Relationships between University Groups and Library Opening Hours: Uses of Facility in HEI

Sonthya Vanichvatana

Abstract—This research searched for a relationship between groups of universities in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and library opening hours. All 123 Thailand universities library opening hours, both normal and exam periods, were searched through websites and telephone calls. The data reflected the library management for 2/2015 academic semester, January to May, 2016. The findings show that the order of the 5 groups of universities in Thailand that offer from longest to the shortest group average library opening hours is 1) Autonomous Universities, (2) Public Universities, (3) Rajamangala Universities, (4) Rajabhat Universities and (5) Private Universities. This is valid for both normal and exam periods. Top research universities extend library closing times to 24:00 am.

Keywords—Library Opening Hours, University Library, Facility.

I. INTRODUCTION

From past to present, university library is one important supporting facility in higher education institutions, especially for searching and retrieving information. Alternately at present, internet and electronic library has been increasing used also for searching and retrieving information, for twenty-four-hour access to electronic resources. A question was raised whether the needs to use university library were reducing or not. As such, it was very interesting to examine the operating hours of university libraries as a function to facility academic purposes. In addition, it was also interesting to know whether there were any differences between library opening hours in different groups of universities.

The objective of this research was to examine the relationship between opening hours of university libraries and the groups of universities. The scope covers all universities in Thailand as listed in 2015 [1] and library opening hours during the second semester of the academic year 2015.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

A. Functions of Library

University library is a formal source of learning which has many important functions to facilitate academic and other purposes including: teaching and learning, research, preserving art and culture and providing academic services [2]. Values of libraries to facilitate college and university have been broadened to become a source of lifelong learnings [3][4].

B. Opening Hours of Library

There is little literature on the subject of academic library opening hours [5]. Library opening hours range from normal office style opening hours to the twenty-four-hour access to the physical resources of library buildings. The idea of opening an academic library 24 hours a day in not new as the University of Bath library became a 24-hour service in 1996 [5]. University libraries that provide 24-hour opening are recognized and reported by Times Higher Education World University Rankings [6].

Many factors and pressures affect decisions made in UK university libraries on opening hours especially 24/7. Ravenwood [5] reported the results from conducting a workshop for senior library managers in UK to identify influential factors of university library opening hours. The top most important factors were: demand from undergraduates, student's union and university senior management, providing an extended service during exam revision periods, cost constraints and budgets, expectations from full fees and national student survey performance.

C. Groups of Universities in Thailand

Initially, this research planned to analyze library opening hours based on university rankings. However, there is no national acceptable university ranking in Thailand. For the world university rankings, among many university rankings, there are two acceptable annual publications namely: the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings [6] and QS World University Rankings, by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) [7]. These two annual publications of world university rankings do no extend to cover all universities in Thailand. As such it is more appropriate to analyze library opening hours based on the groups of universities in Thailand.

In Thailand, there are 156 institutions of education which consist of 124 universities, 20 private colleges and 12 private institutions. The total of 124 universities is categorized into three groups: (1) 62 public universities, (2) 19 autonomous universities and (3) 43 public universities. The 62 public universities consist of three sub-groups: (1) 9 Rajamangala universities, (2) 38 Rajabhat universities and (3) 15 other public universities [1]. Table 1 summarizes the total number of institutions of education in Thailand.

Rajamangala Universities were initially established as technology and vocational colleges and later developed as universities. Rajabhat Universities were initially established as teacher training schools that are located at central and other provincial regions of Thailand. These schools were then

developed as teaching colleges and finally as universities. The names of both 'Rajabhat' and 'Rajamangala' were endured by the King Rama IX of Thailand.

Autonomous universities are public universities that still received annual block grant by the government. However, each institution has its own budgeting, human resources management and other forms of management systems and regulations for internal enforcement. Eight autonomous universities are 'National Research Universities (NSU)', from the total of nine universities. The other NSU is a public university. All NSU are listed among the world university rankings by the THE and QS. There are seven universities in Thailand that are listed in the Times Higher Educations World University Ranking 2015-2016 [6]. Six out of seven are autonomous universities. For QS World University Rankings 2015/2016, there are eight universities in Thailand listed. Seven out of these eight universities are autonomous universities [7].

