |
|------|--|
| 1997 | 672 |
| 1998 | 730 |
| 1999 | 801 |
| 2000 | 1138 |
| 2001 | 1201 |
| 2002 | 1538 |
| 2003 | 1776 |
| 2004 | 6012 |

* This table was established through the interviews and unpublished official reports of the Republic of Turkey, Ministry of National Education.

Among the titles that appear in Table 1, some (generally 30 to 50 per year) have been accepted as textbooks by the Ministry of National Education. In the academic year 2001–2, 16,064,500 individual textbooks were published, and a total of 21,826,190 textbooks (including others published previously) were delivered for individual use. Since the academic year 2002–3, it has been planned that primary and secondary education textbooks would be regularly published and delivered free (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2003).

Building information technology classrooms in at least two primary schools in 81 cities and every town has been a very important goal since 1998. In these classrooms, there are computers, printers, scanners, educational office and computer literacy software, educational games, electronic references, videos, televisions, educational video-cassettes, overhead projectors and transparencies. A total of 3462 televisions, 6179 videos, 6255 VHS videocassettes, 3462 overhead projectors and 6254 transparencies have been purchased and distributed in 2802 primary schools (10 percent of all primary schools). Materials have been stored in the technology classrooms but used in other classrooms; there has not been extensive cooperation with school libraries. To solve these and other problems, a system for the nationwide distribution of educational materials not only for primary schools, but also for secondary schools, has been planned as of 2004. In addition, a cyber education library, EGITEK, has been established in Ankara for purposes of: meeting students' and teachers' information needs; preparing educational materials and software; teaching general concepts relating to education; providing expert support for school libraries; researching and developing educational models for the community; enabling information-sharing and cultural interaction among 15 countries (including Turkey) by means of an Internet-based model; and, digitizing an audiovisual materials archive.

Research question 2

Which information needs, information resources and school library services do students perceive as important?

To answer this question, an analysis was done of the results of this survey question: 'On a scale of one to five, with one being the most important and five being the least, please identify your information needs with regard to your school activities and special interests, and then indicate the usefulness of the following information resources and services provided by your school libraries to assist you in meeting your information needs'. Information needs were grouped into three general categories: school-related subject information, interest-driven information and 'other information' needs. The latter category included a blank for students to identify these needs, which they did as: personal; skills development; and preparation for life. Table 2 provides very interesting

Table 2. Types of students' information needs

| Need type | Gender | | | Age | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | All (%) | Boys (%) | Girls (%) | 13–14 (%) | 15–16 (%) | 17–18 (%) |
| Interest-driven information | 41 | 44 | 38 | 45 | 40 | 38 |
| Other information | 30 | 32 | 28 | 32 | 28 | 30 |
| School-related subject information | 29 | 24 | 34 | 23 | 32 | 32 |
| Total (N) | N = 3000 | N = 1239 | N = 1761 | N = 1590 | N = 1080 | N = 330 |

results for educators and librarians in Turkey, because, for the first time, school-related subject information needs have been evaluated as less important than other types of information needs.

Within this question, students were asked to rate 10 information resources in terms of their usefulness in meeting their information needs. The purpose was to determine which information resources offered by school libraries are the most useful and which are the least useful. It should be noted here that good communication between school library service staff and students is essential to enable maximum benefit from such contacts. Table 3 shows the usefulness of information resources

Table 3. Percentage of 13–18 year olds who use the information resources at school libraries

| Information resource | Gender | | | Age | | |
|----------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | All (%) | Boys (%) | Girls (%) | 13–14 (%) | 15–16 (%) | 17–18 (%) |
| Textbooks | 57 | 55 | 59 | 54 | 60 | 57 |
| Books and printed media | 48 | 47 | 49 | 45 | 52 | 47 |
| Reference books | 45 | 46 | 44 | 49 | 43 | 43 |
| Cartographic materials | 37 | 38 | 36 | 35 | 39 | 37 |
| Journals and newspapers | 35 | 36 | 34 | 34 | 38 | 33 |
| Visual materials | 33 | 32 | 34 | 31 | 36 | 32 |
| CD-ROMs, multimedia | 30 | 28 | 32 | 31 | 31 | 28 |
| Internet | 17 | 20 | 14 | 17 | 14 | 20 |
| Sound recordings | 15 | 16 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 17 |
| Reports, pamphlets, models | 9 | 7 | 11 | 8 | 10 | 9 |
| Total (N) | N = 3000 | N = 1239 | N = 1761 | N = 1590 | N = 1080 | N = 330 |

