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### Aims and Scope

IFLA Journal is an international journal publishing peer reviewed articles on library and information services and the social, political and economic issues that impact access to information through libraries. The Journal publishes research, case studies and essays that reflect the broad spectrum of the profession internationally. To submit an article to IFLA Journal please visit: <http://ifl.sagepub.com>

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# The long-tail of global engagement and international librarianship

Steven W. Witt

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As *IFLA Journal* enters its 41st year, it is appropriate to glance backward at the route that brought us to this point. As a publication, *IFLA Journal* is moving with the wider profession to continue to provide a research base that supports answers to the important questions and issues we presume to be essential for both the long- and short-term interests regarding access, dissemination, and advocacy. Central to this platform is the value of the cultural and intellectual exchange facilitated by libraries and information access. This may explain why the *Journal's* currently most read article focuses on indigenous knowledge and the cultural interface (Nakata, 2002) while the most cited is a 1975 report that challenges us to work 'out of the narrow boundaries of our own professions' (Tveterås, 1975: 161). Globally as a profession, we continue to transcend barriers while working within and honoring multiple cultural and historical contexts.

In 2016, the *Journal's* special issue will focus on research data services, a topic that does not immediately bring to mind the importance of cultural exchange and libraries. The increasing prominence of data, as both an information source and research tool, requires librarians and archivists to help researchers and patrons address needs throughout the research data lifecycle, for example by conducting assessment and outreach, consulting on data management plans and metadata, incorporating data into information literacy instruction and collection management, and providing data publication and preservation services. In collaboration with the Research Data Alliance, an international organization committed to developing the social and technical infrastructure to support open data sharing, the *Journal's* editorial committee is working with Wolfram Horstmann, Director, Göttingen State and University Library and Michael Witt, Head, Distributed Data Curation Center, Purdue University Libraries.

Research and practice in data services, however, touches upon many traditional aspects of librarianship such as preservation, literacy, reference, metadata, and staffing. At the same time, a focus on data elicits topics seen in IFLA's current strategic planning as

documented in the 2015 Trend Report. This report highlights the impact of technologies on education and teaching while also emphasizing the need to focus on timely policy issues such as privacy, access, and data protection. Culture and intercultural dialogue globally are at the heart of gaining both an understanding of the scope of issues around data sharing and forming professional norms on how to put policies and practices in place amidst varying values, economic situations, and political climates. It is the past impact of IFLA's commitment to cultural exchange that maintains our trajectory as we look to these future needs.

Looking at the history of *IFLA Journal*, one sees an overlap with colleagues who have broken barriers and impacted profoundly the global scope and nature of IFLA as an organization. On 9 July 2015, we lost Ekaterina Yurievna Genieva, one of the library world's most influential leaders in promoting the value of cultural exchange during times of political turmoil. Starting in 1976 with a visit to Great Britain and through her illustrious tenure as the Director of the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow (1996–2015), Ekaterina worked tirelessly to promote intellectual engagement, literacy, and access to people, cultures, and knowledge through library and cultural programs (East-West Review, 2015). From 1993 to 1999, Ekaterina served in various leadership roles within IFLA, including vice-president. It is through the institutions, programs, and practices inspired by global leaders such as Ekaterina that international organizations like IFLA advocate successfully for professional practices and information policies that work to transcend boundaries and articulate a vision for the future.

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# Internship in LIS education: An international perspective on experiential learning

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## Abstract

The value of internship as a form of experiential learning in library and information science education has been debated for many years in North America. To gain a global perspective, the current research examines whether such an experience is required and for what reasons and whether placements can be done internationally or virtually. Participants include national libraries, associations, and academic library and information science programs from 69 different countries around the world. Results indicate that outside of American Library Association accredited institutions, internship is more often required and that when it is not, participation rates are low. Further, there was much stronger support for international experiences. Despite the increasing use of online tools to deliver library and information science education, there is a decided lack of institutional support for virtual internships. Suggestions for further research are proposed that address the interdisciplinary, intentional, interconnected, and international model for an internship in 21st-century library and information science education.

## Keywords

Internship, library science, information science, experiential learning

## Introduction

Internships serve a critical function in professional education by exposing students to professionals, their day-to-day activities, and the challenges of an institutional environment. Students who participate in these opportunities achieve a better understanding of their chosen profession and can better link theory and practice (Coleman, 1989; Kolb, 1984; Kolb et al., 2000; Schön, 1983, 1990). In addition, through both observation and participation, these students are more adept at analyzing problems encountered in the field and better able to create workable solutions. Professional experience, gained outside the classroom, enhances a student's sense of commitment to the community, as well as a personal sense of confidence, that can enable creativity (Sen and Ford, 2009).

Through experiential learning, internships usher future library and information science (LIS) professionals into the field and allow them to engage with their future colleagues in the real world of professional work. The benefits accrue not only to the student: LIS programs benefit by using the results of internship experiences to assess and align their curricula to current practice. In addition, the practitioners who engage with the interns are afforded a chance to renew their own skills and reconnect to current

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research and theoretical approaches to their work (Bird and Crumpton, 2014).

The relative importance of the work experience has been debated in LIS education from its beginnings in the United States (US) (Crowley, 2004; Grogan, 2007). Indicative of the continuing debate are statements like that made by John Berry (2005: 8) in the *Library Journal*, "Given the great value of experience in professional practice for the job seeker and students and faculty in the classroom, an internship must become a required component of any program leading to the master's degree in our profession." At the same time, studies showed that library education programs were not requiring internships or other work experience (Hall, 2009). Although less controversial in other parts of the world, most notably in Germany where it is regular practice (Ratzek, 2006), there is still discussion of the value of these experiences and how they can be implemented in an increasingly interconnected and virtual world (Searing and Walter, 2012).

In 2011, a re-conceptualization of the possibilities for an internship experience that would serve a more global world was proposed; one that imagined them as intentional, interconnected, interdisciplinary, and international (Bird et al., 2011). It frames the present research that used survey methodology to examine these attributes at the international level to compare how different countries view and implement this important aspect of LIS education. The main questions that guided the research were:

1. What is the status of required internship for LIS education internationally?
2. Are alternative options, like virtual and international internship, available?

## Literature review

### *Experiential learning and internships*

Studies focused on LIS curriculum and the role of practice-based training within it often use the term "internship" interchangeably with "field experience," "field work," or "practicum." Coleman's (1989: 22) definition of internship appears to capture its true essence as "a relatively short-term, professionally supervised work experience offered as part of the school's curriculum and taken during the academic sequence [of course work]." Grogan's (2007) in-depth look at British and American attitudes shows a constant back and forth between proponents of work experience and extensive requirements for field experiences. In one such debate, the students

were the most vociferous opponents, finding the required placements lacking in interest and rigor.

Training of librarians within the LIS curriculum has been researched and discussed regularly over the years in the United States and in international arenas like the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Section on Education and Training. Research done primarily from the North American perspective shows that bridging the gap between theory and practice has been a topic of discussion even before the establishment of library schools in the US (Grogan, 2007; Howden, 1992). In Germany, by way of contrast, the emphasis on preparing students for practice has always been on hands-on learning incorporated into the educational program through extensive internship (Ratzek, 2006).

In North America, standards promulgated by the American Library Association for accredited Master's degree granting institutions have emphasized combining theory and practice (American Library Association, 1992, 2008), but stopped short of requiring an internship. Therefore, since the expectation is for students to gain and master a level of real world library experience before graduating, library programs have often responded to this need by incorporating various experiential learning opportunities (Ball, 2008) such as practice-based assignments, projects, or service learning initiatives. Course-based experiential activities are designed to emulate workplace experience through the development of solutions that are applicable to information organization problems. In the process, students can gain experience with tools used in the field while accomplishing class work. Service learning is a more intentional experience that requires the student to apply classroom knowledge and university resources to an identified need while working with a community-based organization to accomplish it. These projects are designed to enhance students' civic engagement and appreciation of the people that they will ultimately serve (Ball, 2008; Peterson, 2009).

An internship provides a professionally guided experience when compared to the other experiential learning activities for the student. Students immerse themselves in daily routines of an information organization where they can experience the professional world, observe a variety of role models, and put theory and academic rigor into practice. When combined with a technique called reflective practice (Schön, 1983, 1990) students can come close to achieving a level of artistry that is much deeper than a course-based assignment can grant. The effectiveness of using reflection was confirmed by two in-depth studies conducted in the United Kingdom with LIS practicum students (Sen and Ford, 2009).

The internship experience is typically completed in one library or information agency for its entire duration. Although Coleman (1989) notes that in most internships the student does not receive compensation in the form of salary or wage, some institutions pay students an internship stipend and in some countries, for instance, Peru, the government requires that the intern be paid in order to protect paid staff positions (personal communication).

Students who participate in internships often work with a local, physically co-located site to meet the requirements. As LIS education in North America is offered increasingly in an online environment, students can now complete course work without setting foot at a physical site, but little evidence exists for an equivalent change in the nature of the internship experience (Oguz, 2013). There are isolated examples of the internship being conducted online, for instance, the Internet Public Library has been used as a site for teaching LIS digital librarianship skills (Lin and Abels, 2010; Mon et al., 2008). There are also examples of international internships, notably at the University of British Columbia, but there has been little or no documentation of such experiences.

#### *The four I's model to describe new internship possibilities*

In a paper conceptualizing the internship for LIS education in the 21st century, Bird et al. (2011) outlined ideas for providing students with more and richer learning opportunities by using four English language concepts beginning with I: intentional, interconnected, interdisciplinary, and international. Thus internships are re-conceptualized to include experiences that are *intentional* so that students, LIS program faculty, and practitioners have a clear idea of their purpose, the process that will be used to achieve it, and the role of each participant. In turn, the participants must exhibit *interconnectedness* in their work together through shared dialogue and joint learning outcomes. In addition, internships must be *interdisciplinary* to reflect the intrinsic nature of LIS as a profession that encompasses a broad range of disciplines. Finally, experiences should be *international* so that students can look beyond their local situation and prepare for a globally connected information environment. These concepts guide an approach to internships that is appropriate as they are made increasingly possible through the availability and affordability of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

It is rare for a single internship to incorporate all four of these important characteristics, but some projects were cited as examples to highlight the

possibilities for implementation (Bird et al., 2011). The Real Learning Connections Project (RLCP), a joint venture of the University Libraries and the Library and Information Studies Department at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, was cited as illustrating intentionality, interdisciplinarity, and interconnectedness (Bird and Crumpton, 2014). Several other projects highlighted the possibilities of using virtual connections to provide international experiences (Lin and Abels, 2010, Mon et al., 2008).

A project-based program, the RLCP has demonstrated the importance of intentionality as the library departments submit proposals to host one of three internships available annually, since 2010–2011 (Bird and Crumpton, 2014). These intentionally-designed projects, with buy-in from the whole department and focus on one particular practitioner with individualized goals to accomplish, were in contrast to informal agreements with particular students. The choice of student to participate in these opportunities was also intentional since LIS students competed for the spots by submitting resumes and cover letters outlining their goals for participation. The connection with LIS faculty was intentional, too, since the student committed to enroll in a particular class that would complement the internship experience. In addition, the faculty-learner participant had goals for learning about how the curriculum might change in response to the activities in which both the student and the practitioner were engaged.

Interdisciplinarity was obvious in several of the RLCP internships that have been hosted in the archives and special collections. In these internships, there is a mix of practitioners who were trained in LIS programs, archival studies programs, and as historians. In each internship, there has been a negotiation between the training that the LIS department offers and that from the practitioner's background. In these instances, the faculty member tried to be more involved by immersing herself in the training and bridging disciplinary differences that resulted between the student and the practitioner. Although many libraries, archives, and museums are now merging, especially in digital environments, there is much to be done in education and practice to unite the cultural heritage fields (Marty, 2010).

Interconnectedness has been a theme throughout the RLCP. In the 10 projects, all participants, the faculty advisor, the professional supervisors, and the student intern have been interested in deep learning from the experience. For one project, the student had training in music while the practitioner was an experienced digital projects librarian. The team was able to complete a specialized digital collection showcasing a

cello virtuoso and his music (University of North Carolina at Greensboro University Libraries, n.d.). A further example of interconnectedness is that some internship experiences led to independent research by the student. Such independent work can be used for both coursework and to further inform the field. In addition, the practitioners, some of whom are in tenure earning positions, have been able to complete publishable research during the projects.

Experiences outside of the local vicinity have been pursued through international internships in a limited fashion. With access to ICTs virtual internships provide new opportunities for experiential learning. The concept of virtual internship may sound relatively new, but the underlying idea of carrying out tasks and gaining experience at a distance is more realistic. As organizations and people have become more interconnected because of increased access to broadband Internet and high-speed computing devices, telecommuting is a large part of the workplace. A European Union-funded project, Enterprise-University Virtual Placement (EU-UV) attempts to place students virtually at various organizations across national boundaries so that they can enhance their skills and competencies at an international level while not leaving their country of residence (Vriens et al., 2010). Students are interviewed by host sites via web/video conferencing, and initial training is provided online before students are placed at their respective sites. All of the work is completed virtually.

The Internet Public Library (IPL) in the US provides LIS students virtual and international internship experiences. IPL recruits LIS students to serve as Digital Reference Librarian (Lin and Abels, 2010; Mon et al., 2008). Students are responsible for the daily functioning of the library's email reference service while mostly helping an international audience of youth and teens with their research. For example, several LIS students at Valdosta State University successfully fulfilled requirements of their internship experience at IPL (personal communication).

The GALILEO Knowledge Repository in the State of Georgia in the United States also created virtual internships as part of a state-wide digital repository initiative (Yang, 2012). Selected students received training via online conferencing, and this training was supplemented with a set of electronic readings and tutorials. Upon completing the training, students were placed at participating institutions and worked on the daily functioning of the host institution's digital repositories. Students completed their tasks virtually and maintained their communications with the host institution electronically or via phone. Students also stayed in touch with the faculty member to get support for questions or concerns.

The phenomenon of embedding librarians in online learning management systems has been increasing in the United States and provides opportunities for virtual internships. A recent internship collaboration between a local community college library and an LIS program has proven that it can work (Coltrain, 2014). To address the growing demand for service to online community college students, interns were recruited and trained to answer reference questions, provide instruction, and support student research projects.

### *Surveying the present state of the internship*

The four I's conceptual model is useful for informing the design of internship opportunities as described above, but there was little evidence in the literature for whether LIS programs were actually encouraging these innovations. A first step to understanding whether or if the internship experience can be re-designed internationally, is to understand the present state of experience in multiple countries. The research presented here is an attempt to describe the characteristics of internships in LIS programs in the international arena, especially in terms of requirements, international or virtual availability, and implementation.

### **Methodology**

The present research sought evidence about the characteristics of internship in library education worldwide through a mixed-methods approach. Because the US and Canadian programs accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) had been examined in the past (Crowley, 2004; Hall, 2009), the team sought, first, to update internship information gathered from those schools websites. Specifically, the researchers were looking for whether the internship was required and for mentions of virtual or international experiences.

To broaden the view beyond US and Canada (hereafter, North America), a survey funded by the IFLA and sponsored by its Section on Education and Training (SET) was constructed and distributed to LIS education programs outside North America, and to national libraries and library associations worldwide. In order to reach the maximum number of countries, an initial list of 427 potential international survey recipients was produced by examining the publication, *World Guide to Library and Information Science Education* (Koopman, 2007), and updating addresses, email contact addresses, and other information from their websites. In the first round, only major educational programs (those with greater than 100 students) were chosen, except when the program was the only

one listed for a particular country. Three months later additional smaller educational programs and associations were added to the contact list and emails were sent to those addresses. The survey was distributed twice in summer and fall 2013, with email contacts removed when a response was received from that person or program. Each participation request was accompanied by three follow-up emails. The researchers also contacted members of the IFLA SET directly to gain additional data.

The focus of the questions was internships for each of the degree programs at each university. Internship was the word used throughout the survey and it was distributed only in English. Participants were allowed to name the particular degree program available in their school and this led to a wide variety of names. Analysis was done by the degree level, certificate, undergraduate, and Master's rather than by the program name so archival, documentalists, and other degrees may have been included with those concentrating on librarianship.

#### Demographics/characterization by income of survey participants

There were 135 respondents; at least one from 69 countries, with 98 LIS programs from 55 countries, 11 national libraries, and 23 library associations. The full list of respondents is in Appendix A. Countries represented in the dataset were grouped according to the World Bank's classification of world economies by gross national income per capita in 2012. The groups included low income, \$1035 or less; lower middle income, \$1036–\$4085; upper middle income, \$4086–\$12,615; and high income, \$12,616 or more (Country and Lending Groups, n.d.). For analysis purposes, low income and lower middle income countries were combined as low/lower middle income countries. Survey respondents were either from LIS programs or were from national libraries or associations in individual countries. Figure 1 illustrates that there were more respondents from high income countries (55% of LIS programs and 42% of associations and national libraries) in the sample. More respondents from lower/lower middle income countries were from associations or national libraries.

#### Results

The results of the document review and survey paint an international picture of the status of internship in LIS education. The results are separated into North American schools and those in other countries. Where there is data gathered only from national libraries and associations it is noted in the text.

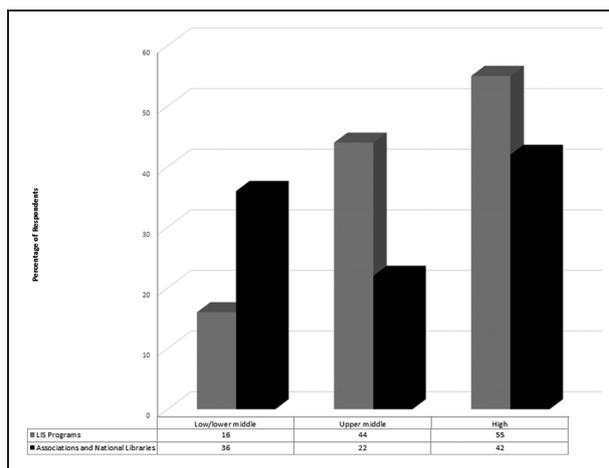


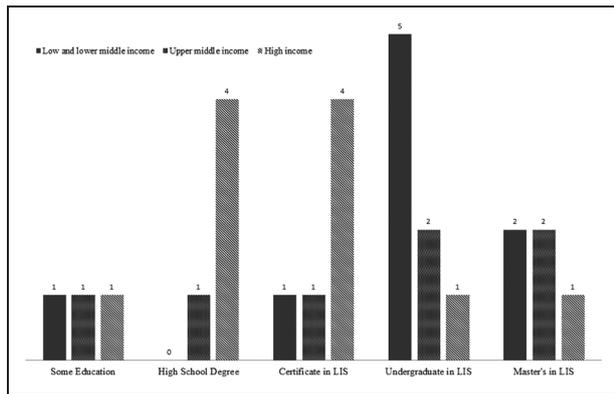
Figure 1. Respondents by type and country income category.

#### Results from ALA-accredited (North American) programs

The document review of North American LIS programs revealed that the internship is required in only 10 out of 59 (17%) of programs, except for students who intend to work in school libraries. Interestingly, at the University of Maryland, this requirement is active only when a student selects the non-thesis option in the program; while at the University of Denver a capstone project can be substituted. Also, noted during this review was the fact that several alternative terms were used in addition to “fieldwork”, “field experience”, and “practicum” (Coleman, 1989), including “professional field experience,” “professional experience,” “co-ops” (co-operative education), and “clinical experience.”

In addition, only three out of 59 (5%) of the programs specifically noted that virtual or international experiences were available or encouraged. The University of British Columbia is especially noteworthy because the internship documents specifically state, “There is no limitation on locality . . . placements have been arranged in almost every province and in many foreign countries” (University of British Columbia School of Library, Archival and Information Studies, n.d.). Similarly, Syracuse University notes that, “internships and co-ops can be done locally in the Syracuse area, nationally, and even internationally” (Syracuse University Course Catalog, 2012). A few programs mentioned study abroad opportunities with some practical aspects, but these are not complete work experiences in a different country and were not counted here.