TABLE I: SUMMARY OF ALL INSTITUTIONS OF EDUCATION IN THAILAND

Universities		Colleges	Institutions
Public:	14 public universities 9 Rajamangala universities 38 Rajabhat universities	Public: 1 public college institution	
Autonomous: 19 autonomous universities			
Private:	43 private universities	Private: 20 private colleges	Private: 12 private institutions
Total 123 universities		Total 21 colleges	Total 12 institutions
Total 156 Institutions of Educations in Thailand			

III. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

This research conducted quantitative analysis approach. The data used was gathered through universities' websites and telephone calls. The data reflected library opening hours during the second semester of the academic year 2015 of all 123 universities in Thailand. The number of each group of universities is as shown in Table 1.

The data was of regular opening hour services, both weekdays and weekends, and during examination weeks.

IV. FINDINGS

Based on the data from 123 universities in Thailand, the followings describe the characteristics of open and close hours during normal and exam periods; the total opening hours of each group of the universities; and the comparison among the five groups of universities in Thailand.

A. The Characteristics of Opening and Closing Times

The opening and closing hours are as shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The summary of the operating hours during the normal hours and examination are as follows:

- Normal Opening Hours
  - Opening Hours
    The normal opening hours are between 7:00 am and 9:00 am, with one university open at 10:00 am. The mode is during at 8:00 am and 8:30 am, with the total of 83.61%.

- Closing Hours
  The normal closing hours have broader range than the opening hours, between 16:00 pm and 22:30 pm, with one university closes at 24:00 am. The mode is at 16:30 pm, 28.69%.
- In conclusion, about 30% of university libraries in Thailand open and close by using government official hours, 8:30 am to 16:30 pm. (Normal government official hours in Thailand are Monday to Friday between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm.)
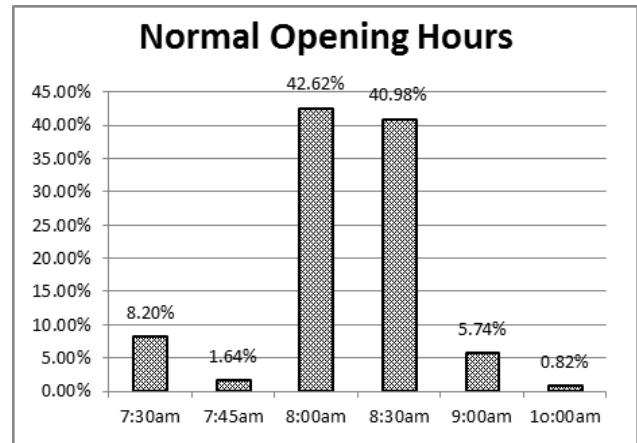

Figure 1: Normal Opening Hours and the Percentage of Universities that Open at Each Category
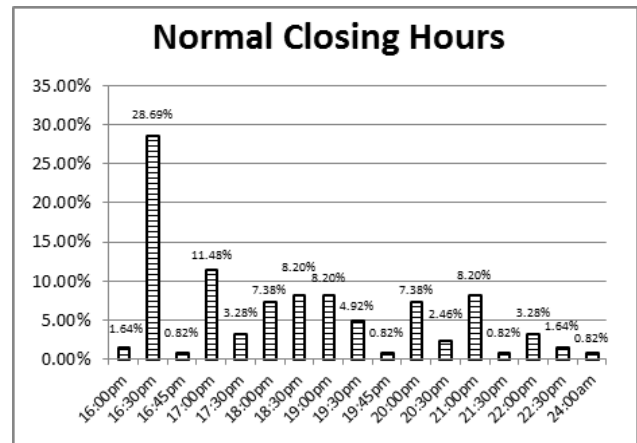