provided by school libraries according to students, arranged in descending order.

Students indicated that the availability of some services from school libraries are important for meeting their information needs, completing their course-related assignments and developing successful information-seeking behaviour. The factors that motivated students to use libraries were analysed. On the basis of the answers, it seems that students have apparently been offered these choices as school library services. Table 4 lists the responses that were mentioned more than once.

Five progressive high schools and all of the private high schools included in the survey have established better school libraries and resource centres than the others. They provide new kinds of services that represent modern thinking in school librarianship and information science. Among the services provided by these centres are information literacy programmes, online learning, and mechanized information storage and retrieval.

Research question 3

How are students meeting their information needs, through the school library or by other means?

The third major component of this study was to determine how students are meeting their information needs. Students were asked what methods they are most likely to use to identify appropriate information resources for their school-related information needs,

courses, programmes or assignments. Responses from the students indicated that the most popular means of identifying appropriate information resources is a recommendation from a friend (31 percent). The next most popular means are reading a book or an encyclopaedia at home (27 percent) and using materials in the school library (22 percent). Public libraries are utilized by 13 percent of the respondents, and 4 percent of the respondents indicated that they identify appropriate information resources through recommendations from teachers. A small number of respondents (3 percent) used various other methods, the most prevalent of which were Internet searches and materials shown in the classroom.

Responses regarding the students' information use for leisure activities differed slightly from responses to the previous question. Recommendations from friends (32 percent) and reading books, journals, newspapers and watching TV at home (30 percent) were tied at the top, with a significant percentage of the respondents (23 percent) also identifying resources through using materials in the school library. Some respondents (15 percent) indicated that they buy their own materials to use for their information needs.

Students use libraries to meet their information needs in a variety of ways. To meet their interest-driven information needs, school library collections are the students' top choice. The next most heavily used collections, in descending order, are public library collections,

Table 4. Percentage of students who made suggestions for school library services

| Services | Gender | | | School types and their students | | |
|---|----------|----------|-----------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | All (%) | Boys (%) | Girls (%) | High Schools (%) | Private High Schools (%) | Vocational High Schools (%) |
| Organizing library orientation programmes for students | 60 | 58 | 62 | 65 | 58 | 57 |
| Finding interest-driven information | 51 | 52 | 50 | 53 | 51 | 49 |
| Developing programmes for collection management | 48 | 46 | 50 | 51 | 44 | 49 |
| Providing guidance in school-related subject information | 35 | 33 | 37 | 39 | 32 | 34 |
| Supporting for skill development | 33 | 34 | 32 | 33 | 31 | 35 |
| Recommending other libraries with relevant substantial holdings | 31 | 33 | 29 | 30 | 29 | 34 |
| Teaching of information analysis and synthesis | 29 | 30 | 28 | 30 | 30 | 27 |
| Providing Internet services | 15 | 20 | 10 | 11 | 19 | 15 |
| Gateway to the greater library network | 14 | 17 | 11 | 11 | 15 | 16 |
| Preparing or revising web site to be more accessible | 8 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 15 | 4 |
| Total (N) | N = 3000 | N = 1239 | N = 1761 | N = 2190 | N = 450 | N = 360 |

university library collections, national library collections, and special library collections. Table 5 compares how frequently students use various library services.