It was rare for the 59 programs to mention the possibility of a virtual internship in their documentation. Only three mentions were made. The University of



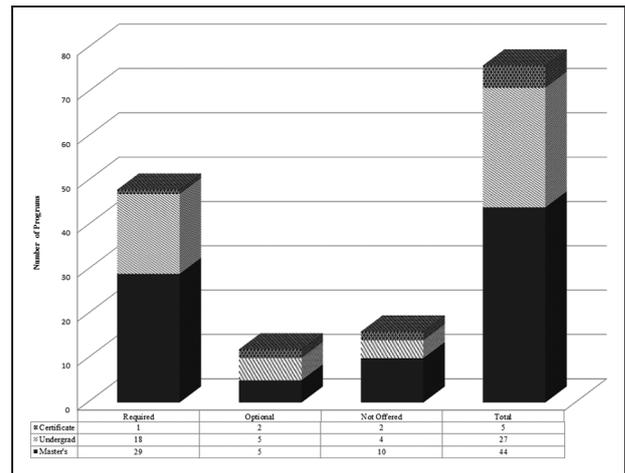
**Figure 2.** Level of education required by respondent country World Bank Classification.

Kentucky noted that it was not possible to do a virtual internship; while the University of Alberta, Canada, and San Jose State University in the United States, allowed them. Considering that almost all of the programs offer an online degree, the lack of any mention in official program documents is noteworthy.

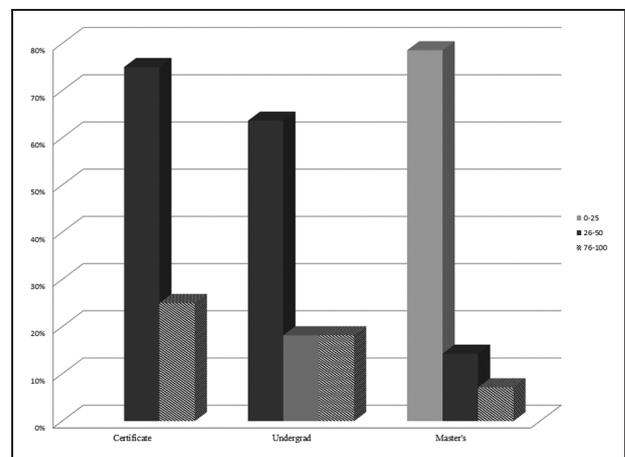
*Outside North America: Survey results*

For comparison purposes, especially in light of the fact that North American employers often show a preference for the Master’s degree for professional positions and Europe has recently adopted the principles of the Bologna Process (Ratzek, 2006), the following results concentrate on data gathered about the Master’s degree in LIS. The data about other levels of education were not analyzed deeply here but are shown where available. One question was asked only to the national libraries and associations ( $n = 11$ ) about the level of education required in the responding country in order to work in libraries. The results were analyzed by income of the country and are reported in Figure 2.

The survey asked whether internships are required in that country to obtain the degree and at which program level. Looking specifically at the Master’s level, as shown in Figure 3, the majority of countries represented said that it was required. Compared to the findings from the ALA-accredited programs, internship requirements are more common in other countries. Yet, in 11% (5 of 44) of the responding countries the internship is optional, and in 23% (10 of 44) it was not offered as part of the Master’s degree program. Certificate and undergraduate degree requirements are shown in Figure 3 but cannot be compared to North American results because only Master’s programs, the professional degree, were included in the document review.



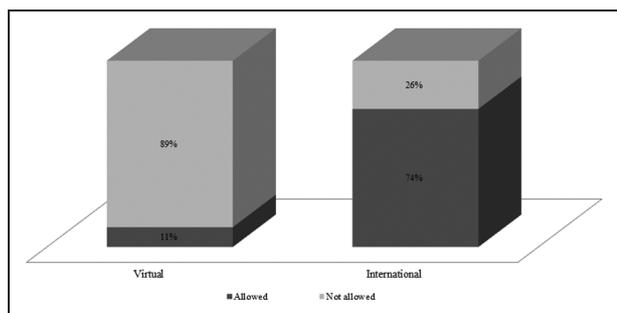
**Figure 3.** Internship requirements by program level.



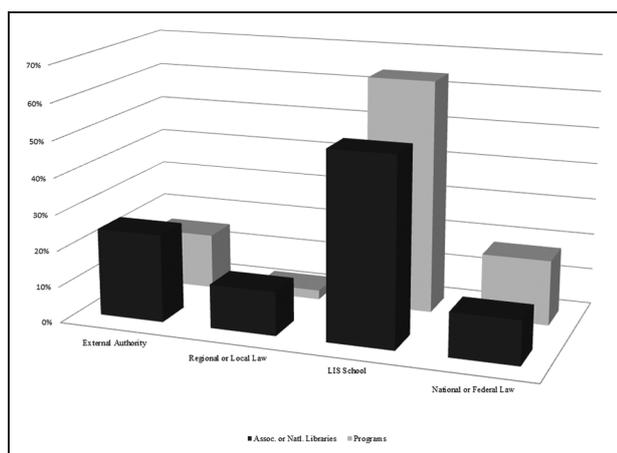
**Figure 4.** Reason for internship requirement.

Respondents were asked to provide a reason for the requirement when that was the case. In Figure 4, the results are divided between what associations or national libraries reported and what LIS programs stated for their reasons. In the main, the LIS programs attributed the requirement to their own programmatic decisions while associations and national libraries chose a mix of answers, including that the internship was required by external authorities or by national or federal law.

When LIS program respondents noted that internships were not required, a follow-up question asking for an estimate of student participation was presented. The data in Figure 5 indicate that at the Master’s level most respondents (89%) estimated that less than 25% of their students took advantage of an internship opportunity when it was voluntary, while only 7% said that a high level of student participation was seen in non-required internships. Certificate programs reported a higher rate of participation, perhaps due to the lack of emphasis on academics in these programs.



**Figure 5.** Estimated internship participation rate in voluntary internships.



**Figure 6.** Virtual or international experiences allowed for required internships.

### *Virtual or international internships allowed?*

Similar to the results from the North American LIS programs, very few survey respondents reported that they allowed virtual internships (see Figure 6). On the other hand, 74% indicated that international experiences were allowed. The number of students participating in these and the nature of that participation were not investigated in this survey.

## Discussion

Although it was a small part of the survey, results showed a remarkable range of professional preparation requirements for employment in libraries across the respondent countries (see Figure 2). When viewed by World Bank country the data show that richer countries are more likely to require Master's level degrees. However, the growth of undergraduate information degrees in the United States I-schools and the results of the Bologna process for Europe, reveal a dynamic context for LIS education.

LIS programs in North America continue to offer the internship as a voluntary experience despite calls from practitioners such as Berry (2005), who call for

some work experience to enhance the Master's level education. Internationally, however, there is strong support, whether by program or law, for requiring an internship, with over 65% of the sample already having such a requirement. More in-depth follow-up is needed about how these requirements are met and the student response to required opportunities. As Grogan (2007) noted about required experiences in his insightful history of internships, many students felt that they sometimes devolved into make-work projects. This can be countered by introducing concepts of intentionality to the students and the supervisors before the work experience begins. The promise that both the work supervisor and the student can learn from each other as the experience progresses is one worth making explicit at the outset, so that reflective activities can lead to deeper learning (Bird and Crumpton, 2014; Sen and Ford, 2009).

The lack of student participation when the internship is not required speaks volumes to the importance of building an experience that emphasizes intentionality and interconnectedness. The connection between the students' goals for the future beyond their LIS education and the short-term experience of the internship can be fostered with stronger intentions on the part of the LIS program. In the same way, the organizational host must feel that the work of the student fulfills the goals of the institution and the supervisors who are giving their time to train the student. Intentionally designing mutually beneficial goals for all of the parties as was done in the Real Learning Connections Project described above (Bird and Crumpton, 2014), can create better required experiences.

Despite the increasing deployment of e-learning in LIS education there is a decided lack of official support for virtual internships. Perhaps more documentation of successful placements, like the case study examples above, would result in better understanding of how they might work for many more students. As Coltrain (2014) notes, virtual interns are a welcome addition for under-resourced institutions. Certainly, more research is needed into diverse aspects of internships as experiential learning, for example, the cost/benefit of internships for the hosting institution, the value for all participants, the extent of the learning achieved, the need for remuneration, and comparison of face-to-face versus virtual experiences.

There was much stronger support for international experiences but we have little information about how these arrangements are encouraged or accomplished. For North American students there is little support for travel, board, and other expenses connected with participation, resulting in few who can afford to take advantage of these opportunities. In addition, there

is no central place for students to seek out the programs that are available. Partnerships between LIS programs in different countries might work to create better and more of these opportunities going forward.

### Recommendations for further research

ICTs have enhanced not only access to communication and information, but also to education. Further research that builds on the findings reported here needs to not only examine different aspects of experiential learning, but how online education program can effectively offer internships and other modes of experiential learning. To start, an international study such as this one faces challenges that may be due to language, technical terminology, different degree and professional training requirements, the status of the LIS profession, and the diversity of higher education policies found around the world. For example, the use of the word “internship” may have skewed the results in unpredictable ways. It would also be helpful to know whether internships are paid or not, and when they are required, whether it is for all students or is an exemption given to those with paraprofessional experience. These are areas that this survey did not address and would merit study.

A survey in multiple languages may reach a broader range of respondents. A better understanding of the role of study abroad programs as a prelude to work experience in a different country would be valuable for increasing international experiences. Certainly, a deeper understanding of the variety of programs offered at LIS programs outside the United States would be beneficial, especially to address the issues of *interdisciplinarity*, still a desirable part of a better internship and not addressed in this particular survey.

The notion of *intentionality* can be addressed by studying the value of internships to students, professional supervisors, and faculty advisors. Did it meet the expectations of all involved? Was there shared learning and/or understanding of the connection of theory and practice that would address the notion of *interconnectedness*.

Lastly, there needs to be attention paid to the expanded opportunities afforded by online education. Such programs can offer students virtual internships, and given that there would no longer be geographic boundaries, the opportunity for *international* experiential learning becomes a reality. Research that examines the four I’s (interdisciplinary, intentional, interconnected and international) of internships will provide educators and students the necessary information to not only design better experiential learning

programs, but would ensure that they will be meaningful in a 21st century context.

### Appendix A: countries represented in sample

Australia  
Austria  
Belgium  
Brazil  
Bulgaria  
Canada  
China  
Colombia  
Croatia  
Cyprus  
Czech Republic  
Denmark  
Djibouti  
Egypt  
Estonia  
Finland  
France  
Gabon  
Germany  
Greece  
Hong Kong, SAR  
Hungary  
Iceland  
India  
Ireland  
Italy  
Jamaica  
Japan  
Kenya  
Latvia  
Lebanon  
Luxembourg  
Malaysia  
Maldives  
Malta  
Mauritius  
Mexico  
Micronesia  
Mongolia  
Namibia  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Nigeria  
Norway  
Pakistan  
Palau  
Papua New Guinea  
Peru

Philippines  
 Portugal  
 Romania  
 Slovakia  
 Slovenia  
 South Africa  
 Spain  
 Sri Lanka  
 St. Vincent and the Grenadines  
 Sweden  
 Switzerland  
 Taiwan  
 Thailand  
 Turkey  
 Uganda  
 UK  
 Uruguay  
 Vietnam  
 Zambia  
 Zimbabwe

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# Information literacy and digital natives: Expanding the role of academic libraries

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## Abstract

Promoting the development of pre-academic information literacy skills of the so-called Google Generation, and especially among upper secondary school students, is one of the current topics of discussion in the field of media and information literacy. Traditionally the Finnish upper secondary school library services have been provided by and developed with the public libraries, but the academic libraries, with their special expertise and digital resources, should also take part in the teaching of pre-academic information literacy skills. The Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti, Finland has taken several steps to meet these demands by collaborating with the region's educational institutions at vocational, upper secondary and university levels. This article discusses these issues and presents our approach to supporting and promoting knowledge creation, pre-academic information literacy skills and lifelong learning from upper secondary school to higher education.

## Keywords

Information literacy, pre-academic information skills, digital natives, serious gaming, joint academic libraries

## Introduction

The role of academic libraries is shifting more and more towards supporting a knowledge-driven economy instead of the delivery of ready-made answers. Information and library services must on their part meet the ever growing demand for information and media literate citizens, who have the skills needed in navigating through the vast amounts of both information and disinformation readily available to anyone with access to the Internet. Promoting the development of pre-academic information skills<sup>1</sup> of the so-called Google Generation, and especially among upper secondary school students, is one of the current topics of discussion in the field of media and information literacy (IL) in Finland.

Traditionally the upper secondary school library services have been provided by and developed with public libraries, but in our view academic libraries, with their special expertise and digital resources, should also take part in the teaching of pre-academic IL skills (Holmström and Karevaara, 2014: 191). These skills will become even more important, since the gradual digitalization of the

Finnish matriculation examination in 2016 will make ICT skills an essential part of all teaching and learning in Finnish upper secondary schools (Britschgi, 2014).

The Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti, Finland is already taking up the challenge by collaborating with the region's educational institutions at vocational, upper secondary and university levels. Established in 2011, the services of the Joint Library are developed and maintained in collaboration with Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LUAS), Salpaus Further Education and the universities within Lahti University Campus. This wide collaboration makes our concept of a joint library different from the usual definition, offering unique opportunities for promoting both pre-academic and academic IL skills.

The framework for this case study is provided by evidence-based librarianship (EBL). Crumley and

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Koufogiannakis (2002: 62) offer a practical definition of EBL as ‘a means to improve the profession of librarianship by asking questions as well as finding, critically appraising and incorporating research evidence from library science (or other disciplines) into daily practice’. It is within this definition that this paper operates, offering a literary review as well as an example of a practical approach to the questions at hand. The main research question is twofold, addressing the IL skills of the so-called digital natives and how these skills could be improved by an academic library. In order to do this, it is necessary to first consider the whole concept of digital natives, or the Google Generation, and its possible implications for teaching IL. The different ways an academic library can support the development of pre-academic and academic IL skills of digital natives are then discussed, based both on professional literature and our own experiences as a joint academic library.

### **Information literacy and the Google generation**

In recent years the IL skills of digital natives, or the so-called Google Generation, has been subjected to discussion. The term ‘digital native’ was originally introduced in 2001 by Marc Prensky, who used it to describe the new generations of students born in the digital age. According to Prensky, these students have grown up with new technologies and have spent their entire lives using the tools of the digital age, which in turn has led them to think and process information fundamentally differently from their predecessors (Prensky, 2001: 1). Other terms used for these new generations of young people brought up in a digitally rich environment include ‘Millennials’, ‘Net Generation’, ‘Google Generation’ and ‘Gaming Generation’, to name but a few (Jones and Shao, 2011: 3). Regardless of the terminology used, they all share the view that since these generations are born into the digital world, they not only see these technologies and the Internet as ‘natural’ but will also challenge the current forms of teaching and learning on all educational levels, including higher education (Jones and Shao, 2011: 5).

#### *Is there a Google generation?*

The assumption of digital natives’ somehow given knowledge of the digital culture has also been criticized. For example Kupiainen (2013) talks about a ‘digital native myth’, which has had negative influence on teaching: since students are expected to have already mastered the digital culture, they are not taught even basic media skills. This is especially

worrying since several studies suggest that the students themselves do not feel as if they are ICT-savvy. For example Kolikant (2010) concludes after interviewing 25 post-elementary students that only a third of the interviewees believed that, in terms of learning, their generation was empowered by technology, with the majority of them feeling their generation was actually worse at learning than the pre-ICT generations before them (Kolikant, 2010: 1389). Another study investigating the extent and nature of university students’ use of digital technologies for learning and socializing did not find evidence to support the view that digital natives adopt radically different learning styles, exhibit new forms of literacies or have any novel expectations from higher education (Margarayan et al., 2011: 438). The interesting thing to notice is the way students actually use digital technologies: several studies suggest that there is a rather strong divide between leisure or social use and potential educational use (see for example Jones et al., 2010; Kolikant, 2010; Margarayan et al., 2011; Tenhaven et al., 2013). While students in general use these tools, they mostly seem to use the largely established technologies such as Google, Wikipedia, mobile phones and media players: at the same time their understanding of what tools to adopt and how to use them to support their learning seems rather limited (Margarayan et al., 2011: 439). These findings are backed up by several Finnish studies indicating alarming variations in the overall ICT skills of Finnish adolescents and young adults, showing a large proportion of them using the computer for recreational purposes, such as games or movies, but not being able to use it as a work tool (Hyytiäinen, 2014; Kaarakainen et al., 2013). An ongoing research project by RoSA is testing over 3000 Finnish adolescents (aged 13 to 20) from different educational sectors to find out their actual ICT skills instead of just recording self-evaluations (RoSA, 2014). The preliminary results show a lack in the skills related especially to information seeking and the use of tools such as word processors or spreadsheets (Hyytiäinen, 2014).

In conclusion, all of the studies mentioned indicate significant variations amongst students in overall ICT skills and use, to the point where a homogeneous, ICT-savvy Google Generation really does seem more like a myth.

#### *Information illiterate digital natives*

Being born into the Internet era does not automatically make these generations information literate, either. A recent Finnish study conducted by Carita Kiili (2012) suggests that being used to digital

technology is not the same as being Internet or information literate and that these skills are something that needs to be taught. Kiili (2012: 34–36) conducted a number of sub-studies, in which she investigated Internet search actions and information evaluation skills of upper secondary school students as they searched for source material on the Internet for an essay on a given topic. These sub-studies showed substantial variation among the students.

According to the study, the students faced problems in formulating adequate search queries, understanding how search engines work, analyzing search results and regulating search activities (Kiili, 2012: 43). As for the search queries, those including only one term were the most common, accounting for 41% of the queries; almost a third (30%) of the search queries consisted of two terms and 17% included more than two terms. Some students did not include the main concept or used very vague terms, which resulted in unsuccessful search queries: most difficulties were caused by using the whole title of the task as a search term. It was also noted that some students were not able to reformulate their unsuccessful searches appropriately (Kiili, 2012: 37). Kiili points out that although a majority of the students were able to locate relevant information quite effectively, it seems that all students need some guidance for developing their searches and that ‘practicing systematic use of conceptual knowledge in specifying search queries would also prepare students for their university studies where inquiry and research based practices are pronounced’ (Kiili, 2012: 43–44).

The study also found students lacking in the skills relevant to evaluating information. Since the Internet is so frequently used for information seeking in school work, it is ‘exceedingly important that students evaluate what is worth reading and critically ponder what they read’ (Kiili, 2012: 47). However, according to Kiili (2012: 47), students evaluated the relevance of information more frequently than its credibility when reading online. The variance in both relevance and credibility evaluation was substantial, with several students not evaluating the credibility at all (Kiili, 2012: 35).

### *Implications and challenges for teaching information literacy*

Whether or not there really are new generations of digital natives remains an open topic. From academic libraries’ point of view there are, however, certain elements that are valuable to keep in mind when teaching both pre-academic and academic IL skills

to current generations of upper secondary and higher education students.

Firstly, as previously indicated, a homogeneous ICT-clever generation of digital natives does not seem to exist; instead we have a very heterogeneous group of students whose skills and knowledge in both ICT in general and information skills in particular vary greatly. Teaching and other forms of guidance will benefit from not assuming every student has similar skills, or knows how to use ICT tools and the Internet in learning; students actually expect to be taught these things (Margaryan et al., 2011). It would also be useful to clearly define which basic ICT skills students need to have before entering IL lessons, so that the time could be used effectively on IL instead of teaching basic computing skills. This of course needs to be done in close co-operation with the educational institution’s other curriculum planning.