Figure 2: Normal Closing Hours and the Percentage of Universities that Open at Each Category

- Exam Opening Hours
  - There are 19 universities that either extend or reduce library closing times during examination period.
    - 16 universities extend the closing times (9 are autonomous universities, 3 are other public universities, 3 are Rajabhat universities, and 1 are private university)
    - 3 universities reduce closing times, they are all private universities.
  - The extension hours are to 20:00 pm for some universities and until 24:00 pm for the others.
  - There are 10 universities that extend closing hours till 24:00 am,
    - 9 out of these 10 are autonomous universities.

- 8 out of these 10 are National Research Universities (NRU).
- One NRU offers a 24-hour zone during exam.

B. The Total Opening Hours

The average total of the opening hours per week during normal and exam are as summarized for five of each university group, as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF THE AVERAGE TOTAL OPENING HOURS PER WEEK DURING NORMAL AND EXAM

Group	Hours/week		Difference (hours)	% Change
	Normal	Exam		
Autonomous (AUT)	75.38	91.25	15.87	21.05%
Public (PUB)	71.22	74.11	2.89	4.06%
Public-Rajamangala (RAM)	69.33	69.33	0.00	0.00%
Public-Rajabhat (RAJ)	63.44	64.87	1.43	2.26%
Private (PRI)	61.24	61.57	0.32	0.52%
Average	68.12	72.23	4.10	6.02%
Maximum	75.38	91.25		
Minimum	61.24	61.57		
Difference Max. to Min.	14.14 (23.09%)	29.68 (48.21%)		

Autonomous universities offer the highest library opening hours per week for both normal and exam periods. The average total number of normal and weekend hours are 75.38 and 91.25 hours per week respectively. Other public universities offer the second highest. The second to the fifth are Other Public Universities (71.22 and 72.11), Rajamangala Universities (69.33 for both periods), Rajabphat Universities (63.44 and 64.87) and Private Universities (61.24 and 61.57) respectively.

The differences number of opening hours between normal and exam period within each group are 15.87 (21.05% of normal period) for Autonomous Universities, 2.89 (4.06%) for Other Public Universities, 1.43 (2.26%) for Rajabhat Universities and 032 (0.52%) for Private Universities. For Rajamangala Universities, there is no difference between normal and exam period. The difference of the overall average between normal and exam period is 4.10 hours (6.02%).

The difference between the highest (maximum) and the lowest (minimum) average total is 14.14 hours (23.09% of the minimum number) and 29.68 hours (48.21%) during the normal period and exam period respectively.

Autonomous universities group offers almost 50% of library opening hour more than private universities group during exam period.

C. Comparisons among the Five Groups of Universities

Figure 3 compares the ranges of 'Normal' library opening hours of each five groups of universities and Figure 4 compares those of 'Exam' hours. In each bar chart, there is a square dot line indicated at 110 hours. From the 10 charts (from the 2 periods with 5 charts each), it can be seen that within each group of universities, there are universities that offer wide ranges of library opening hours.

There are only two charts that have bar charts reach 110 hours square dot lines. The first is 'Autonomous University' group exam-chart because 8 universities in this group offer long library hours until 24:00 am during exam. The second is 'Public University' group also exam-chart because 1 NRU university also offer library hours until 24:00 am. All bar charts in Figure 3 and Figure 4 are similar to the findings described in the above discussions.