While asking students the question 'What three things would you do "on a really good day" and "on a really boring day"?' might help to describe and then improve the status of library and information services in schools, by helping librarians to understand students' lifestyles, further conceptual development would also be desirable, as would be bringing new ideas and advances to the attention of school library staff. Table 6 describes which activities students saw themselves doing 'on a really good day' and 'on a really boring day'. Their answers say something about their lifestyles and expectations. It is crucial to understand these expectations, patterns of actions, leisure activities and youth culture in general. Focusing on the structure of everyday life allows us to see first what students' preferences were and how they spent their time and, secondly, how library services fit into and contribute to this structure. In order to

Table 5. Students' reasons for using selected library services with their friends or on an individual basis and their frequency of use

| Services | All (%) | School types and their students | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | High Schools (%) | Private High Schools (%) | Vocational High Schools (%) |
| To ask for some information | | | | |
| Most days | 73 | 61 | 87 | 71 |
| Once or twice a month | 20 | 25 | 12 | 23 |
| Non-user | 7 | 14 | 1 | 6 |
| To go to a programme | | | | |
| Most days | 58 | 42 | 69 | 63 |
| Once or twice a month | 23 | 37 | 17 | 15 |
| Non-user | 19 | 21 | 14 | 22 |
| To read or borrow books | | | | |
| Most days | 39 | 31 | 58 | 28 |
| Once or twice a month | 38 | 42 | 28 | 44 |
| Non-user | 23 | 27 | 14 | 28 |
| To access databases | | | | |
| Most days | 36 | 30 | 53 | 25 |
| Once or twice a month | 43 | 44 | 27 | 58 |
| Non-user | 21 | 26 | 20 | 17 |
| To use Internet | | | | |
| Most days | 31 | 17 | 51 | 25 |
| Once or twice a month | 48 | 65 | 32 | 47 |
| Non-user | 21 | 18 | 17 | 28 |
| Total (N) | N= 3000 | N= 2190 | N= 450 | N= 360 |

Table 6. What three things would you do 'on a really good day' and 'on a really boring day'?

| Activities | On a really good day (%) | On a really boring day (%) |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Meet friends | 44 | 5 |
| Go to the cinema | 37 | 8 |
| Make something/hobby | 31 | 11 |
| Watch TV | 27 | 16 |
| Listen to music | 15 | 21 |
| Play sport | 12 | 28 |
| Read a book | 11 | 39 |
| Play computer games | 10 | 34 |
| Do homework | 8 | 31 |
| Go to the library | 7 | 17 |

develop library and information services, this type of inquiry will help us not only in meeting existing information needs, but also in developing making long-term plans.

Findings

The primary findings of the research are as follows:

1. Substantial changes have taken place in the Turkish education system over the past 80 years. Although increases in information resources, in information needs, and in technological facilities have changed the demands on school library systems in a positive way, there are still serious problems.
2. In spite of foreign researchers' and scholars' (John Dewey, Lawrence S. Thompson and John Ruffi) efforts, it can be argued that the nature of the problems in the condition of school libraries has remained unchanged. These problems are a fundamental part of Turkish librarianship. Turkish librarians are aware of the problems and are trying to solve them while at the same time keeping up with contemporary developments in librarianship.
3. School librarianship literature is very poor in Turkey. There is a great need for up-to-date research in this field.
4. It has been considered very important to prepare legislation and general regulations for user services and to organize school libraries according to the School Library Manifesto. However, the new legislation and regulations have thus far given students the opportunity to access a wide range of print, non-print and electronic learning resources only at private high school libraries, not at school libraries in general.