Secondly, the alleged challenge posed by digital natives to the current forms of teaching and learning should also be viewed critically (Jones and Shao, 2011). A mounting body of evidence suggests that students entering higher education do not have any special demands regarding the use of new technologies in teaching; on the contrary, students are reported to persistently prefer moderate use of ICT in their courses (Jones and Shao, 2011: 3). According to Margaryan et al. (2011: 436), when students were asked for ideas on how technologies could be used to support teaching and learning, most of them had difficulties in suggesting any. This brings us to another important issue: it really is not as much about the tools as it is about the content. If students are finding it hard to understand the potential usefulness of ICT and the Internet in their learning, then the use of technology in teaching should not be based solely on the students’ current ICT preferences and use. On the contrary: as stated by Margaryan et al. (2011: 439), decisions regarding teaching should be based on a deeper understanding of how these technologies could actually improve the process and outcome of learning. This cannot be achieved without the staff actively experimenting with different technologies. In our view this is also something that could be done together with the students. Later in this article I will give some suggestions for this potential student co-operation.

Thirdly, as already suggested, there seems to be a gap between how students use new technologies in leisure and in learning. Kolikant (2010: 1389) talks about students living within two value systems, wherein on the one hand the Internet is seen as a user-friendly, fun and easy way to access and retrieve information, yet on the other hand when facing a ‘serious’ or ‘important’ assignment, students felt they

should incorporate books, since using only the Internet was seen as lazy and reflecting a cursory job. From a library's point of view this 'book-orientation' is interesting and actually something that can be witnessed daily: students usually ask for printed books on a certain subject rather than digital material, unless their teacher has specifically advised them to look for digital articles from the library's databases. As Kolikant (2010: 1389–1390) sees it, the reason for this lies within the different values and practices students face in and outside school, wherein school encourages in solo learning (i.e. attempting to hold the information in one's head) as opposed to the collaborative ways students use ICT outside school by sharing content and innovatively using what is already there. The faculty's role cannot be ignored either: teaching is still relying heavily on printed course books, instead of using versatile digital resources. This is something in which an academic library can really take up a significant role, not only making digital collections available but also offering relevant guidance and teaching in their use. I see this both as a challenge and an opportunity for IL teaching: to bridge the gap by educating both students and staff alike that ICT and the Internet can be used effectively in learning when you know how and where to look.

In conclusion, it is both a responsibility and an opportunity for academic libraries to make use of their special expertise by offering the kind of teaching, tutoring and guidance that students equipped with different levels of information skills need. Versatile teaching and access to personally tailored guidance are key elements in supporting the gradual development of the students' IL skills from upper secondary school onwards. In the following sections I will give practical examples of how the Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti offers these services to both students and staff at three different educational levels.

### **Building information literacy from upper secondary school to university**

Information and library services must on their part meet the ever growing demand for information and media literate citizens, who have all the basic skills needed in the ICT-driven world. This is why the information literacy, or quite often illiteracy, of the Google Generation is something to be taken seriously by the academic libraries also. But how to make sure students entering higher education are well equipped in these skills? The Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti, Finland has a unique position from which to tackle the issue.

### **Advantages of a joint library**

A joint library is a library for one or several independent universities and independent polytechnics (or Universities of Applied Sciences), with its operation based on a contract between its parent institutions (Palonen et al., 2013: 224). The Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti is stretching this definition by also co-operating with the region's educational institutions at both vocational and upper secondary levels. The Information and Library Services (2014) are developed and maintained in collaboration with Lahti University of Applied Sciences (LUAS), Salpaus Further Education and Lahti University Campus with units of three different universities (Helsinki University, Aalto University and Lappeenranta University of Technology). The Learning Centre Fellmannia,<sup>2</sup> home also to the library, was founded in 2011 and is located in the city centre, which makes it easy to access. The whole concept of the Learning Centre was developed for learners of different ages and levels of education from upper secondary level onwards, making it an attractive learning environment for all learners. In addition to Fellmannia, the Joint Higher Education Library has several smaller information centres in the Lahti region, reflecting the subject interests of their users and thus forming a multidisciplinary network.

The collaboration of different educational institutions has several advantages. Students entering the Salpaus vocational or upper secondary education will immediately become familiar with the higher education library services, as each group of new students will be welcomed to the library by a short tour and introduction. Printed collections and most of the services as well as local use of the digital resources are available to all students, as well as guidance in their use.<sup>3</sup> The Joint Higher Education Library offers IL teaching to both students and staff of all educational levels. As a result the library staff has gained extensive experience and expertise in IL teaching, making it possible to further develop teaching and guiding methods and tailor them to best meet the needs of the different student groups, as well as bearing in mind the whole study path from upper secondary to higher education, whether it be polytechnic or university. The information and library services are therefore an integral and natural part of the whole educational continuum.

To further promote the development of pre-academic information skills, we have recently teamed up with Lahti's Kannas Upper Secondary School's new International Baccalaureate (IB) programme which, with its critical, innovative and scientific

focus, is an excellent starting point for learning the information skills needed in later academic studies (Kannaksen lukio, 2014). This collaboration will support the study paths of students from the IB programme to universities and make sure their knowledge and skills in IL are gradually developing together with other areas of their studies.

### *Offering access and supporting knowledge creation*

Availability of digital collections is directly linked to the support of knowledge creation. As a joint library we are in a unique position to offer our users local access to the licensed digital resources of three universities: Lahti University of Applied Sciences, University of Helsinki and Aalto University. This gives our users an opportunity to expand their information seeking to include resources they otherwise would not be able to access.

Of course simply offering access to resources is not enough: in order to really support knowledge creation, libraries must also offer easy access to guidance. One could argue that in the last few years the role of the information specialist has changed from a more traditional role of librarianship into that of a coach, not giving ready-made answers but helping and encouraging users in finding the answers themselves. This is also why the focus of our services is in teaching and guiding information skills, source criticism and using the digital collections. As an example, our Information Skills Clinics offer personal, tailored sessions where information specialists help users in accessing databases and finding sources relevant to their subject and level of study, give guidance in assessing information quality and help in citing digital information. These clinics are especially popular among the undergraduate students writing their theses.

The Information Skills course is one part of studies at Lahti University of Applied Sciences and is worth one study credit. All LUAS students will attend a two-hour lecture, complete a source criticism assignment and finally take the information skills test; alternatively they can participate in an online course. The aim is to make sure students have the needed competence in IL and in using the available resources. It is advisable for students to complete the course during their first year of study.<sup>4</sup>

The Joint Higher Education Library is also developing eKnowledge and eLibrary services as part of the FUAS Virtual Campus.<sup>5</sup> As the number of virtual campuses is increasing, academic libraries must find ways to best serve their users online. The aim is to integrate information and library services with the virtual campus and also develop innovative new online

services. Teaching students and staff in information skills and using the digital collections plays an integral part in this development, as well as promoting the educational use of these collections. Library services must also be made available and usable for those users who can only access them online (Kiviluoto and Blinnikka, 2013).

Promoting and encouraging the educational use of the digital collections took a giant leap forwards when the new Masto-Finna Online Catalogue was launched in autumn 2014. This new interface allows users to find both printed and digital material available at the Joint Library with just one search, whereas before two separate interfaces needed to be used. Remote access to licensed digital resources is available to LUAS students and staff and the staff of Salpaus Further Education. The new Masto-Finna is a localized version of the national digital library interface, with the Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti being amongst the first higher education libraries in Finland to adopt this new user interface.<sup>6</sup> The experiences gained from Masto-Finna in IL teaching and other guidance have so far been very encouraging, with students finding the new interface convenient and easy to use.

### *LINKKU: Putting information literacy on wheels*

As discussed earlier, offering access both to information resources and guidance in their use is a critical part in supporting knowledge creation and the development of both pre-academic and academic IL skills. But what about upper secondary school students and other potential users, who are living and studying in the more remote areas of the region? Although Lahti is the regional centre of the Päijät-Häme province, only half of the region's population actually live here, with the other half scattered around the province. To promote equal opportunities for these users to benefit from the services of a joint library, we have decided to make these services literally mobile by putting them on wheels.

The project SmartBus tests a multipurpose, mobile service unit in the Päijät-Häme region. The project, financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), is being administered by Lahti University of Applied Sciences and implemented in cooperation with Salpaus Further Education, Learning Centre Fellmannia and several of the region's social and healthcare service providers. The project is running until 31 March 2015, after which the SmartBus will stay in operation for a minimum of five years.

LINKKU, as the SmartBus is called, started piloting its services in autumn 2014, visiting several smaller towns and villages in the Päijät-Häme region

with a regular schedule, providing different services on different weeks. LINKKU is designed to be easily modified to adjust to the needs of several different services, so it can function for example as a mobile healthcare unit, a dental clinic, an ICT classroom or a mobile polling station (Lahden ammattikorkeakoulu, 2013; LINKKU, 2014).

LINKKU is also a new kind of learning environment on wheels, with advanced mobile telecommunications technology and networks making the licensed digital collections of the Joint Higher Education Library available to students, teachers and other learners in the whole Päijät-Häme region. Expert services such as the Information Skills Clinic will be made available either physically with an information specialist on board or virtually as an online service. The focus again is on teaching and guiding information and media literacy skills and creating an equal opportunity for learning these skills regardless of where one is located. It should be noted that LINKKU will not be a traditional mobile library, since those services are already well provided by the region's public libraries. Our aim is to complement the already existing services by bringing something new from an academic library's viewpoint, delivering essential services to support a knowledge-driven economy.

In addition to the new mobile learning environment and already existing services, we are developing new ways of teaching pre-academic information and media literacy skills to upper secondary school students. The aim is to make learning these skills more interesting and appealing to the 'Gaming Generation' by using serious gaming and participatory design.

### *Learning by gaming*

Andrew Walsh (2013) sees similarities in the skills developed by gaming and the skills needed in IL; both require problem solving, planning and critically considered strategies to achieve one's goal. According to Walsh, increasing numbers of people are identifying themselves as gamers, which makes game-based learning easier both to implement and to be accepted also by information and library services users. It should also be noted that although the 'Gaming Generation' is often used as a synonym for digital natives, the average age of a gamer is now 37 (Walsh, 2013). Adult learners should therefore be taken into consideration as a potential user group for IL learning games, although these games are usually developed for younger students.

Why then should academic libraries use gaming in IL teaching? As pointed out by Van Meegen and Limpens (2010: 272), the number of teaching hours

assigned for IL teaching is usually limited, which means information specialists have a relatively short time to teach students the necessary skills. It is therefore reasonable to argue that any means to make the most of these few teaching hours should be employed to ensure learning. Interactive elements and games are already being used by many academic libraries to enhance IL learning, and the first reactions have been positive (Van Meegen and Limpens, 2010: 275). A research project by the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam compared the effectiveness of a web-based IL tutorial and an online IL game, concluding that students who played the game got higher scores than those who followed the web-based tutorial (Van Meegen and Limpens, 2010: 285). According to the study, the result suggests that students playing the game are more actively engaged in the task from the beginning until the end, and the more active students get, the faster they will learn. Games are one way of introducing interactivity to learning, but not the only one; interactive elements could also be used in other forms of teaching. As Van Meegen and Limpens conclude (2010: 286), 'the clue is to engage students in their learning, to get them to actively participate and understand the content within the short period of time libraries have to teach information literacy'.

Anna-Liisa Holmström and Katja Karevaara from LUAS have developed a new model for game-based IL learning. This model draws parallels between Carol C Kuhlthau's information-seeking process (Kuhlthau et al., 2004) and gaming, and its basic concepts include pervasive learning, scaffolding, immersion and the flow experience (Holmström and Karevaara, 2014: 196–197). The role of pedagogical scaffolding is emphasized, since students need support in utilizing mobile technologies and learning games, both at the beginning and during the game. The idea of the model is to utilize the emotions, thoughts and actions evoked by gaming and aim them at information seeking; at its best, students can get so immersed in IL gaming that they actually experience the flow. By making information seeking into a game, students may feel less uncertain about starting the information-seeking process and get a real feeling of accomplishment when succeeding in the task, which in turn can nurture the upper secondary school students' budding interest in doing (pre-academic) research (Holmström and Karevaara, 2014: 205).

To test this new model, we are planning to launch a new initiative to create a futuristic and mobile Information Skills Clinic together with the students of Kannas Upper Secondary School's IB programme. As part of their studies, the IB students themselves will participate as developers and testers of this new

service. The Mobile Information Skills Clinic will pilot several new learning games developed in LUAS, including ROX Role Play and INTACT Information Battle.

In ROX Role Play, the student chooses an alias (for example a researcher, a chemist or a historian) and will interact with the virtual information specialist in this chosen role, trying out different strategies for searching and evaluating information as if she/he actually was a researcher, a chemist, etc. This will give students an opportunity to use their imagination and get a real working life experience in information seeking. Feedback and assistance will be given online by the information specialist (Holmström and Karevaara, 2014: 199–200).

In INTACT Information Battle students will practise academic debating. The debate will be over a given topic and the winner is the one with most credible arguments, which need to be based on scholarly articles. The aim is to learn how to find peer-reviewed, scholarly articles from different databases and use them in argumentation, getting students acquainted with source criticism and other academic practices. To add more challenge, non-Finnish information sources will also be used. The battle can take place in an online environment, with an information specialist as the game master (Holmström and Karevaara, 2014: 204).

These learning games will be available online, so anyone can participate regardless of location. In addition, LINKKU will take the digital collections of the Joint Higher Education Library to the region's more remote upper secondary schools, giving an opportunity to use these collections in serious gaming as well as other studies.

### **Assessment and suggestions for further research**

Assessment or the evaluation of the effectiveness of the actions taken is an integral part of the EBL process (Eldredge, 2006). Although the Joint Higher Education Library participated in the national library user survey in 2013<sup>7</sup> and has in addition conducted several smaller user surveys as part of the Fellmannia service evaluation process in 2012,<sup>8</sup> there has not so far been any systematic research on the impact of the joint library approach to the pre-academic IL skills of the vocational and upper secondary school students.

There are several reasons for this lack of assessment. Many of the new services introduced in this paper have not yet come into use, like the Mobile and Futuristic Information Skills Clinic and the IL games, or have only just started piloting, like LINKKU.

There will be impact assessment once these services are properly up and running and first experiences have been gained.

The second dilemma is in the coverage of the current IL teaching aimed at Salpaus vocational and upper secondary education students. Although all new student groups are invited to the library for an introduction and teachers encouraged to book IL teaching for their groups, this has not so far been mandatory and therefore there has been great variation in the participation of these groups, depending much on the teacher and overall curriculum planning. There is also significant variation between different fields of education, with some being more active all round in using the information and library services and others hardly visiting the information centres after the first introductory visit, let alone participating in any IL training. It is our rough estimation that only about 30% of all Salpaus students are active users of our services, which is also one of the reasons for piloting new methods for IL teaching and guidance.

This problem of random and uneven participation together with the increasing importance of IL skills in vocational training has luckily been acknowledged in Salpaus Further Education. As a result, the basic and advanced information-seeking courses designed for vocational education<sup>9</sup> will be integrated into the future curriculums of Salpaus, which will make them mandatory for all vocational education students. The use of digital collections among these students will also be monitored as part of the new Salpaus Further Education ICT strategy, which in turn will produce research data for our purposes as well.

One interesting topic for future research would be to compare the initial IL skills of the students, who have previously studied in Salpaus and are now entering LUAS, and those who come from other educational institutions and have not therefore yet received any IL training from the joint library. This kind of assessment, conducted for example as a survey, could provide information on the effectiveness of the joint library approach and whether or not it has any impact on the gradual development of pre-academic and academic IL skills. So far, with the IL teaching participation levels of the vocational and upper secondary school students having been so random, any real impact assessment would in turn have been quite arbitrary. This will change once the new curriculums come into effect and the previous Salpaus students can be expected to have participated in the basic and advanced information-seeking courses provided by the Joint Higher Education Library. From the point of view of lifelong learning, the research could be taken further to also study how the IL skills

of the previous LUAS Bachelors degree programme students differ from other students when entering the LUAS Masters degree programmes.

## Conclusion

It is our view that academic libraries have an important role in supporting and promoting also the development of pre-academic IL skills of upper secondary school students. In our experience, the best results are made by stepping out of the more traditional academic library model by collaborating widely with educational institutions of different levels. This way the information and library services become an integral and natural part of the whole educational continuum, also giving the library staff extensive experience and expertise in IL teaching and making it possible to further develop teaching and guiding methods to best meet the needs of the different student groups. The academic library's collaboration with different levels of education also supports lifelong learning, with services provided for the whole study path from upper secondary to higher education, whether it be polytechnic or university.

Information literacy of the so-called digital natives is a hot topic for discussion. Whether or not there actually are digital natives remains open to discussion; however the increasing role of games, digital technologies, the Internet and social media in the everyday lives of our students should not be ignored – on the contrary, they should be put to good use to enhance learning of important IL skills. Because of the often very limited number of teaching hours assigned for IL, the library staff needs to make the most of the time they have: since interactive elements and gaming seem to improve learning, they should be employed in IL teaching as well.

Creating equal opportunities and new ways for access and learning are other key issues in today's IL skills teaching. The Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti has taken up the challenge of access by making IL services literally mobile in LINKKU and developing new online services such as the virtual Information Skills Clinic and a number of IL learning games. Since these new services have only just started piloting, it is not yet possible to make any assessments on their impact on IL teaching and learning; this topic must therefore be left for future research, after more experience has been gained.

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## Notes

1. The term 'pre-academic information skills' is used here to describe the upper secondary school students' (aged 15–18) inquisitive and scientific attitude towards life that is needed later in university studies (Holmström and Karevaara, 2014).
2. To read more about Fellmannia, visit <http://www.fellmannia.fi/>.
3. Due to current institution specific licensing models of digital resources, customers of the same joint library have different solutions and rights for remote use depending on their institution; therefore for example the students of Salpaus may only access the digital resources of LUAS on the library's computers. For more, see Palonen et al., 2013.
4. For more on Information Skills services, visit <http://www.lamk.fi/english/degree-students/academic-library/studies/Sivut/default.aspx>.
5. FUAS – Federation of Universities of Applied Sciences is a strategic alliance formed by HAMK, Lahti and Laurea Universities of Applied Sciences. For more, visit <http://www.fuas.fi/en/Sivut/default.aspx>.
6. Masto-Finna Online Catalogue available at <https://masto.finna.fi/>.
7. The survey is conducted by the National Library of Finland every two or three years. Link to the results of 2013 survey (in Finnish only): <http://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/kirjastoala/koordinointi/kayttajakysely2013.html>.
8. The service evaluation process was conducted as part of the World Design Capital 2012 project and used service design and developmental evaluation methods to see how Fellmannia has succeeded in meeting the needs of its users. Documentation of the project (in Finnish only) can be found at <http://www.fellmannia.fi/?s=WDC>.
9. For more on the guidance at Salpaus Further Education, see <http://www.lamk.fi/english/degree-students/academic-library/studies/Sivut/default.aspx#services>.

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### Author biography

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# Library anxiety among university students: A survey

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## Abstract

Library anxiety has been identified as a contributory factor to poor academic performance among students, and libraries are being challenged to give serious consideration to this phenomenon in order to develop strategies for reducing the problem. This study sought to determine if there were any indicators of the presence of library anxiety among a sample of 150 undergraduates in the faculty of Humanities and Education at the University of the West Indies, Mona Campus and some of the factors contributing to this condition. The findings indicated the presence of library anxiety of short-term duration among the students due to both personal and institutional factors. Some personal factors included a lack of the relevant information literacy skills, absence of previous library experience, ignorance of the capability and extent of the library information retrieval systems and confusion when trying to find their way around the library. Institutional factors included the relatively large size of the library, the layout and organization of floors and collection, unavailability of computers and lack of appropriate signage. Recommendations were made to help alleviate the problems that appear to have triggered library anxiety.