V. CONCLUSIONS

There are 5 groups of universities in Thailand: autonomous universities, 3 Public universities groups (Rajamangala, Rajabhat and other public universities), and private universities. The total of these 5 university groups consist of 123 universities. Library opening hours during normal and exam periods were gathered via universities' websites and telephone calls. The analysis results are as follows:

- During normal opening hours, there are about 30% of university libraries in Thailand offer opening hours using government official hours, 8:30 am to 16:30 pm. The opening time is between 7:00 – 9:00 am, with one university open at 10:00 am. The closing time is in a wider range between 16:00 – 22:30 pm, with one university close at 24:00 am. During exam period, there are 16 universities either extend or reduce closing time: 10 universities extend library closing hours to 24:00 am, with one university operate 24/7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Moreover, 3 private universities close earlier during exam.
- Within each group of university, the opening hours are varied widely. However, by calculated the average opening hours/week of each of the 5 university groups, the order of 5 university groups can be arranged, from the longest to the shortest opening hours as follows: (1) Autonomous Universities, (2) Public Universities, (3) Rajamangala Universities, (4) Rajabhat Universities and (5) Private Universities. This is valid for both normal and exam periods.
- 8 out of 10 National Research Universities extend closing times during exam period until 24:00 am, with 1 university open 24/7. All universities that extend closing time during exam period are either autonomous universities and/or National Research Universities.