5. The organization of school librarians is very important. It seems unlikely that a separate Association of Turkish School Librarians will form at this time. There are various problems regarding formation of a Turkish School Librarians' Association.
6. Everyone was very eager to contribute to our research, and their contributions were indeed very important not only for our research, but also for their libraries. Generally, respondents thought that interaction – student-to-information and student-to-library – would be directly related to improvements in all aspects of the school library programme. However, significant interaction was lacking in most schools. By helping with this research, respondents hoped to have a real and positive impact on their school libraries.
7. The educational materials and information resources that have been produced by Ministry of National Education in recent years have been very useful in the realization of educational programme goals.
8. An adequate collection of library materials, housed in a well-equipped library room, and the appointment of a school librarian have been regarded as the ideal for every school, but a great many schools are still operating in restricted conditions, far from this ideal.
9. By developing services that not only provide resources but also meet information needs, professional librarians can encourage students to become lifelong supporters of libraries.
10. The school librarian should keep in close contact with the school's students, so that the latter can become acquainted with the choice of services offered by the school library.
11. Coordinated efforts among teachers, librarians, administrators and parents in the community have been very important for meeting information needs.
12. Secondary school students are interested in using not only school libraries, but all types of libraries as well.
13. According to the students in our survey, school libraries should not be a quiet, inert warehouse of collections. They expect school libraries to function as lively, dynamic providers of information and services.
14. Libraries, especially school libraries, must be more active in the process of educational and social change, and must pay attention to their users' interests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The school library's responsibility is to the school population as a whole, not just its current users. Every student, teacher and school employee is a potential user, and all of them should have access to information in some way. More work needs to be done to meet the users'

information needs and to find new means to reach students that do not require them to visit the library to receive materials and services.

Recent statistics indicate that in 2004 Turkey had about 70 million people. In 2004 more than 19 million school-age children and young people were school library users in 53,874 different level schools (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, 2004: 35). As we all know, Turkey is now acknowledged as a country that has great potential for growth and development. Paradoxically, it has also become evident that Turkey has significant problems in its education system. For educational development, information services supported by school libraries are essential, but careful planning and implementation are needed.

In fact, school libraries in Turkey are not considered an integral part of the education system. Because of recent developments in Turkey, the demands on school libraries have increased, but the necessary resources in terms of money, personnel, materials and management have remained very limited.

Basic recommendations for strengthening and improving the school library system in Turkey can be summarized as follows. There is a need to:

1. produce a new collection management policy;
2. use the power of legislation to promote school library services;
3. encourage the establishment and development of libraries;
4. improve the status of and conditions for school librarians;
5. organize and implement information literacy programmes not only for students, but also for teachers and eventually for parents;
6. understand the direct correlation between current interest in delivery of information resources and the use of the Internet;
7. undertake a survey of the relationship between Turkish school library collections and the factors influencing use of school library collections;
8. coordinate activities and exchange experiences at the national and the international levels.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, none of us can imagine education without access to the library. Today, the school library works hand-in-hand with school and students to supplement course materials and to provide the necessary source materials for interest-driven information. Libraries serve as collections of history, culture and insight, offering access to information and knowledge representing diverse sources and viewpoints. In the same way that libraries have always adapted to social and technological evolution, they today acquire, organize, preserve and

make available both print and non-print information resources including electronically available ones. Within the educational community, not only can students now access information in their school libraries and throughout the school, but they also expect to be able to reach information resources everywhere, at all times. With an appropriate emphasis on planning, and by understanding historical developments, information needs, resources and the nature of information centres, the promise of improvements in the quality of school library services can become a reality.

It is hoped that the results of this research will be helpful in understanding the historical background, determining current practices, and identifying the need for better and more standardized school library services in Turkey.

Information resources and technologies afford tremendous opportunities for school librarians and for improved and enhanced student access to information. Students want to know how to effectively locate, use, analyse and evaluate information in school libraries. The most common perception is that Turkish school library services have not improved sufficiently in quality during the last 80 years. Clearly, the concept of user-centred services will provide insight, inspiration and an impulse toward action in the area of school library development policies in Turkey.

Finally, the results of this research reflect only the situation in Turkey. It would be interesting to compare the school library situation, developments and services in Turkey with those in another country. Although it is impossible to give comprehensive coverage of every subject and country on an equal footing, all of these efforts taken together would provide an assessment of recent and historical developments that have taken place on a worldwide basis. By doing comparative research, for which countries appropriate to the researcher's purposes are selected, we can begin to view more clearly the alternatives that face us in a rapidly changing world.

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