## Keywords

Library anxiety, academic library, undergraduate students, University of the West Indies, library phobia, library avoidance

## Introduction

Library and information administrators continually face the challenge of identifying problems that may hinder the use of libraries. Various factors have been identified such as the size of the library (Esch and Crawford, 2006: 22), difficulty using the online public access catalogue and databases (Nwokedi and Dachalson, 2007: 5) and lack of appropriate information literacy skills (Kuhlthau, 1990a: 366). One of the factors that have been brought to the attention of library professionals is the concept of library anxiety which Jiao et al. (1996: 152) comprehensively define as ‘an uncomfortable feeling or emotional disposition characterized by tension, fear, feelings of uncertainty and helplessness, negative and self-defeating thoughts and mental disorganization that appear only when students are in or contemplating a visit to the library’. The idea first emerged in 1986 based on observations by Constance Mellon who noticed that USA college students’ description of their initial response to the library included ‘fear’ or a ‘feeling of being lost’ stemming from their perceptions regarding the size

of the library, a lack of knowledge of where things were located in the library and how to begin their research; incompetence in utilizing library resources; and embarrassment at asking questions that they perceived would reveal their incompetence.

The growing evidence of other researchers such as Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (2004), Shoham and Mizrahi (2001) and Ansari (2009) have placed library anxiety on the radar of library administrators and researchers who have been challenged to take a closer look at how it can negatively affect students’ use of the library and to see what strategies they can develop to reduce its impact. One of the contributory factors to library anxiety as presented in the literature is the inability of students coming from smaller school libraries to make the transition to the larger university libraries. While there are no studies on library

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anxiety emanating from the Caribbean, the findings from Shelley-Robinson's study about the poor state of school libraries in Jamaica identified potential risk factors for library anxiety in Jamaican tertiary level schools. Chief among them was the failure of a majority of school libraries to meet the minimum physical and human capacity standards and the absence of formal policies for school libraries (Shelley-Robinson, 2007: 102). Factors such as these have helped to place severe constraints on the ability of school libraries to operate effectively and efficiently, resulting in a deficit in the delivery of information literacy skills at the secondary school level. Thus it was theorized that many students are ill-prepared for the transition to the university library, making them highly vulnerable to feelings of anxiety in the much larger academic libraries like that at University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona.

Most of the studies that were done on library anxiety related to students using large and well-equipped academic libraries in developed countries, therefore, a study of this nature conducted in a developing country that is plagued with many challenges in regards to resources, services, among others, will fill an important gap in Library and Information Science research and add to the general body of knowledge worldwide. It is in this regard that a quantitative study was adopted to: (1) identify any indicators of the presence of library anxiety among first-year undergraduate students and (2) identify some of the factors contributing to library anxiety among first-year undergraduate students.

### Literature review

Library anxiety has been the subject of considerable empirical work since the ground-breaking qualitative doctoral dissertation on the issue undertaken by Constance Mellon in 1986. She developed the theory of library anxiety after an analysis of the personal writings of 6000 undergraduate students which indicated that college students described their initial response to the library in terms of 'fear' or a 'feeling of being lost' which stemmed from their perceptions regarding the size of the library, a lack of knowledge about where things were located, how to begin their research and what to do. This fear can prevent students from approaching a research assignment rationally and effectively and can influence a student's ability to complete assignments and be successful (Bowers, 2010: 5). Mellon's main impetus for undertaking the study was based on observations made during her four years of developing, coordinating and teaching an information literacy programme at a small university (Mellon, 1986: 278–279).

Among her findings was that freshmen tended to start university with very little knowledge of the library (Bostick, 1992: 20) and that 75–85% of the students described their initial library research experience in an academic library as one characterized by fear and anxiety (Mellon, 1986: 278). Since then several researchers have conducted both qualitative and quantitative studies to identify the degree to which different aspects of library use pose problems.

Kuhlthau is another theorist influencing library anxiety research. Her theory focuses on the affective domain that is, the different range of emotions students experienced at the six different stages of the search process. Kuhlthau (1990a: 366) argues emphatically that strong emotions play an integral part in the success of the research process and can range from confusion and anxiety at the beginning of a search process to confidence and satisfaction or disappointment at the end. She further identified 'vague, unclear thoughts about a topic or question, gap in meaning and limited construction which initiates the process of information seeking' (1990b: 5) as sources of uncertainty, confusion and frustration among students. Failure to attend to these emotional issues during the information search process could mean that one of the key sources of library anxiety remains unaddressed (Kuhlthau, cited in Bowers, 2010: 26–27).

### Factors contributing to library anxiety

Library anxiety is affected by both personal and institutional factors. Personal factors relate to various inhibitions regarding the library which may prevent students from making optimal use of this facility for their studies. These include inadequate and/or lack of knowledge and skills of library resources, absence of previous library experience, ignorance of the capability and extent of the library information retrieval systems, lack of self-confidence in conducting research, inadequate knowledge of the subject matter, lack of appropriate information literacy skills and their general confusion with the various aspects of the information search process (Abusin et al., 2011: 162; Andrews, 1991: 8; Carlile, 2007: 134; Kwon, 2008: 124; Lawless, 2011: 17; Mellon, 1986: 279; Mizrachi and Shoham, 2004: 36; Nwokedi and Dachalson, 2007: 6).

Unfamiliarity with computerized catalogues and databases appears to be a recurrent challenge for students as OPACs and databases often have different interfaces and some of them are difficult to manoeuvre. Andrews (1991: 8) and Swigon (2011: 483) have provided clear examples which included

difficulties differentiating between a subject and a keyword search and narrowing or broadening a search using Boolean logic. Students also developed anxiety as a result of the subject terminologies and the fact that some articles only carry an abstract and not the full text (Harnett, 2005: 3). Nwokedi and Dachalson's (2007: 5) study on level of anxiety amongst medical students at the University of Jos, Nigeria also found that a majority of the students were inept in using the catalogue and journal indexes.

Institutional factors relate to physical and environmental aspects of the library service. These include: the size of the library and collection, the layout and organization of floors and the collection, the noise level, poor ventilation, lighting and air conditioning, signage and computer facilities (Abusin et al., 2011: 169; Andrews, 1991: 9; Ansari, 2009: 422; Antel, 2004: 232; Coker, 1993: 29). The relationship between size and layout of libraries was first made prominent by Mellon (1986: 278–279) who found that students were intimidated by the large size of the academic library compared to their school or public libraries. Andrews (1991: 8–9) found in her study of students at the Manchester Polytechnic library that students reported feeling lost, disoriented and unable to locate the materials because of the size of the library. This resulted in frustration, anxiety and even withdrawal from the library.

Other institutional factors that may trigger library anxiety include: the arrangement of materials on the shelves (Esch and Crawford, 2006: 22 and Harnett, 2005: 3) inadequate signage (Abusin et al., 2011: 164 and Coker, 1993: 30); library jargon; and the perceptions among students that librarians are threatening, frightening, unapproachable and inaccessible when they are seeking personal assistance from them (Andrews, 1991: 12; Antel, 2004: 232; Harnett, 2005: 2; Kwon, 2008: 119; Nwokedi and Dachalson, 2007: 7; and Robinson and Reid, 2007: 413–414).

### **Impact of library anxiety on students**

Studies undertaken in the United States and many other countries have found library anxiety to be pervasive among college students (Abusin et al., 2011: 173; Carlile, 2007: 130; Cleveland, 2004: 177; Shoham and Mizrachi, 2001: 306; Jiao and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 138; and Lawless, 2011: 17). According to Swigon (2011: 483) this accounts for approximately 40% of surveyed library users.

It has been observed that students suffering from library anxiety have a greater propensity to avoid using an academic library and were thus more prone to avoid or delay starting or completing assignments

that involved the library (Onwuegbuzie and Jiao, cited in Lee, 2011: 4). These feelings tend to reduce the time students spend in the library and alternatively increase photocopying expenditure (Mellon, cited in Abusin et al., 2011: 162); overlook maps and signs; misinterpret directions and cues when attempting to locate periodicals and books and refrain from seeking much needed help (Keefer, 1993: 4). Library anxiety can also hinder students from using the library efficiently and effectively, thus contributing to academic failure (United States Education Trust, cited in Cahoy, 2004: 26).

### **Methodology**

The study was exploratory using the survey method. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire consisting of items related to students' demographics as well as their use of the library, and items referring specifically to library anxiety, based partially on Bostick's 1992 Library Anxiety Scale (LAS). The population comprised all the 1050 first-year undergraduate students registered in the faculty of Humanities and Education (FHE) in the 2012/2013 academic year. Due to its exploratory nature, the study was confined to the FHE which was also chosen because the special collection of this faculty was housed at the Main Library of the University. First-year students were chosen because of their status as incoming students who would have had little experience with the library and for whom it would be much easier to recall their earliest experiences since it would be fairly recent. For manageability, 150 students from six randomly chosen intact classrooms comprised the sample.

### **Findings**

The main findings of the study are presented in this section. A majority of the sample (95.2%) fell below the age of 30 with as many as 42.6% being under 20. These demographics are indicative of recent high school graduates who may have a high propensity to experience challenges making the transition from a small school library to a big library environment as suggested by authors such as (Antel, 2004: 232 and Esch and Crawford, 2006: 22).

#### *Indications of library anxiety*

Table 1 reveals that just under 50% of users experienced some form of anxiety based on how they described their feelings as either confused (51.3%); uncertain (49.3%); or anxious (32.6%) in semester 1. In their second semester, it would seem as if the

**Table 1.** Feelings experienced when students first used the library.

Type of feeling	No.	%
Confused	77	51.3
Uncertain	74	49.3
Anxious	49	32.6
Helpless	45	30
Nervous	26	17.3
Uncomfortable	24	16
Fearful	15	10
None of the above	13	8.6
Other	6	4

majority (with percentages ranging from 50–68) of the students had gone past their initial feelings of anxiety experienced during the first semester.

### Factors contributing to library anxiety

Both personal and institutional factors were identified as contributing to library anxiety among first-year students. Personal factors related to inadequate and/or lack of knowledge and skills of library resources, absence of previous library experience, lack of self-confidence in conducting research, lack of appropriate information literacy skills and their general confusion with the various aspects of the information search process. Institutional factors related to the size of the library and the number of different resources, lack of or inadequate signage and staff issues.

### Personal factors

Table 2 reveals that over 80% of the respondents indicated that their initial feeling about the library in the first semester was influenced by personal factors related to the fact that they were visiting the facility for the first time as well as their limited awareness about how books were organized on the shelves.

The majority of the students (71%) encountered problems on their first visit to the library. Table 3 shows the nature of problems encountered by students on their first attempt to use the library. The lack of information literacy emerged as a major contributor to the students' frustration when using the library as evidenced by the major problems cited. Among the problems identified were inability to locate resources (31.3%), and use the OPAC (26%), not understanding how things are arranged (23%) and uncertainty about how to begin research (19.3%). These findings suggest that a certain degree of library anxiety came from unfamiliarity of students with the new library environment and a lack of the requisite skills to use the

**Table 2.** Factors contributing to students' negative feelings.

Factors contributing to students' feelings	No.	%
Fact that it was my first visit	72	48
Not knowing how books were organized on the shelf	49	32.6
Having to go to different floors to get what I want	30	20
The size of the library	23	15.3
Seeing a lot of books on the shelf	10	6.6
Other	9	6

**Table 3.** Nature of problems encountered on first attempt to use the library.

Nature of problem	No.	%
Inability to locate resources	47	31.3
Inability to use online catalogue	39	26
Not understanding how books are arranged on the shelf	34	22.6
Uncertainty of how to begin research	29	19.3
Inability to operate photocopy machine	25	16.6
Inability to use online databases	23	15.3
Lack of help from staff	19	12.6
Unapproachable staff	12	8
Other	3	2

library which was corroborated in the literature by authors such as (Abusin et al., 2011: 164; Kwon, 2008: 119 and Nwokedi and Dachalson, 2007: 5).

In the second semester, the findings suggest some marginal improvement in the level of library anxiety among students. For example, the findings revealed changes in the ease of use of online databases (37.2% disagreeing, 40.6% agreeing) and the OPAC (36.6% agreeing, 33.4% disagreeing). This suggests that students considered the online catalogue and databases difficult to manoeuvre, reflecting findings from other studies (Andrews, 1999: 12; Hartman, 2009: 6; and Swigon, 2011: 477) which reported recurrent challenges for students resulting from unfamiliarity with these library resources. This could be relevant since many of the students were coming from high schools, most of which did not even have a proper card catalogue (Shelley-Robinson, 2007: 105).

In the second semester some 63.4% of the sample reported being unsure of how to begin their research. This would seem to suggest that these students had overcome the feelings of uncertainty that they experienced at the start of the search process that can cause library anxiety as stated by Kuhlthau, (1990: 366) and previously identified by Mellon (1986: 278) in her study.

### *Institutional factors*

The availability of physical provisions such as computers and copying machines was one of the institutional factors that contributed to library anxiety. Some 32% of the students stated that computers were usually unavailable when they were needed. Lack of ready access to computers for these students may have had a negative effect and created anxiety as students were unable to complete their work. Of the students 24% were undecided on the issue which may be related to the increased ownership of personal computers and smart phones which make students less reliant on computers in the library. As for the photocopiers, 42% of the respondents reported using them frequently and so were unable to speak to their availability, which is not surprising given the greater access to e-resources.

The students were almost equally divided (36.7% disagreeing, 35.4% agreeing) in regard to the clarity of signage in the library. This could give rise to confusion and frustration in attempts to locate resources and services.

In contrast to the findings of other authors, only a small proportion of the respondents (13.4%) found the library to be too big. This may be due to the comparatively small size of libraries in the Caribbean to those found in developed countries. This finding, however, might suggest that this small group may have felt extremely overwhelmed by the size as over two-thirds of the students thought the library was comfortable for study.

The issue of safety of the library did not emerge as a major factor in library anxiety. This was particularly evident in the second semester, where 68.6% (strongly agree and agree combined) agreed that they felt physically safe in the library. This may be related to the existence of 24-hour security at the library in addition to the small size of UWI library relative to much larger academic libraries where the perception of safety may be less.

The availability of staff to assist students played a minor role as a factor determining library anxiety as only 13% and 8% respectively complained about the unhelpfulness and inapproachability of the staff in the first semester. In the second semester their availability when needed to help students drew mixed responses as 43.3% disagreed while 32.7% agreed. On the other hand, a little more than half of the group (51.3%) disagreed with the idea that library staff were unhelpful while even more (60.7%) disagreed that they were unapproachable. So while not getting overly high marks, the staff would seem to be a lesser source of library anxiety than might have been anticipated,

given findings from other studies which showed staff as a major contributor to library anxiety (Antel, 2004: 232; Coker, 1993: 27; Robinson and Reid, 2007: 413–414).

There was a high degree of reliance on friends (44.6%) compared to the library staff (29.3%) among students to resolve problems they encountered when they attempted to use the library. The preference for students' assistance opposed to the library staff's assistance is in keeping with findings by (Mason, 2010: 10) who suggests that students might be unwilling to reveal their ignorance to a stranger, even if he or she is the professional with the knowledge to help them.

### *Impact of library anxiety*

The initial feelings of anxiety about the library appeared to have affected them negatively. Table 4 shows that some 46% of the students stated that it affected their ability to complete their assignments with as many as 20% citing failure to turn in a good assignment and the other 26% having to delay the completion of same due to library anxiety. 'Other' initial feelings were reported by 37%, some of which included: developing a phobia for the library; having to go elsewhere to conduct their research; and becoming discouraged from using the library unless it was absolutely necessary.

Most students experienced a positive change in emotions by the second semester in sharp contrast to their experiences in the first. More than two-thirds of the respondents indicated that their initial feelings about the library had changed by the second semester due largely to three main factors. These were: increased knowledge of the library, how to use its resources, and a recognition of the channels to use when requesting assistance. These responses being personal factors highlight the importance of information skills instruction and library orientation activities in helping to reduce library anxiety among new students.

The respondents also advanced reasons for unchanged feeling about the library. However, only seven students gave any clear reason for their initial feelings about the library remaining unchanged even in the second semester. An analysis of their responses indicated that this resulted from the same factors being present during the first semester. The main responses were: confusion stemming from the arrangement of the books on the shelves and the layout of the library which some admitted happened because they did not attend the orientation sessions; difficulty locating books which were identified in the OPAC but could not be located on the shelves; an

**Table 4.** Effects of students' initial feelings on their actions.

Actions resulting from initial feelings about the library	No.	%
Other	56	37.3
Delay completion of assignments	39	26
Failure to turn in a good assignment because I did not get enough information	30	20
Increased in my photocopying because I did not want to stay in the library	25	16.6

insufficient number of books; and unfriendly library staff.

Overall the responses regarding the personal and institutional factors that might be related to library anxiety showed a mixture of likely variables and indicated that for this group of undergraduates, library anxiety might be short termed in some instances. This may be as a result of students being less anxious as they became more familiar with the library and how to use it. These findings should provide some useful insights for administrators as to some of the ways to address some of the factors that contribute to library anxiety. Based on the findings it may be fair to suggest that first-year undergraduate students in the faculty of Humanities and Education at UWI Mona exhibited library anxiety in their first semester even though it might be in a mild form and largely temporary. This may be due to the fact that by the second semester students showed many signs of overcoming most of their preliminary negative feelings as indicated in previous discussions.

## Discussion and conclusion

Bearing in mind the definition of library anxiety advanced by Jiao et al. (1996: 151), it is clear that there were some indicators of this phenomenon among first-year undergraduate students in the faculty of Humanities and Education at UWI, Mona although the situation would appear to have been greatly lessened by the second semester. This was due to greater familiarity with the library and increasing mastery of information-handling skills among students. The study found that a majority (71%) of the students experienced some form of negative emotions on their first visit to the library. These related more to personal rather than institutional factors and included feelings of confusion, uncertainty, anxiety and helplessness. These feelings of anxiety seemed to have been influenced largely by unfamiliarity with the library on their first visit (48%), the size of the building (15.3%) and the fact that students had to manoeuvre multiple floors (20%). The nature of the problems

encountered by the students on that first visit gave some indication of other likely sources of their disquietude. Some were related to the organization and arrangement of the materials in the library and the inability of students to properly use the library. These results point to a general lack of information-handling skills among students, possibly related to the fact that many of them are recent graduates of high school with ill-equipped libraries as reported by Shelley-Robinson, (2007: 102–103).

Although personal and institutional factors both contributed to library anxiety, the former seemed to have contributed to a greater extent to the problem. The absence of information literacy skills among the students appeared to be a key factor contributing to library anxiety which may be related to the failure of some to participate in orientation and information literacy training sessions. While most of the respondents made their first visit to the library to either participate in the orientation or training sessions, almost a third of the respondents avoided these sessions and focused instead on borrowing materials, studying, undertaking research and meeting with friends.

Limited exposure to sophisticated library environments also seemed to have contributed to library anxiety of students. Although just under 70% had membership in either a school library or a public library before coming to UWI, most of this experience was gained in ill-equipped school libraries (Shelley-Robinson, 2007: 102–103). The unfamiliarity of students with the new library environment, coupled with a lack of the requisite skills to use the library was also responsible for a certain degree of library anxiety among students. In regard to the OPAC and databases, there was little positive change between semesters which indicates that students consider the online catalogue and databases difficult to manoeuvre. This finding though is not surprising because students have constantly complained about the difficulty of using online databases which has been further exacerbated by the introduction of UWIlinc which has been found to be very unfriendly to users. These findings are consistent with those of other authors such as Andrews (1999: 8); Harnett (2005: 3); and Swigon (2011: 477). Nwokedi and Dacalson's (2007: 5) research revealed that an overwhelming majority of the medical students at the University of Jos, Nigeria (75.69%) reportedly claimed that they were unable to use library resources such as a catalogue.

The number of students who experienced confusion when they tried to find their way around the library in the first semester declined in the second semester. Among the main contributing factors were the increased familiarity among student with the

library environment; and the impact of the strategies the library administration has put in place to assist students which have resulted in students being more comfortable with using the library. Some 61.4% of the students disagreed with the statement that they can never find things in the library compared to 31.3% who expressed the view in the first semester.