- The research results show how many universities in Thailand made effective uses of their libraries as academic supporting facilities.
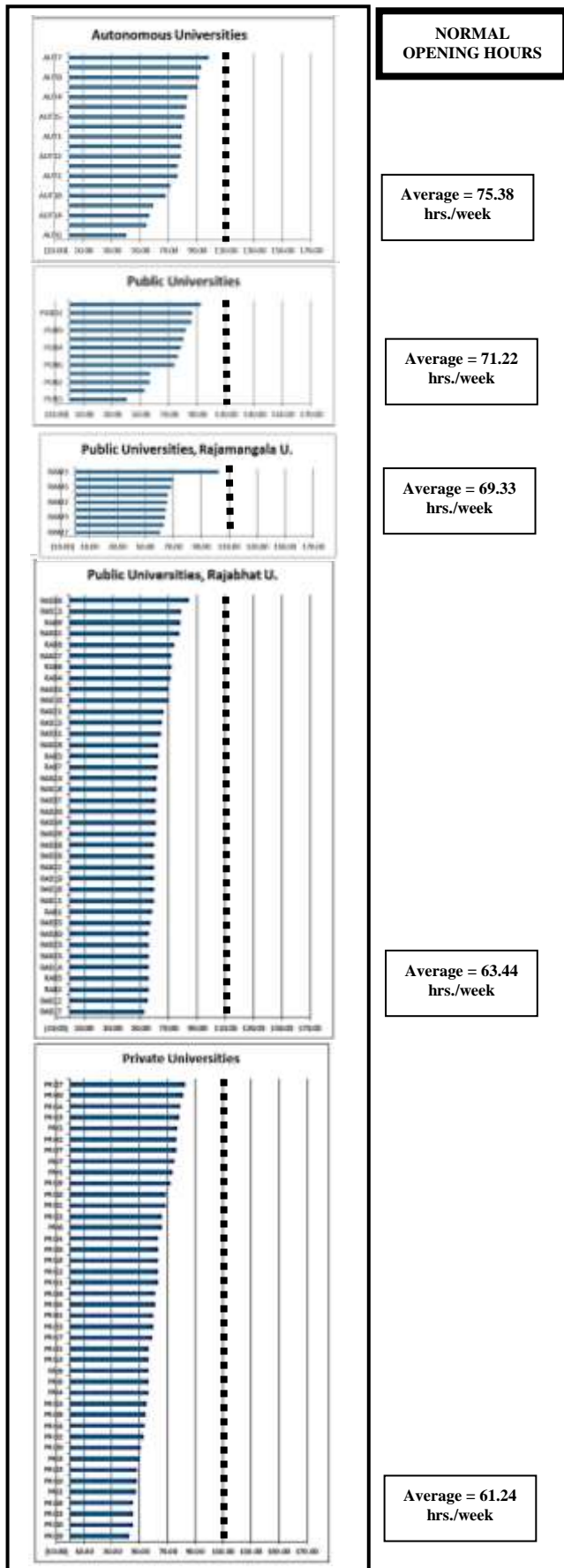
Figure 3: 'Normal' Library Opening Hours of Each Groups of Universities in Thailand
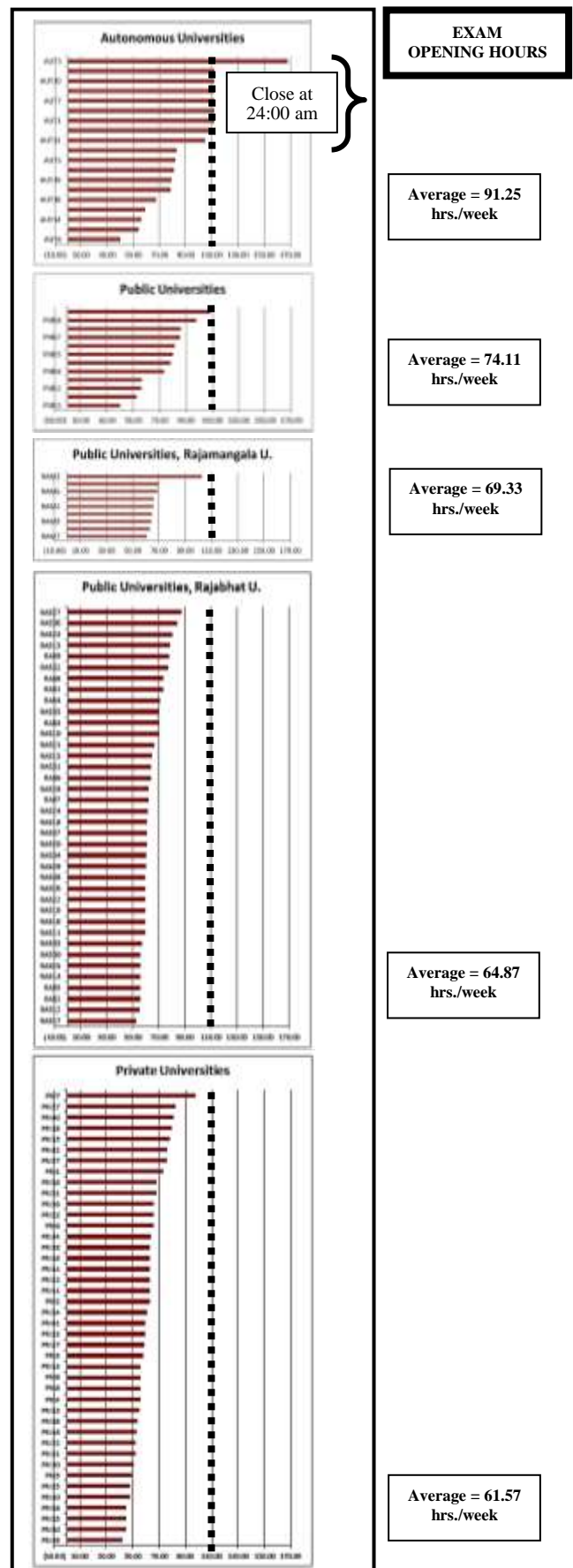
Figure 4: 'Exam' Library Opening Hours of Each Groups of Universities in Thailand

VI. Discussions

The following points can be raised as follows:

- The findings show meaningful results that top research universities offer longer library hours during exam.
- If Thailand can establish national university rankings, further analysis can be done to analyze relationship between university rankings an library opening hours.
- It is very interesting for further study as follows:
  - The real reasons behind library management of top research universities in Thailand to extend library opening hours during exam.
  - The reasons why 110 universities do not extend library opening hours during exam, whether students do not want to come to use during exam or senior management of universities do not really know the needs of students.
  - How many universities are there considers library as a study space and other functions, beside information searching facility.

VII. References

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Sonthya Vaichvatana was born in Bangkok and is a citizen of Thailand. She received her Ph.D. (civil engineering) from the University of California, Berkeley, U.S.A. in 1993, M.S.C.E. (construction engineering and management) from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, U.S.A. in 1987 and B.Arch. from Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand in 1985.

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