The survey provided clues about the factors that contribute mostly to library anxiety. Chief among them is the lack of information literacy skills such as their inability to locate resources, and use online catalogues and databases. There is also evidence that library anxiety impacted students negatively in a number of ways such as delaying the completion of assignments and failure to turn in a good paper.

### Recommendations

Even though library anxiety among UWI first-year students appears to be at a lesser extent and of a more transient nature than has been observed in the literature, it is important for library administrators to adopt various strategies to mitigate this problem. It is recommended that the UWI library administration consider the following strategies:

1. The library needs to aggressively market the orientation and information literacy programme which could be made mandatory for all students and offered during the first semester. This is to ensure that students are immediately educated in the requisite information management skills for academic purposes. This is against the background that the findings revealed that a lack of information literacy skills was a major contributor to library anxiety.
2. There should be a user-friendly directory in the entrance hall, outlining the different floors of the library and the resources on each one, which students will be able to use to assist them in finding resources or different sections of the library. This is essential because inability to locate resources in the library was ranked the highest among the nature of problems students encountered when they try to use the library. Being able to locate places should go a long way in reducing library anxiety.
3. The lack of and clarity of proper signage was an institutional factor that triggered library anxiety and created confusion and frustration when students attempted to locate resources and services. Therefore it is recommended that proper signage be installed throughout the library including directional and point-of-use

guides and the labelling of shelves and special collections so that users are able to quickly locate places and library resources.

4. Existing training sessions and tours should be extended throughout each semester rather than only at the beginning and offered on different days and times to reach as many students as possible so that they will be familiar with the library environment and possess the requisite skills to utilize the library resources.
5. Even though staff was not a major contributor to library anxiety, it is however being recommended that ongoing customer service training be provided for library staff to encourage them to be more accommodating, friendly and helpful to students. In addition to this, the library should make professional staff immediately available at a help desk near the main entrance hall of the library to assist students as they come in, and hopefully, help to allay their fears. Where possible, staff should also be easily accessible on the different floors to assist students in need.
6. The library should collaborate with the managers of the halls of residence to integrate orientation and training sessions into their own regular student orientation activities in an effort to reach as many students as possible.
7. The establishment of partnerships with relevant groups to help to minimize library anxiety among the students would also be helpful. Two such groups that immediately come to mind are high school principals and members of the library school which is also at UWI Mona. In the case of the former, since so many students come directly from the high school, orientation sessions at the university could be held for them with limited instruction in basic information skills. This would reduce the feelings of anxiety, intimidation and bewilderment they tend to experience on their first visit to the library. With regard to the library school, students from the department could be used to conduct peer group training in the library in information skills during the first semester. It would also be a response to the finding that showed that students prefer to seek assistance from friends instead of librarians and the library science students would also gain valuable professional practice.

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### Author biography

**Marisa McPherson** is a graduate of the University of the West Indies, Mona where she obtained her BEd degree in School Librarianship with First Class Honours and her MA in Library and Information Studies with Distinction. This paper was submitted as a requirement for the partial fulfilment of the MA programme which she completed in 2013. She is presently the Teacher Librarian at the Carron Hall High School in St Mary, Jamaica. Her research interests are library anxiety, school libraries, information literacy, digital divide and public library.



# At home in the world: International library staff exchange program highlights

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## Abstract

Since 2011, the academic libraries at Linnaeus University, Sweden and University of Colorado Denver, USA have collaboratively created a programmatic approach for staff exchanges and associated projects. This initiative occurred within the larger framework of university internationalization goals and cultural competency requirements. In addition, both libraries were experiencing significant workplace changes, including newly designed facilities, programs, and services, which required that staff members learn to see their organizations and understand their roles in new ways. As the exchange program evolved, formal comparison studies complemented informal exchange observations about similarities and differences between the two library organizations. Resulting insights altered traditional worldviews and professional assumptions of both host and exchange participants. In addition, cultural competencies were further exercised through collaborative projects that benefit the increasingly diverse faculty and student constituencies at both home institutions. Concluding reflections suggest considerations for organizations considering international exchanges for staff members “at home in the world.”

## Keywords

Academic libraries, internationalization, staff exchange, organizational development, organizational culture, cultural competency

## Higher education context

As evidenced by the advent of the printed book, the global migration of scholars, and the widespread sharing of research internationally, the world of higher education and knowledge development has always been networked. What is different today is that international networking has become inculcated as a fundamental factor in the fabric of the higher education enterprise. The degree of global interconnectivity . . . constitutes larger, more intentional, more complex, and more robust networks than we . . . have experienced heretofore. In short, the broadly global nature of many if not most of the relationships in which colleges and universities are engaged today changes the environment for higher education in profound ways. (American Council on Education, 2011: 6)

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Today, colleges and universities are expected “to produce graduates who are capable of communicating across borders and citizens who are invested with the capacity to navigate a . . . larger world in which they will live and work” (American Council on Education, 2011: 6). In response, institutions of higher education around the world have embraced internationalization, “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education” (Knight, 2003: 2). Examples of campus internationalization initiatives include developing core undergraduate requirements that include global, multicultural, and international aspects; placing more emphasis on foreign language curricula; or establishing campuses abroad. In addition, educators, including librarians, are expected to continuously improve their knowledge of global trends and issues, as well as expand their perspectives to include countries or areas outside their home country. In other words, it is now an expectation that we all become more “at home in the world” (Olson et al., 2007).

### **Academic libraries’ contributions**

Within higher education, internationalization initiatives prepare members of the academic community to successfully participate in an interconnected world by integrating international and intercultural dimensions into teaching, research, and service. With the aim of measuring and assessing activities in institutions of higher education in the United States, the American Council on Education (ACE) conducted a series of surveys in 2001, 2006, and 2011 on internationalization activities that further global competence and engagement among students, professors, and institutions.

Although the ACE 2012 report noted that comprehensive internationalization requires “broad support across campus” (American Council on Education, 2012: 3), and it follows that all members of the academic community are integral to campus internationalization initiatives (Green and Olson, 2003), the report interestingly did not include information about libraries in the survey scope. So in 2013, to establish baseline data on levels of international activities and roles in internationalization efforts of academic libraries, a complementary study of academic libraries in the United States was conducted by a group of librarians. Results revealed that amidst increasing internationalization activities at their home institutions, librarians are responding to new opportunities to support academic curriculum changes and associated student services resulting from campus

global education initiatives (Witt et al., 2015). These results echo similar discoveries reported in the small but important library science literature on academic libraries and internationalization (e.g. Becker, 2006a, 2006b; Bordonaro, 2013; Jackson and Sullivan, 2011; Kutner, 2009, 2010; Peters, 2010).

With campus internationalization activities including a wide range of approaches, such as “globally-focused curricular initiatives, study and research abroad programs, international branch campuses, and integrating international students into the campus environment” (Cooper et al., 2015: 49), it follows that the full participation of academic libraries in these endeavors benefits from intentional workplace preparation. Developing library staff and creating a library culture that can respond to an internationalized campus and world are important steps. In response, administrative leaders in a Swedish university library and a North American university library initiated a formal staff exchange program.

### **Library organizational readiness**

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) offers a contextual framework for situating organizational readiness within internationalization activity. Noting, in the jointly endorsed IFLA/United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Multicultural Library Manifesto, that “all people live in an increasingly heterogeneous society” prompted by “globalization, increased migration, faster communication, ease of transportation and other 21st century forces,” the manifesto cites the 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity encouraging “respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding” (IFLA/UNESCO, 2006/2009). Of special relevance, the document recommends that libraries engage in cross-cultural dialogue, enabled by cross-cultural communication and sensitivity activities, to ensure an environment that enables the community to flourish.

At the organizational level, creation of culturally hospitable and educationally enabling experiences for others requires that:

individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each. (National Association of Social Workers, 2001: 11)

This in turn depends upon the presence of cultural competence, a set of “congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies . . . [that] enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (National Association of Social Workers, 2007: 13).

Developing collective cultural competencies sufficient for staff to feel “at home in the world” requires opportunities and venues to share information and further learning which foster “sensitivity, openness, and a spirit of inquiry to other world views and cultural orientations” (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2012). When this is accompanied by heightened awareness of the variation in situations around the globe, it can positively influence organizational dynamics, that is, the “structure, culture, strategies, change, and other processes, policies, and practices . . . [as well as] the organization’s pattern of activity, change, and growth as it responds to both internal and external forces” (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2012). In order to facilitate this sort of change and growth in libraries, the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) has established standards for cultural competence in library organizations. Essential elements include: cultural awareness of self and others; cross-cultural knowledge and skills; organizational and professional values; inclusive collections, programs, and services; participatory organizational dynamics; cross-cultural leadership and information exchange; and professional education and continuous learning (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2012).

### Staff exchange genesis

In 2011, at the recommendation of a Swedish professor, Linnaeus University Library Director Catta Torhell traveled to the American West to explore possibilities for a library staff exchange with University of Colorado Denver Library Director, Mary M. Somerville. Both library leaders had recently assumed their positions on newly consolidated academic campuses with increasing numbers of international students, staff, and faculty. The two directors also shared a common commitment to workplace democracy and staff engagement and wished to expose their colleagues to the different histories and circumstances of libraries (McCarthy and Ortiz, 2010), which vary by region and country (e.g. Hanssen, 2010). In addition, both universities were placing increasing importance on internationalization, which requires heightened cultural competency and organizational readiness.

Both directors had personally experienced the enrichment of international study abroad. They were

also aware of staff exchange opportunities through the European Commission’s Erasmus program,<sup>1</sup> typically organized as one- to two-week study tours to other European university libraries. At Linnaeus University, the Erasmus program allows librarians to visit libraries in more than 700 international partner universities throughout the world. However, from its genesis, the Linnaeus University–University of Colorado Denver staff exchange had a deeper expectation than a short study tour – to have a lasting impact on the organizations of both institutions.

### Institutional internationalization context

Like other institutions around the world, Linnaeus University and University of Colorado Denver were actively pursuing internationalization through student and faculty exchange programs, as well as through new curricular and research initiatives. Although the libraries supported these efforts, neither was formally recognized in their institution’s internationalization plans. So Torhell and Somerville committed to readying library staff members and, thereby, the academic library organizations, to be full participants in their institutions’ campus internationalization initiatives.

Linnaeus University, the youngest university in Sweden, was inaugurated in January 2010 by the merger of a smaller university and a university college. The strategic plan for the university, titled “A journey into the future,” envisions that the university becomes “an international knowledge environment promoting *curiosity, creativity, companionship and utility*” (Linnaeus University, 2014: 9). The University’s internationalization strategy distributes responsibility throughout the campus:

... internationalisation initiatives will be organized in accordance with the proximity principle which means that responsibility rests at the lowest effective level in the organization. This process can involve difference levels ... but the guiding principle is increased decentralisation of responsibility and implementation. (Linnaeus University, 2012)

Since it provides core academic resources and services, the Linnaeus University Library therefore had to pro-actively prepare to make high impact contributions. This intention also aligns well with the internationalization principles of IFLA, which the library also endorses.

The University of Colorado Denver was also a new institution, following a consolidation of its downtown and medical campuses in 2004. The Library exchange

program similarly had roots in University internationalization strategies for “formation of a new university”:

*Grow strong, mutually beneficial partnerships that engage our local, national, and global communities:* This priority recognizes that the university must expand its partnerships and must increase its engagement with the world beyond its campuses. For the University of Colorado Denver, *engagement* is a *promise* we make to enter into constructive and enriching relationships for the common good, based on shared values of mutual respect, compassion, and *commitment* to the betterment of our community. It includes *communication*, keeping each other current and informed; *coordination*, where we come together to exchange ideas and strategize to find areas of shared interest; and *collaboration*, where we intentionally partner to achieve together goals that benefit all parties but most importantly the greater community. (University of Colorado Denver, 2008: 31)

Within these complementary frameworks, the libraries’ staff exchange program commenced in 2011. A formal inter-institutional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the library directors and their chief academic officers guided exchange activities. The MOU codified the directors’ agreement to exchange two professional staff members annually from each organization for five years. In addition, the document clarified host library responsibilities for arranging suitable schedules that both advanced visiting professionals’ interests and also benefitted their home organization. To ensure continuing relationships, the agreement also encouraged joint projects, including research studies that might culminate in conference presentations and journal articles. In these various ways, the document recognized both institutions’ needs to develop cross-cultural experiences among staff members and thereby advance organizational readiness to contribute to campus internationalization plans.

The underlying premise about collective enrichment, through hosting and exchanging activities, reflected both directors’ conviction that organizational learning can be amplified through international experiences and engagements. More specifically, “increased exchange between people from different cultures” (IFLA, 2009: 27) encourages proficiency in cultural interactions and communications (Smith, 2008: 143). Over time and with practice, this produces a broad worldview – “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990: 17) – and acceptance of pluralism because, it follows, as vantage points change, so too can viewpoints. Having established shared aspirations, the libraries then began a five-year staff

exchange program to build internationalization capability and cultural competencies.

### International exchange logistics

With the signing of the MOU, annual exchange of two staff members from each institution commenced. Both directors continued to remain actively involved in exchange planning and program evaluation to ensure that the 20 Swedish and American professionals’ visits produced individual, department, and organizational level benefits. In planning for a future visit, usually a participant would share information about their work, interests, and anticipated goals with their hosts who would then determine a schedule of meetings and activities to help meet these goals. While exchange activities typically emerged out of participants’ current duties, the schedules developed by the host library often also included participants’ aspirational responsibilities, sometimes supplemented by international conference attendance. For instance, the Swedish library director suggested that Niraj Chaudhary, Head of Library Technology at the University of Colorado Denver, attend the Emerging Technologies in Academic Libraries (EMTACL15) conference in Norway. She also arranged for him to visit Chalmers University in Gothenburg, Sweden, where that library director arranged meetings about their unique approach to project-based research and development activities. Both experiences supplemented Niraj’s visits at Linnaeus University with the Head of Learning Environment and with e-learning specialists. These professional development experiences anticipated the creation of new initiatives within his Library IT department, including a Digital Resources Center to support faculty teaching and student learning.

Selection processes for exchange participation in the two libraries varied. In one library, the director invited volunteers and, with her deputy directors, established exchange schedules based on individuals’ personal availability and their workplace responsibilities. For instance, public services librarians typically traveled abroad during times in the semester when there were fewer demands for library research instruction. In the other library, the director designated participants, with concurrence from her associate directors, to ensure equal numbers of participants from the library’s three units (technical, public, and technology services), as well as gender, age, and ethnic variation. In both cases, the outcomes were similar: a diversity of willing professionals actively engaged in exchange residencies (from 4 to 10 days in length) which introduced them to culturally

different workplaces with associated organizational practices. This disrupted assumptions about “how it’s done” in libraries – especially for those who had no previous professional international experiences. It also deepened appreciation for the heterogeneity of international librarianship, as different national circumstances and cultural values produce varied academic library responses.

At the operational level, after initial exchanges were completed, the directors delegated the construction of detailed exchange schedules to the last exchange participant. Sharing this responsibility also prepared the host library professional to assume coordination duties during the exchange visit, including both work-related and evening social activities. To simplify scheduling logistics and ensure low cost, each host library was responsible for the local expenses of the visiting exchange participant (Cooper et al., 2013). Initial exchanges focused on getting to know one another through customizing visit schedules to the expressed interests of exchange participants. Since staff members in a variety of positions were able to participate, a wide range of topics were explored, including public service delivery models, organizational decision-making processes, and technical services e-book workflows.

Reciprocal exchanges were especially enlivened during this period by an unexpected coincidence: both libraries were engaged in design and construction of repurposed spaces. Since “form follows function,” changes in the physical facility required associated changes in service philosophy. Therefore, early exchange visits intentionally compared research consultation and service desk philosophy and staffing models as well as instruction approaches, including increasing expectations for active learning experiences among student populations in both countries. In addition, Colorado exchange librarians were so impressed with the service desk design at another Swedish library, the University of Borås, that they replicated it – including the light wood finish characteristic of Scandinavian furniture – in their renovation plans.

During the next two years, more intensive comparisons of the workplace cultures elevated casual observations into practical results that informed intercultural adjustment and cultural learning (Savicki et al., 2008) within and across organizations. For instance, early exchange participants from the United States noted differences in the food culture of their host culture and their home culture. One food custom that stood out to the US participants was the Swedish institution of *fika* (a coffee break, oftentimes

accompanied by pastries or sandwiches) which soon became integrated into the Denver library’s vocabulary and practices. As common knowledge expanded, other differences were explored, including assumptions regarding environmental concerns, architectural premises, and civic engagement, both in library design and larger society.

Concurrently, as both libraries intensified their design and construction activities – in the United States, remodeling a 40-year old building and, in Sweden, building a new multipurpose facility – shared interests led to exploring culturally based assumptions about the availability and use of public spaces. This naturally led to comparison of professional role expectations and academic service aspirations. While there is significant value in seeing meeting participants, it was not practical to send more than two people from each library abroad annually. So Skype meetings began to supplement email messages, both in preparation for and as follow up to physical exchanges. As exchange practices expanded to include virtual communications, in addition to physical residencies, increasing numbers of participants on both sides of the Atlantic were able to regularly practice cross-cultural communication intentionally exercised through collaborative projects of mutual interest and of benefit to both library organizations and their faculty and student constituencies.

### Organizational culture comparisons

Midway through the exchange, participants on both sides of the Atlantic recognized the need to better understand the two libraries’ organizational cultures. Prompted by this shared awareness, a research study was initiated, mindful that:

library organizations (manifested as people) must be self-aware and educated with an understanding of the underlying cultures that shape them. They must learn why things are as they are, the way things are done, the unspoken (or misspoken) expectations, and the other informal systems that influence the people in the library. (Stephens and Russell, 2004: 248)

It follows that “the assessment of an organization’s culture can uncover . . . unwritten (and often unspoken) understandings held by individuals about expectations, privilege, power, obligations, rewards, and the like” (Stephens and Russell, 2004: 248). As Betances and Souder (2006 cited by Smith, 2008: 143) write, such “study of hidden rules” for values and norms about “the normal way of doing business in the past may reveal patterns that will not suffice for creating

the organizational culture useful in responding to the challenge of change.”

In the recognition that cultural values about what is right, good, and desirable have implications for work (Hofstede, 1983), an organizational culture study engaged two dozen staff members at Linnaeus University and the University of Colorado Denver, who explored such issues as individualism-communalism, independence-interdependence, autonomy-relatedness, separateness-interdependence, mastery-harmony, and hierarchy-egalitarianism (Schwartz, 1999). In the comparative analysis stage, study participants compared social norms about work, including work centrality. In follow-up conversations, participants explored implications for cultural communication styles and intercultural adjustment processes, including negotiating differing assumptions about the pace of events and the value placed on non-work-related activities.

“Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of culture is that it points us to phenomena that are below the surface, that are powerful in their impact but invisible and to a considerable degree unconscious” (Schein, 2004: 8). In making the tacit elements of experience explicit, and thereby discussable, the study’s results disrupted customary assumptions and deepened communication experiences. Participants gained new insights into their home library as well as comparative appreciation for their library partner. This additional cultural context appreciably heightened the learning experiences reported by subsequent exchange participants who returned from exchange experiences with enriched understanding of how to adapt partner innovations on their home campus.

As one exchange participant wrote,

With the force of our collective dreams, explorations, research, vision, outreach, and collaborations, the Library is evolving into both an intellectual and physical “destination,” . . . the future of workplace learning and organizational transformation, amidst rich diversity of local and global thoughts and ideas. (Cynthia Hashert, 2012, personal communication)

This quote reflects the shared commitment within both libraries to enhance collective organizational learning capabilities, which is “more of a need than a choice at the present time” (Khalib et al., 2015: 169). In that spirit, fortified by knowing one another better, virtual groups at both institutions next embarked on three projects to apply and extend enhanced understanding of cross-cultural values and practices, applied to analyzing, acting, and adapting, through an enlarged worldview, within respective home environments.

## Comparative ‘onboarding’ practices

In the first project, Swedish and American participants in the organizational culture study deepened their understanding of comparative values and practices through examination of respective onboarding practices. Onboarding, also known as organizational socialization, refers to the ways through which new employees acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviors to become effective organizational members through developing role clarity and organizational context. Research has demonstrated that these socialization techniques lead to positive outcomes for new employees such as higher job satisfaction, better job performance, greater organizational commitment, and reduced occupational stress (Bauer and Erdogan, 2011). The topic emerged as highly relevant in both organizations, given the number of new hires permitted by recent retirements. In both libraries, these hiring opportunities required re-evaluating organizational priorities and re-inventing former positions. In many cases, this led to hiring candidates from other fields, such as technology or pedagogy, who were not conversant with professional librarianship values.

Consequently, a study was initiated to reveal the wide variety of structured onboarding activities used in the two libraries, including supervisor checklists, formal meetings, orientation lectures, recorded videos, printed materials, and computer-based orientations to introduce newcomers to their new jobs and organizations. It also revealed more informal orientation tactics such as mentoring programs and informal discussions aimed to communicate tacit knowledge to newcomers. By exploring and comparing their respective practices, both libraries improved their workplace socialization processes. In addition, by developing more robust enculturation, the library organizations’ shared aspirations to enhance, facilitate, and encourage workplace learning were also furthered.

## Beneficial campus collaborations

Upon this foundation of mutual understanding, two additional projects were initiated, one related to learning management systems (LMS) and another related to researcher support services (RSS). These projects were selected because they were relevant to both faculty and students on both campuses. They also reflected the widespread recognition that students must be prepared for productive international engagement and leadership to navigate the complexities of the contemporary world (Witt et al., 2015) and that “no matter what shape the internationalization process takes at a given institution, student learning must

remain a central goal” (American Council on Education, 2012: 25).

In that spirit, participants from both libraries investigated issues and opportunities for integration of the libraries’ expertise, resources, and services into the campus LMSs. Although the institutions use different systems, the libraries found value in comparing LMS integration strategies. As one group member noted:

If we do indeed share similar challenges and opportunities, it would be very helpful to both campuses as we can benefit from each other’s solutions or perhaps even co-create solutions. (Niraj Chaudhary, 2015, personal communication)

A second group chose to respond to the pressing need among academic libraries to better support researcher workflow, both in person and online. Noting that academic libraries offer both traditional and innovative services to support researchers’ needs and with the aim of discovering common ground and exploring comparative approaches, this group initially cast a wide net, which was then refined during exchange residencies. Two RSS initiatives emerged as strong shared interests: digital repositories and scholarly communications.

In both projects, the groups began by using these questions on trends and strategies to guide their discussions:

- What are the international/universal library issues?
- How has each library managed/addressed these issues?
- What strategies, processes, and procedures were implemented?
- What are the differences and similarities in libraries’ approaches?
- Looking to the future: what responses (from above) are inspiring?

These thought questions also guided face-to-face interactions during physical residencies abroad, when exchange staff members met virtual group participants in their home country.

With the constitution of projects focusing on the organization (onboarding), students (learning management systems), and faculty (researcher support services), exchange impact extended well beyond the two persons per organization each year designated in the MOU. Continuing use of virtual communications, to supplement physical interactions, holds significant promise for sustained exchange of ideas and collaborations.

## Concluding reflections

Throughout the five-year exchange program, the two directors regularly assessed international staff exchange outcomes through email and Skype communications, supplemented by discussions in person at international conferences in the United States and in Europe, where they were both present. This high-level coordination ensured progressive organization development at both academic libraries. Of particular value, since both libraries were engaged in library facility designs that anticipated new service models, they regularly discussed new staff competencies needed in the re-invented library organizations. These informal assessments guided host libraries’ scheduling of exchange participant activities that anticipated new service opportunities.

Midway through the exchange, the Swedish director conducted an on-site assessment in the United States, which established criteria for the final program assessment conducted in Sweden by the North American director at the conclusion of the program.

Results confirm that the international library staff exchange has enhanced creativity, generated ideas, furthered innovation, and fostered relationships that enrich staff members’ ways of experiencing the world more deeply and broadly. Cultural competence and internationalization confidence has thereby been enhanced among exchange participants, who now readily express increased appreciation for variation in workplace assumptions and professional practices. Insights evolved organically through investments of time and energy that advanced participation and engagement, thereby broadening perspectives. Relationships continue to grow: it is now a regular part of daily work life communications to hear, “well, in Denver . . .” or “in Växjö, they . . .”

Heightened organizational readiness now positions both libraries to contribute to their campus internationalization initiatives through increasingly expanding circles of influence in the classroom, on the campus, and in the world. Since both institutions are comprehensive teaching universities, this has typically taken the form of working collaborations among the libraries, disciplinary academic faculty, and student services providers on campus. While approaches vary, customized to university level internationalization goals, questions such as these guide new international program and service opportunities that invite diverse viewpoints and exercise cultural competencies (adapted from Hughes et al., 2011):

- Imagine together a “partnership in pedagogy” that improves our ability to teach international

students and take advantage of the wealth and richness of a complex international, multicultural classroom. What will we be doing together that we do not do now? What will success look like?

- Describe the campus future that we would like to create for our culturally diverse international populations. What opportunities are available for them and how do they feel and experience belonging, inclusion, and opportunity on our campus? What partnerships and collaborations support this ideal future? Who are the stakeholders?
- If we had one or two highly successful demonstration projects, what would we be doing and with whom would we be collaborating? How would the campus discourse change as a result of those collaborations? What means would be used to inform the campus of these activities and successes?
- If this dialogue continues, what next steps would be taken to implement and sustain improvements?

This generative approach to creating learning partnerships with campus stakeholders is also transferable to other academic libraries clarifying exchange aspirations with prospective international partners. Then, as suggested by Linnaeus University and University of Colorado Denver libraries' experiences, a common desire to discover and explore, fostered through in person and online communications, can produce shared commitments and clarify mutual priorities. On the way to furthering staff experience of being "at home in the world," invaluable insights about self and others prepare individuals and their organizations for enhanced academic library engagement in and impact on campus internationalization.

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## Note

1. European Commission's Erasmus program: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/staff\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/opportunities/higher-education/staff_en.htm).

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# Future of public libraries: Opinions of public librarians in Turkey

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to analyze public librarians' perspectives on the future of public libraries in Turkey. The research is arranged under six headings as follows: the state of overall change in public libraries; services; lifelong learning and information literacy; technology; administration and collection; building, librarian, user and other elements including finance. Every aspect of the study which entails literature review, findings, discussion and conclusion were examined within the scope of these six subjects. A descriptive method of research was used; the data was collected through an online survey technique that consisted of 62 questions in the form of a three-point Likert scale. Survey questions were also constructed within the frame of the six research headings, and the questions in each group were presented in a mixed order. The questionnaire was sent to 481 librarians working in public libraries in Turkey in 2014. Of these 201 librarians responded, and 185 survey answers out of these responses were found to be valid. The response rate was 38.5%. The results show that public librarians in Turkey are optimistic about the survival and development of public libraries in the future. According to them, public libraries will undergo significant changes in the sense of structural makeup, services, technology and administration by preserving their fundamental composition and functions.

## Keywords

Public library, future of the public library, technology and the public library, management and the public library, public library services, Turkey

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## Introduction

Public libraries have to evaluate their social roles, missions, responsibilities and priorities about their future in order to continue their existence and set new positions. While Smith (2014) mentions that libraries are “absolutely essential”, Norman (2014: 232) states that the loss of social value for libraries will mean “silencing the voices of the past and damaging the future”. Cassidy (2014), assuming that there is a negative course of cases in terms of public libraries, states “let's wake up and start valuing learning, imagination, culture and community, before all of those things are lost forever”. The most important problem that librarianship faces currently is how this profession will adapt to the changing information environment

in the trend report prepared by IFLA (2014). The move toward digital resources is significant. Newly formed digital content in 2011 was several million more than the content of all books that have been written up to this time (Bartlett and Miller, 2011). Plus, OECD numbers show that Internet traffic increased 13,000% in the last 10 years and digital content created between 2008 and 2011 is more than all the written history recorded up to present (World Economic

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Forum, 2012: 59). To be able to comprehend this fast and qualitative change within the global information environment will help to make predictions as well as to form a perspective about trends or the social stance that will determine the future of libraries in general and public libraries in specific. The change in the global information environment will influence future roles and services of public libraries. It is especially the responsibility of public librarians to realize social and cultural changes in the matter of public libraries. Opinions of public librarians as well as related scientists on the future of public libraries will contribute to the development of national policies **concerning public libraries**. Moreover, this study is important in reflecting a developing, secular (even though it has gone through critical erosions) Islamic society's perspective on public libraries.

## Background

There have been attempts to discuss and estimate the rate and direction of social, economic, cultural and technological changes that directly concern libraries. In the IFLA Trend Report (2014) some key trends that will change the global information environment of public libraries were presented. Two of these trends are worth mentioning. They entail possibilities as "new technologies will both extend and limit opportunities to access information" and "online education can both democratize and disrupt global learning". Discussion abounds on whether or not public libraries will be able to survive in the future. Wooden (2006) states that the public believes public libraries are necessary and precious not only now but also in the future. Public libraries have to and will adapt to the changing and complicated nature of the information world, just like lots of other live organisms (Dysart, 2011a). The issue of whether "the future" will constitute a threat or create new opportunities is a controversial subject. The fact that the level of use of public libraries has decreased in general all around the world is accepted as a concrete indication of this threat. Research conducted both in the USA and the UK shows that public libraries have negatively changed statistically and there is a decrease in use of these libraries (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, 2014; Sullivan, 2003). The same situation can be valid for Turkey (KYGM, 2014). The reasons for this threat are believed to be the Internet, new information and communication technologies, electronic book sellers, financial problems, new, quick and easy ways of access to information and replacing books with electronic sources in libraries (Sullivan, 2003).

On the other hand, it is estimated that both the digital divide, which will deepen in the future, and lifelong learning, which will be one of the mandatory conditions, will create opportunities for public libraries based on their principle of "equality in access to information". It can be said that these opportunities will empower democracy in countries. In particular, it can be predicted that public libraries will play a role in filling the increasing gaps of democracy in neo-liberal societies and that this will occur through the effort to create an educated society. Therefore, the functions of public libraries in enhancing democracy will increase. Also, Watson (2011) argues that as books and libraries are not the same things, it would be wrong to assess them without differentiating. Gibbons (2014) believes that the basic problem of the future of public libraries is lack of obligatory strategic leadership rather than meeting the societal and technological requirements. Most Americans think that public libraries will continue to play a vital part in the future due to their function of "offering free information" and public libraries will participate in society to increase equality, opportunity and the development of society rather than being nostalgic institutions in this information age (Wooden, 2006). It can be said that public libraries will be secure in their existence as long as inequality in society and its outcome "ostracization" continue. Public libraries can play a role in resolving conflict in society, and as long as social problems continue, public libraries will survive through this function (Wooden, 2006). Watson (2011) believes that public libraries will be "ideas hubs" where librarians take part in helping people develop ideas rather than being a place which provides information and content. Public libraries will make a significant contribution to the local economy through this very function. In this context, Rydell (2011) thinks that public libraries will act like "knowledge brokers" in the next two decades.

It can generally be said that there are two hypotheses regarding the future of public libraries, i.e. whether they endure or vanish in the future. However, Sullivan's (2003) approach seems to expand our vision on this subject and is more realistic. According to him, it will not be a simple question of either gain or loss; public libraries will both win and lose. So public libraries which have strong societal relations, produce projects with other cultural institutions, publishers and politics, and use information and communication technology will win; public libraries that have a narrow point of view and are not inclined to cooperate with other organizations will lose. In this regard, it can be said that all public libraries in the world or in a country will not develop on the same

level. Hence it is not an issue of existence and disappearance. Rather, it will be a societal selection process resulting in the survival of those that are attuned to change.

Hernon and Matthews (2013: 157) mentions four scenarios related to the future of public libraries. Public libraries will either keep their status quo and remain as traditional libraries or they will become “community living rooms”. They will either turn into electronic libraries or exist as happening places. In the same study it is stated that these scenarios will come true depending upon changes in society, economy, culture and technology (pp. 6–8).

Norman (2012) states that fundamental points about the future of the public libraries will be providing opportunities with proactive society and partner institutions; communication with society; lifelong learning and culture-oriented programs; strategic planning for library services; and collection and developing for society. In addition, technology, digital divide, center for social communication and unpaid service-information concepts can be counted among the fundamental points about the future of the public libraries. Oldenburg (1991) mentions the idea of the “third place” referring to public libraries. He uses this as a notion that provides a natural platform for community members of a library to gather, interact, create or realize themselves. The “first place” is home, “second place” is the workplace/school, and “third place” is libraries where people share the same interests. The possible change in the future of public libraries will reflect on some points; services, technology, administration, collection, building, user and budget can be considered among them.

### Services

It is believed that public libraries should absolutely renew their services to survive, as they cannot continue their current services in the future. Some core services (i.e. circulation, reference, etc.) will survive but will undergo thorough change. However, the principle of free service – indiscriminately for everyone – will remain unchanged. In this context, developing better programs for young people, becoming a popular place for illiterate adults or adults with poor literacy, offering ready, quick and acquirable information, documents and forms for government service, providing easy access to formal procedures and offering better access opportunities via computers for everyone will be primary services (Wooden, 2006). Reliable services are mandatory for the existence of public libraries. Moreover, public libraries may have new roles like making increasingly complex

information easier for users. Public libraries will need to support distance education which will spread gradually, especially with electronic sources. Public libraries will increasingly become a part of information literacy programs. They will tend towards disadvantaged groups especially the adult, the old, the poor, the poorly educated, women, the housebound, prisoners and digital immigrants. Roles of reference librarians will be vital because of the complexity of access to information (Sullivan, 2003). Nonetheless, Schepke (2011) states that reference desks have died and the information desk in public libraries will not exist in the future. He argues that there will be a mobile reference service instead and this service will be offered through social media. Public library services for children will become more prominent in the future. Public libraries will need to cooperate more with educational and cultural institutions like museums and archives. Also, they will have to use new methods of public relations in order to announce their services.

### Technology

Reeder (2011) explained public libraries’ relationship with technology in the future with this statement “they’re a place that you can go to get computer access, or access to technology that you can’t get anywhere else, and access to people”. It is a generally accepted fact that the main trend in determining the future of public libraries will be technological changes. Torrone (2011) asks if “it is time to rebuild and retool public libraries and make TechShops” in preparation for the future. Because he thinks public librarians will have a role in meeting the requirements of users in the creation of a techno-creative society, Schenker (2011) confirms that public libraries will be free centers for individuals, families and even small companies to access expensive technology.

It is generally accepted that public libraries will be necessary for an effective and equal access to the digital world by guaranteeing computer access for everyone (Norman, 2012; Wooden, 2006). New technology-based roles of public libraries will be providing content, access management and information literacy instruction. Also it can be assumed these new technology-based roles will interest lower socio-economic groups in society (Wooden, 2006). The public is expected to make use of the technological facilities of the public library in order to access public sector data. However, technology and the Internet can be perceived as a threat for today’s and tomorrow’s public libraries. The main source of this threat is the fact that people reach information faster and easier via

the Internet. On the other hand, this threat also means an opportunity. The need for society to obtain the skills for accessing information and making use of technology will direct them to use public libraries. Furthermore, the question of whether information on the Internet is really reliable or not and the fact that the Internet is not an authority but overwhelmingly commercial are some other sources of concern for public libraries. In other words, it will not be easy to find information for well-conducted research in the future, which will create opportunities for public libraries in the end (Sullivan, 2003). Nevertheless, as information culture (the level and quality of information use) between countries that produce and consume technology is different, the position of public libraries will also be different in different countries. They will be more important and necessary for countries producing technology.

It is obvious that local cultures are under threat of disappearing due to rapidly growing globalization. Examples of this can easily be observed today. The function of public libraries of protecting local cultures, especially by digitizing, will attain great importance against the unifying effect of globalization.

Lastly, public libraries just like other kind of libraries will have a security problem in automation systems.

### *Administration*

Public library administrations will also be affected by the change. McEntyre (2011) discusses the McDonaldization model which means standardization and centralization of service for all public libraries in a country when he mentions that public libraries will need to develop new operating models in the future. It is still a possibility for this model to introduce a central public library administration system at a national level even though it may destroy the local character of public libraries. It could be said that this operating model is not appropriate for public libraries despite its advantages. The fact that users can operate public libraries for themselves is another foreseeable option for the future. Boaden and Clement (2009) propose flexible integration of cultural spaces such as library-theatre, library-museum, library-gallery and library-archive based on the concept of "together".

### *Collection, building, librarian, user and finance*

Future trends of collection can be as follows: electronic sources will replace printed books and other materials in public library collections, opinions and demands of users will be further taken into consideration in the selection of materials for the library, use

of materials will be more "outside" of the library (at home, at work, etc.) and the importance of currency of materials will continue. However, these changes or the fact that other materials will replace books is not a determinant of the future of public libraries, because public libraries have never been about "the book". They have existed and will exist to share information. There are currently several different materials apart from books and the number will increase in the future. In short, public library collections will be a combination of digital and other kinds of materials. Furthermore, as public libraries' function of being a local memory becomes more prominent, they will have to preserve printed sources about local history and culture by digitizing. Digitizing will be a significant mission for librarians to preserve sources and make people use them (Dysart, 2011b).

Public library buildings are likely to be formed as places that take disabled people into consideration; function as a culture center; create a desire to work, think and learn; help technology and space integrate with a green library approach; are fun, comfortable and "proper for laziness" based on the principle of flexible architectural design. Such "user-oriented" places will create a "different" atmosphere with an "attractive" aesthetic rather than being functional management-oriented centers in the form of social communication and meeting centers for face-to-face communication in future (Yılmaz, 2013). Rydell (2011) argues that public libraries that function as physical meeting places will be less important because the fact that their mission is to provide electronic information will be more prominent. In spite of that, Aabø et al. (2010) mention in a study conducted in Norway that the function of public libraries as gathering places for individuals will continue to expand. It can be said that libraries' function of providing spaces for social communication, cultural activities and leisure time will increase. Public librarians will need to be further highly educated due to the complexity of the information retrieval process (Sullivan, 2014). New future roles of public librarians will cause them to improve their qualifications. The fact that it will be hard to find librarians to employ in some countries due to low salaries is among the predictions about the future of public libraries (Sullivan, 2014). Public librarians will also need to have capacity and sufficiency to form and run lifelong learning and information literacy programs. In this context, their instructional roles will increase.

It is also expected that the use and user profile of public libraries will change. McMenemy (2009) states that public library users will be perceived by

librarians not as clients but as citizens. While it is foreseen that the use of public libraries will get easier (Dysart, 2011b), users will also need to be better educated in the complicated information world. Virtual/electronic use will replace physical use of public libraries. On the other hand, public library buildings will function as social communication institutions where face-to-face and interpersonal relationships will occur in an increasingly virtualized world. In other words, the cultural purposes of public library use will become prominent. Their new roles and functions with regard to users will affect space design in the future.

Sullivan (2003) discusses public library branches that were closed down due to budget insufficiency in the USA. As public libraries are not revenue-generating institutions and are counted as income households, they will be among the first institutions to find their budget in financial difficulties. In fact, 71% of US citizens think that public library expenses do not go to waste, are to the point and may result in additional tax if necessary. But such thinking does not change the fact that financial problems will be among the major factors to determine the future of public libraries (Dysart, 2011b). Norman (2014) states that public libraries will not be given big budgets and so they will have to change the way they work. In this sense, the UK Local Government Group (2011) suggests public libraries consociate with private sector and other councils, integrate with shopping malls and village halls, and help health and police services.

### Public libraries in Turkey

It can be said that the foundation of modern public libraries in Turkey was laid during the Republic period/era (after 1923). The libraries functioned especially as a part of literacy programs and as mediators of the cultural policies of the newly founded republic. Public libraries were involved with the ministries of education and culture. There is a predominantly central public administration system in Turkey. Accordingly, the public library system is the central structure. Public libraries serve as a part of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, General Directorate of Libraries and Publications (KYGM, 2014). They work under governorships via directorates of culture in cities and district governorships in districts. Some municipalities also have libraries. There were 1118 public libraries including children's libraries by the end of 2013 in Turkey, a country whose population is about 82 million and which has 81 provinces. The total number of materials is 16 million, the number of annual visitors is almost 20 million and the number

of enrollees is 1 million in these libraries. Almost 7.5 million materials were borrowed and 3000 cultural activities were organized in 2013. There are 32 mobile libraries in total (KYGM, 2014). Public libraries consist of the central library, branch libraries, children's libraries, mobile libraries and temporary collections. The budget of public libraries is provided completely by the central government and all policies, services and practices are planned, conducted and inspected by the central organization (KYGM, 2014). Public libraries put into practice the central government's decisions; their local power is rather limited. They can only choose a very small amount of library materials (8.6%) (KYGM, 2014). Public libraries in Turkey have been facing a great personnel issue and this situation is getting worse. Staff in senior managements (general manager, vice general manager, etc.) are generally appointed politically and most of them are not librarians. As the school library system is very poor in Turkey, public libraries function more as school libraries. The majority of public library users consist of students, children, and adolescents. The subject of transferring public libraries to municipalities has been seriously considered and discussed lately. Indeed, a draft law on this issue has come up to the national parliament but has yet to be enacted.

### Research questions

This study aims to analyze perspectives of public librarians currently working in Turkey regarding the future of public libraries. The study is based on six research questions.

According to public librarians in Turkey:

1. What will the general trends of change of public libraries be in the future?
2. What kind of change will public library services undergo in the future?
3. What will public library functions be in terms of lifelong learning and information literacy?
4. What will public library-technology relations be like in the future?
5. What will public library administration systems be like in the future?
6. What kind of changes will public library collection, building, personnel, user and budget undergo in the future?

These research questions were structured, and systemized on the basis of a literature review, interviews with Turkish public librarians and all the observations and studies that we have conducted to date.

## Methodology

### Research methods

The descriptive method of research was used in the study. The data was collected through survey. The online survey was constructed and applied in Google Docs. There are 62 multiple-choice questions in the survey. A 3-point Likert scale multiple-choice was used for 59 of the questions. It was important whether participants of the survey agreed or not, instead of how much they agreed with the ideas/statements that were provided. That is why such expressions as “I agree”, “I do not agree”, “I have no idea” were used in the Likert scale options. The use of the expression “I have no idea” instead of “I am not sure” or “I am doubtful” was a conscious decision. While “I have no idea” reflects a certain “not knowing” situation, the other two options show that the participant has some information in mind to a certain extent. As we intended to get clear opinions in this study, we preferred using “I have no idea”. The statements in the survey tried to be neutral to positive and negative judgments. The three questions in which 3-point Likert multiple-choices were not used consisted of different numbers of options. The survey questions were created under six groups. These are;

1. General trends of change related to the future of public libraries and participants’ opinions about other elements such as:
2. Services
3. Lifelong learning and information literacy
4. Technology
5. Administration
6. Collection-building-personnel-user-budget.

Questions under these six headings were asked non-consecutively to ensure consistency.

### Participants

The number of professional librarians (graduates of departments of Information Management) working in a total of 1118 public libraries in 2014 in Turkey is 481.<sup>1</sup> The survey was sent to all these librarians in the study. Of these 201 answered the survey but only 185 responses were found to be valid. The sampling rate was 38.5%.

### Data analysis

The data obtained in the research was evaluated by frequency analysis. SPSS 21 and Microsoft Excel programs were utilized for evaluations.

## Findings

Opinions of public librarians in Turkey about the trend of change in public libraries in the future will be discussed within the scope of the six research questions in this section. It is important to stress that their opinions reflect the perspective about the future of public libraries in Turkey alone.

### Public libraries’ general trends of change

Of the public librarians participating in the survey 92.4% stated that they occasionally considered the future of public libraries. Librarians predicted that radical changes of public libraries in Turkey will happen between 1 to 20 years with a percentage of 58.4; between 21 to 30 years with a percentage of 18.4; and in 31 years and more with a percentage of 18.9. The percentage of librarians who had no foresight about this subject was 4.3%. The data about opinions of public librarians in Turkey about public libraries’ general trend of change in the future is presented in Figure 1.

According to the findings in Figure 1, a majority of public librarians (91.9%) think that the public library institution will continue its existence and even 69.2% of them believe public libraries will become more necessary in the future. However, the fact that more than one-fifth of the librarians (21.1%) assume that public libraries will not be necessary cannot also be underestimated. A large number of research participants (85.4%) state that society will be affected in the case of future destruction of public libraries. A similar proportion of public librarians (84.3%) do not believe that public libraries will be perceived as “outdated” places. More than half of the librarians (57.3%) believe that the basic roles of public libraries will not change. However, more than one-third of the respondents (38.9%) foresaw that aforementioned roles would change.

Librarians were also asked about the possible trends of change of public libraries in the context of the information society. The majority of them (81.1%) believe that public libraries will be an indispensable part of the information society and their roles in the decreasing digital divide will strengthen (81.6%). The rate of those who think that public libraries’ role in developing democracy will increase (70.8%) and who think that their function as socialization centers will become prominent (75.7%) is very high. But one-fifth of librarians have the opposite opinion about both subjects.

### Trends of change in public library services

It is predicted that one of the areas where the trends of change will be observed is public library services

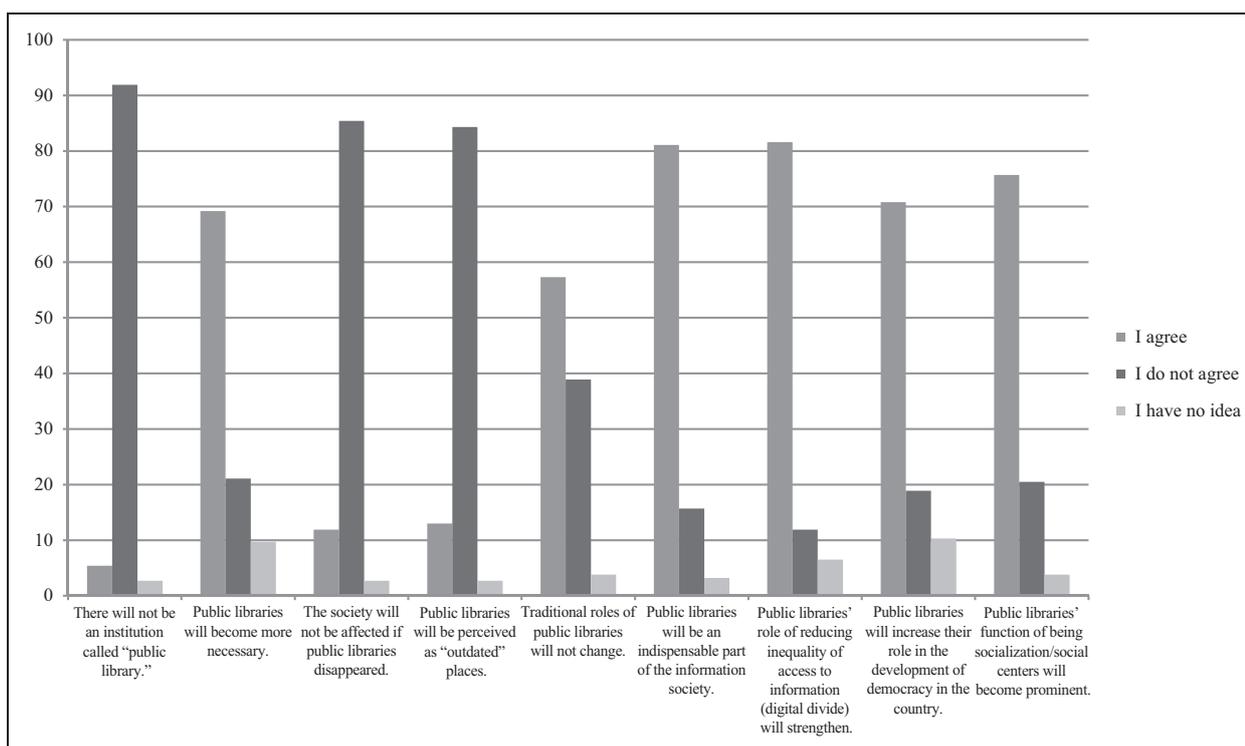


Figure 1. Public librarians' opinions about libraries' general trend of change in the future.

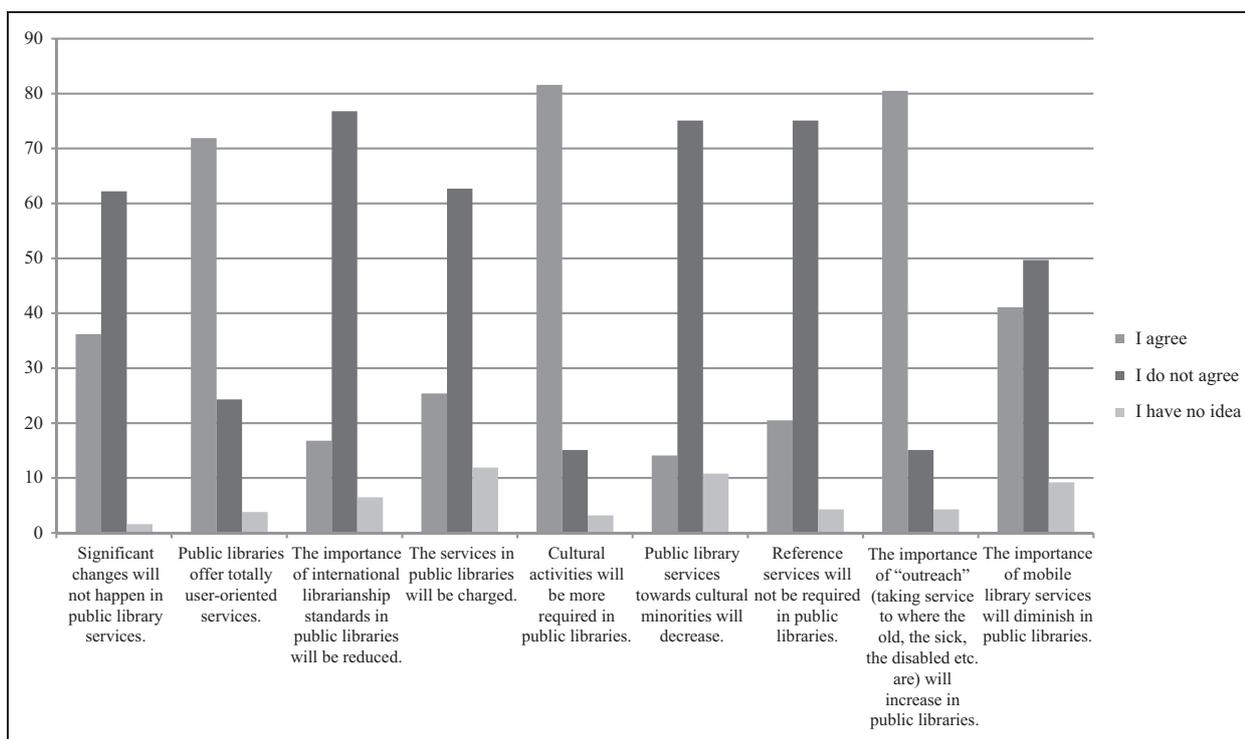
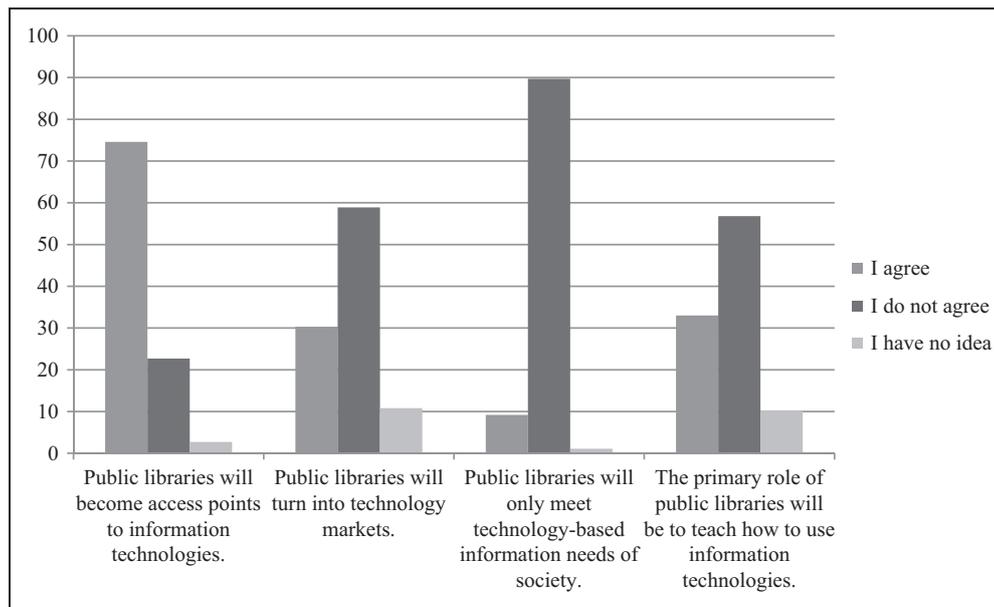


Figure 2. Public librarians' opinions about library services in the future.

which will reflect changes in other public library aspects. Opinions of research participants about changes in public library services are shown in Figure 2.

According to findings in Figure 2, while a significant proportion of librarians (62.2%) think that a major change will occur in public library services, more than one-third (36.2%) do not believe that such



**Figure 3.** Public librarians’ opinions about technology in the future.

a change will occur. However, they generally (71.9%) agree that public library services will be user oriented in the future. Librarians (76.8%) assume that there will not be change in regard to the importance of professional standards and these standards will continue to be significant. While the proportion of librarians who think that future public library services will not be free of charge is 25.4%, more than half of them (62.7%) state that they will remain free. A minority (11.9%) does not have an idea about this subject.

It is thought that cultural activities will be more necessary in public libraries (81.6%) and in this context services towards cultural minorities will increase (75.1%). A vast majority of participants (75.1%) predict that reference services will still be needed and similarly the importance of outreach will grow (80.5%). It is remarkable that although half of participants (49.7%) believe that mobile libraries will continue to be important, a significant number of librarians (41.1%) think that this kind of service will lose its importance.

**Trends of change in public library functions in lifelong learning and information literacy**

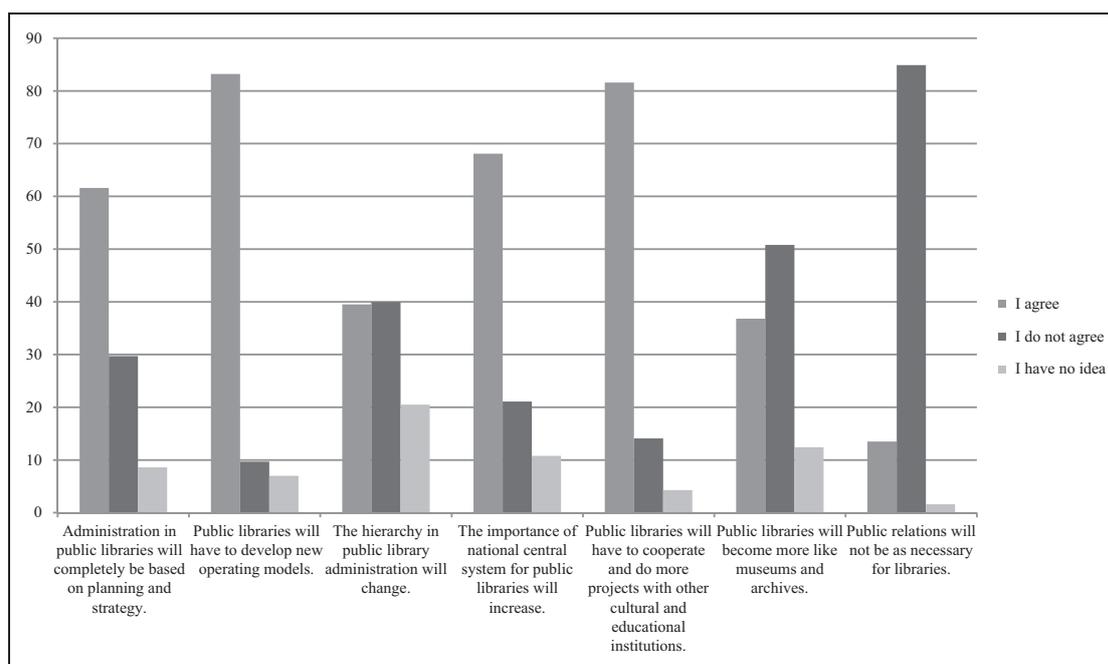
As emphasized in the literature review of the research, lifelong learning and information literacy are presumed to be the most prominent functions of public libraries in the future. According to the findings, librarians (79.5%) believe that public libraries will become a more important part of lifelong learning processes. In this context, 78.4% of the participants think that supporting and developing

information literacy will be a significant mission of public libraries.

**Trends of change in public library-technology relations**

As explained in the literature review, technology is evaluated as the main section that will determine the trends of change towards the future. It has the potential to change not only all processes and services but also all other components of public libraries. In other words, technology is the primary element that will change public libraries. Approaches of public librarians to this subject constitute a major part of this study.

According to the findings in Figure 3, three out of four librarians (74.6%) consider public libraries will be centers of access to technology in the future. According to answers to another statement that more strongly reflects public library and technology relations, while more than half of librarians (58.9%) believe that public libraries will turn into TechShops, about one-third of them (30.3%) estimate that such a change will not happen and 10.8% of them do not have an opinion. Similarly, a vast majority of librarians (89.7%) regard public libraries as institutions that will meet only technology-based requirements of society in the future. Nevertheless, librarians do not associate the primary future role of public libraries with technology. Therefore, the proportion of librarians who agree with “the primary role of public libraries will be to teach how to use information technologies” is 56.8%. On the other hand, almost half of them (43.3%) do not foresee such a change of role or do not have an opinion.



**Figure 4.** Public librarians' opinions about library management in the future.

#### *Trends of change related to administration structures of public libraries*

Administration structures of public libraries are foreseen as another important area where change will occur. Perspectives of participants regarding this subject are provided in Figure 4.

As seen in Figure 4, a significant number of public librarians (61.6%) state that public library administration structures will be completely based on planning and strategy and a majority of them (83.2%) say that public libraries will have to develop new operating models in the future. The proportion of librarians who think that the hierarchical structure in public library administration will change or not change is almost the same. And the proportion of the rest who do not have an opinion (20.5%) is also high. It was remarked by 68.1% of the librarians that nationally qualified central administration systems will become more important and necessary for public libraries. More than one-third of them (31.9%) do not believe in such a change. Another element considered in administration structure is public libraries' relationship with other cultural institutions. A vast majority of public librarians (81.6%) believe that public libraries will have to cooperate more and undertake projects with other cultural institutions. But 50.8% of them do not think that public libraries will become closer to museums and archives. However, 36.8% of librarians foresee such a relationship. Most of the librarians (84.9%) advocate that public relations as a part of administration will keep its importance for public libraries in the future.

#### *Public libraries' trends of change about collection, building, personnel, user and budget*

Other elements that will go through change are collection, building, personnel, user and budget. Librarians' predictions regarding collection are provided in Figure 5.

Two-thirds of librarians (65.4%) think that the future of public libraries does not depend on the future of the "book". However, 33% of librarians state that the future of the book is determinative in terms of public libraries. Research participants widely (89.7%) suppose that public library collections will just be composed of electronic sources but it is generally (68.6%) believed/assumed that this situation will not change the purposes of public libraries. According to 69.7% of public librarians, security of sources in future collections will become more important. Participants made predictions about trends of change in user services based on public library materials. Thus, while 69.2% feel that there will be no decrease in borrowing materials in public libraries, the proportion who think that the rate of lending will decrease is almost half (43.8%). Moreover, for a high percentage (78.4%) of respondents, it is understood that public libraries will need to play safer in terms of both forming and availing of the collection in the future.

Within the scope/context of the study, thoughts of librarians about the physical structure of libraries are shown in Figure 6.

Almost all of the librarians (93.5%) foresee that public libraries will continue their physical existence

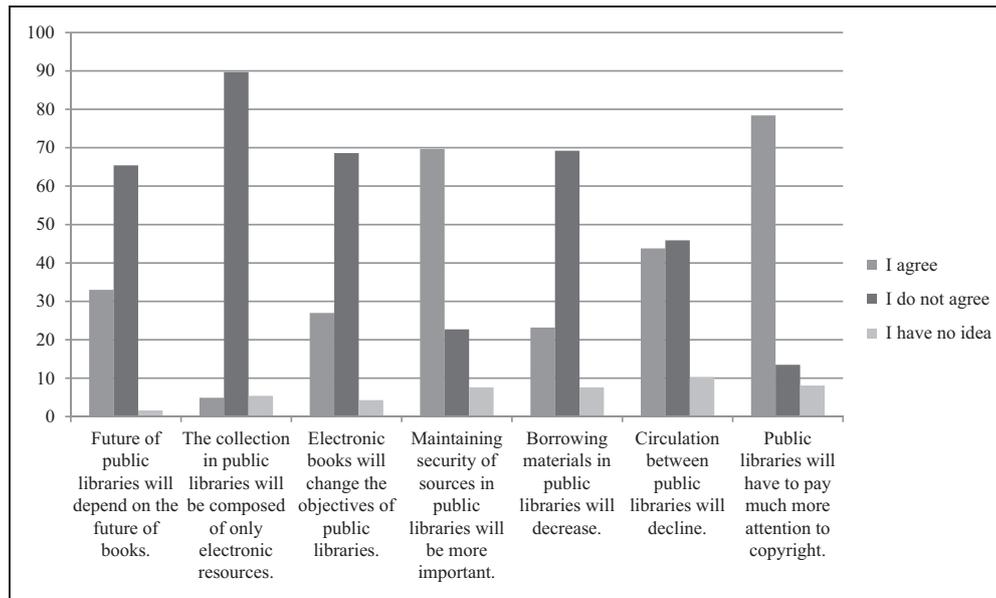


Figure 5. Public librarians’ opinions about library collection in the future.

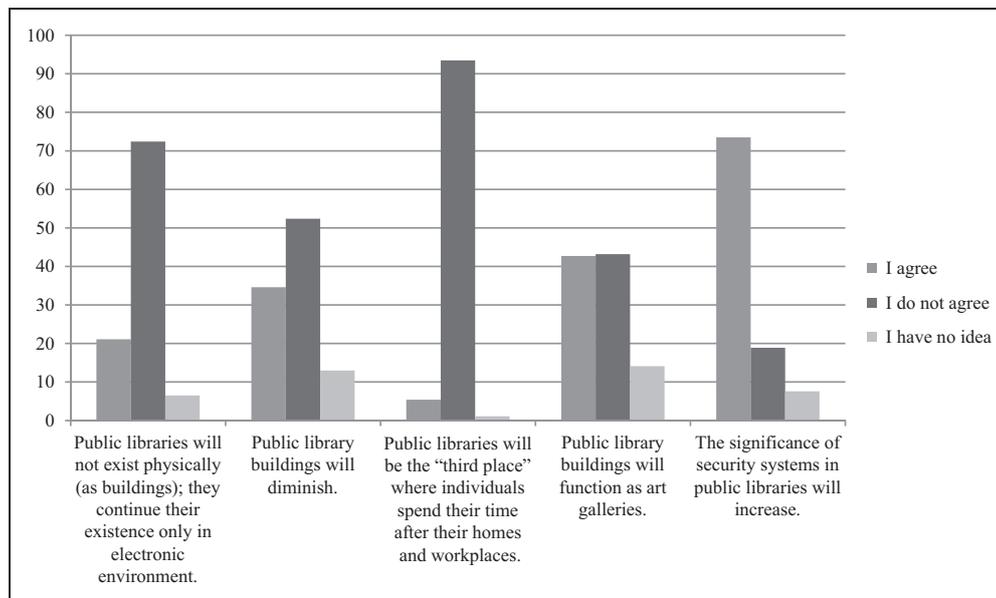
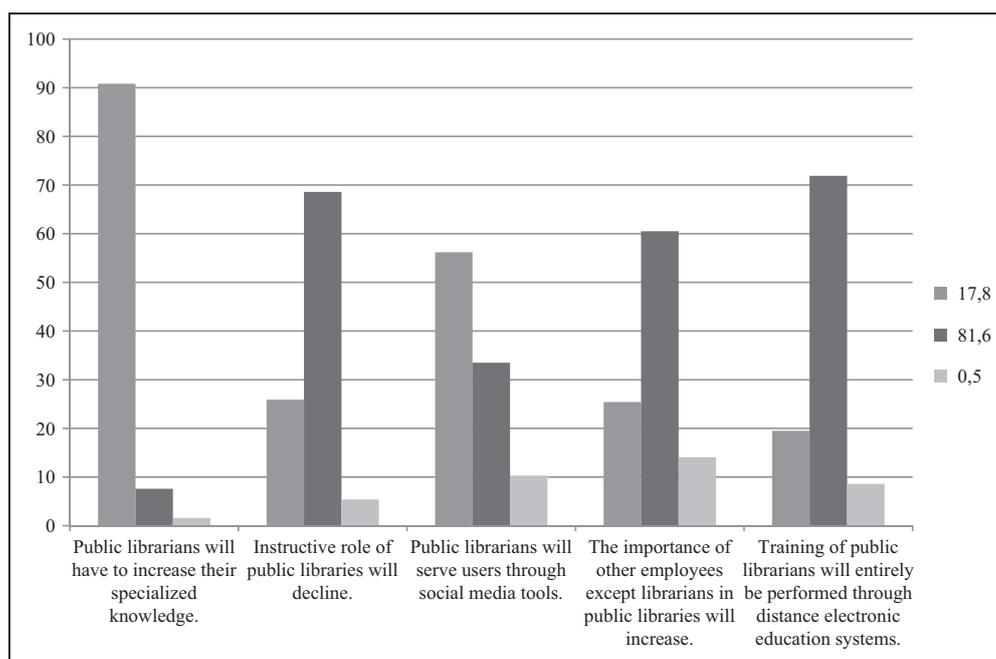


Figure 6. Public librarians’ opinions about library buildings in the future.

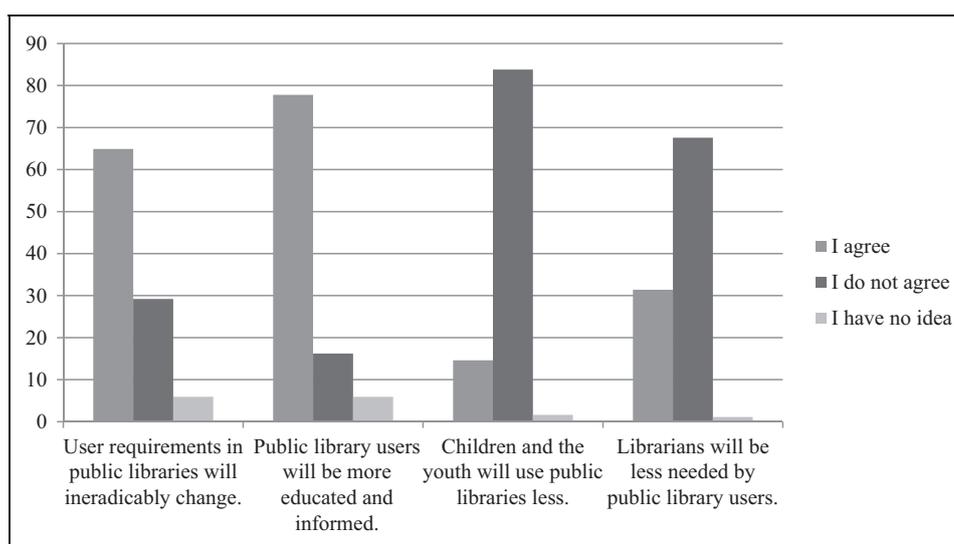
(as a building) and public library buildings will not get smaller (72.4%) in the future. The proportion of librarians (42.7%) who think that public libraries will be the “third place” to spend time after home and workplace is almost equal to the proportion (43.2%) with the opposite opinion. It is not thought that public library buildings will function as art galleries in future (52.4%). However, it is interesting that more than one-third of librarians (34.6%) put forward an opposite opinion. Furthermore, 73.5% of librarians state that safety systems in public libraries will become more significant in the future.

Insights of participants about the personnel element are provided in Figure 7.

According to findings in Figure 7, a vast majority of public librarians (81.6%) do not believe that librarians’ role will diminish. The proportion of librarians who think that public librarians will need to improve their specialized knowledge is also very high (90.8%). Similarly, librarians 68.6% state that their instructive roles will not decline. More than half of them (56.2%) envision that they will serve users with social media tools. One-third of librarians disagree with this idea. It is predicted by 60.5% that the significance of other personnel apart from professional librarians will increase as well. A high proportion (71.9%) of public librarians suppose that vocational education will be completely practiced through distance education methods.



**Figure 7.** Public librarians' opinions about library staff in the future.



**Figure 8.** Public librarians' opinions about library users in the future.

The change can also be observed in another public library element, which is the “user”. Public librarians' points of views about the future of the user are shown in Figure 8.

According to findings in Figure 8, a substantial number of public librarians (64.9%) envisage that user requirements will radically change in the future. In this context, 77.8% think that users will be more educated and informed, and 83.8% that children and young people will not use libraries less. The proportion of participants who estimate that users will require a smaller number of librarians in the future is 67.6%.

A very considerable proportion of participants (85.9%) believe that the costs of public libraries will

increase and accordingly 58.9% believe that there will be problems with budgets. Most of the public librarians (80%) assert that more money will be spent on electronic/digital sources.

## Discussion

The results will be discussed in this section in relation to the six research topics.

### *RQ1. General trends of change*

Public librarians in Turkey are concerned and (generally) worry about the future of public libraries. This data proves that answers of participants to the

research questions/questionnaire are deliberate and reliable. They anticipate change in public libraries or believe that public libraries will definitely go through a change and this radical change will come about in the short or medium term. There is certainty but not at the same level of consistency between the facts that librarians think public libraries will exist in the future and they predict that public libraries will become more necessary. The facts that participants believe society will not be affected in the case of the destruction of public libraries and that public libraries will not be perceived as “outdated” places in future are consistent with answers to the two previous questions. Predictions of librarians that public libraries will be indispensable parts of the information society have a basis in their thought that public libraries will continue their existence and will even become more necessary in future and will help decrease the digital divide. Another justification of librarians for the existence and development of public libraries is their belief that the primary roles of public libraries will not change.

#### **RQ2. Services**

On the one hand librarians think that public libraries will go through radical changes, on the other hand a considerable number do not believe that there will be great changes in services. Although this seems to be a conflicting situation, another similar approach presents consistency. As stated in the previous section, participants argue that public libraries’ primary roles will not change in the future. They most probably consider the concept of services in this section as an output of these primary roles, draw a correspondence between these two elements and present very similar opinions. Participants’ ideas that cultural activities will be more required in public libraries and that services towards cultural minorities will not diminish overlap. Nonetheless, their predictions that the importance of outreach in public libraries will increase and that the significance of mobile libraries will diminish are contradictory. It can be said that this approach towards mobile libraries is based on the relation between public libraries and technology as it will be interpreted in the section about technology.

#### **RQ3. Lifelong learning and information literacy**

Participants establish a conceptual relationship between lifelong learning and information literacy. Their thought that both phenomena will be almost evenly important for public libraries in future is interesting. This situation seems consistent with public

librarians’ predictions regarding the relationship between the information society and public libraries.

#### **RQ4. Technology**

There are three similar questions in this section which emphasize different aspects of technology. While librarians lean towards the idea that public libraries will be access points to information technology in the future, they regard the idea that public libraries will become TechShops as impossible. In this context, they almost disagree with the prediction that the only function of public libraries will be to meet the technology-based requirements of society. The idea that the primary role of public libraries is to teach how to use information technology seems unacceptable to them. According to the librarians’ answers to questions about technology, they have a clear approach towards the relationship between the public library and technology.

#### **RQ5. Changes involving the administrative structure**

According to participants’ answers to the survey questions formed in the framework of administration, it is understood that public libraries will have to improve their operating models but this will not change the hierarchical structure. Librarians’ prediction that the importance of a central administration system for public libraries will increase in future shows a parallel with their prediction about new operating models. Other data that attracts attention here is the difference between the librarians’ predictions that public libraries will have to be more cooperative and undertake projects with other cultural institutions, and the assertion that public libraries will not become closer with museums and archives. Participants’ approach about the need for public relations is that the public library administration should maintain sensitivity on this issue.

#### **RQ6. Collection, building, personnel, user and budget**

It is interesting that even though a substantial proportion of librarians do not associate the future of the public library with the future of the book, one-third of them link libraries with books. It is a conflict that almost all participants think that public library collections will only be composed of electronic sources. The proportion of participants linking the future of the public library with the future of the book is close to the proportion of participants thinking that electronic books will change the purpose of public libraries. However, the proportion of librarians who believe that electronic books will change the purpose of

public libraries is low. The approach of participants that public libraries will maintain their primary functions in future in the first section of the discussion can be associated with their thought about the future of circulation services in this section. That only one-fourth of participants think borrowing will decrease in public libraries is consistent with their idea that public libraries' primary functions will not change, because book circulation is accepted as one of the core services in public libraries.

Participants' prediction that public libraries will exist physically (as a building) in future seems consistent with their disbelief that public library buildings will get smaller. In other words, they think that public libraries buildings will preserve their existence without getting smaller. The disbelief among almost all librarians that public libraries will become a "third place" shows that they have not internalized this concept yet. Librarians' opinion that there will not be radical changes in basic aspects of public libraries also reflects on the future role of librarians. A vast majority of librarians think that the future role of a librarian which they perceive as a main element will not decrease. Their thoughts that librarians' "instructive role" will not diminish but that they will need to improve their professional knowledge seem consistent with one another. Other data that supports this consistency is their approach that the importance of other personnel will also increase. Librarians' belief that users will have service through social media tools in future seems similar to their idea about a public library-technology relationship as mentioned before. More clearly, one-third of librarians (33.5%) think that social media tools will be used in library services and almost one-third of them (30.3%) believe that public libraries will turn into technology markets.

Participants' insights that public library users will become better educated and informed have caused them to predict that user requirements will radically change. Their approach that users will be more educated and aware is consistent with their thoughts that librarians will have to improve their professional knowledge stated in the previous section. Librarians' non-acceptance of the statement that children and young people will use the public library less in future is similar to their general approach that public libraries' primary roles will not change.

Librarians' thought that public library costs will increase, which will make them have problems about the budget makes sense. They state that electronic sources will cause this increase in expenses.

The findings obtained show that Turkish public librarians have opinions especially consistent with these subjects in the literature:

- Public libraries will keep their existence.
- Their roles in actualizing the principle of equality in information access will increase.
- Their function in improving democracy will be more powerful.
- They will have the purpose of decreasing the digital divide.
- Their future will not depend on the future of books.
- They will depend on phenomena such as life-long learning, information literacy and being social communication centers.
- Their services to disadvantaged groups will increase.
- Their national centralization approach will strengthen.
- The level of expertise of librarians will increase.
- The users will be more educated and aware.
- They will have problems about budget.

Turkish public librarians' opinions about the following are not similar to/consistent with the literature:

- Public libraries will completely turn into technology centers.
- They will come close to archives and museums.
- They will become the "third place".
- The training of librarians will be totally online.

## Conclusion and recommendation

General results obtained based on the data provided under the result section and comments made in the discussion section are as follows.

Public librarians in Turkey have deliberated on the future of public libraries and they predict that radical changes will happen in 1–20 years which is a medium term. The librarians are optimistic that public libraries will protect their existence in the future and they will become more necessary. The librarians who think that destruction of public libraries will affect society in a negative way establish a relationship between public library and information society.

According to public librarians in Turkey, public libraries will continue their existence without changing their basic roles and will assume new roles like decreasing the digital divide, developing democracy and contributing to socialization. Librarians anticipate that public library services will undergo important changes in the future, turn into a user-oriented structure and continue to be free of charge. It is considered that while standards will maintain their importance, reference services, services towards cultural

minorities and outreach will grow stronger in public libraries, while mobile libraries will become less important.

The relationship between public libraries and technology will become stronger to some extent; however, they will not become TechShops. Users' technology-based requirements will become prominent and the main role of public libraries (but not the only one) will to a considerable extent be to teach how to use these technologies. The importance of planning and strategy in public libraries' administration will increase, they will look for new operating models, and a central administration system will be regarded as an option in the future. Moreover, public libraries will cooperate more with other cultural institutions and reinforce their relationship with the public.

Relating to the future of public libraries it can be said that books will continue to influence, the collection will not just involve electronic sources and the change of sources in the collection will not change the purposes of public libraries. Concerns about the security of information sources and copyright issues will become more prominent in the future. Public libraries will continue their physical existence (building); however, they will require further security systems and their function of being the "third place" will not be achieved. Public libraries' function of contributing to art will not increase. Public librarians will have to improve their professional knowledge and develop their instructive roles due to their increasing roles in the future. It is understood that the importance of staff

other than librarians will increase and training of librarians will be significantly actualized through distance learning applications. User requirements will radically change and users will be more educated and informed but they will still need a librarian.

All in all, public librarians are optimistic about the survival and development of public libraries in the future. According to them, public libraries will change in terms of structural components, services, technology, administration, functions and roles by preserving their basic construction and features. It is certain that opinions of public librarians in Turkey about public libraries are influenced by the reality of the country where they live and work. Moderate development of public library services in Turkey limits the horizon of its public librarians. It seems that their approach is a little different from opinions of those librarians living in countries where public library services are well developed. Their prediction about technology-public library relations is a typical example of this. They are unable to adequately evaluate the decisive influence of technology on the future of public libraries. Nonetheless, their potential for being more realistic in thinking about the future increases compared to librarians from other countries. They experience the advantage of staying away from futuristic approaches.

This study could be converted to a new study comparing the approaches of librarians working in other types of libraries in Turkey. Furthermore, a comparative study with other countries' librarians could be carried out.

## Appendix

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Dear Colleague(s),

This questionnaire was developed in order to write an article. It will be based on your opinion about the future of public libraries. You are required to mark each question. Thank you for your contribution.

Prof. Dr Bülent Yılmaz

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

I agree I don't agree I have no idea

---

In the following 20–30 years in Turkey;

Public libraries' function of being socialization/social centers will become prominent.

Significant changes will not happen in public library services.

Administration in public libraries will completely be based on planning and strategy.

Public libraries will become access points to information technologies.

Improving/promoting information literacy will be the most important objective of public libraries.

Future of public libraries will depend on the future of books.

Public library buildings will diminish.

Librarians' role in public library services will decrease.

Librarians will be less needed by public library users.

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(continued)

**Appendix** (continued)

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	I agree I don't agree I have no idea
Public libraries will have budgeting difficulties.	
Public relations will not be as necessary for libraries.	
Public libraries will have to cooperate and do more projects with other cultural and educational institutions.	
The significance of security systems in public libraries will increase.	
Children's libraries will be more important.	
Public libraries will become more necessary.	
There will be a charge for services in public libraries.	
The hierarchy in public library administration will change.	
Public libraries will turn into technology markets.	
Public libraries will be more significant parts of the lifelong learning process.	
The collection in public libraries will be composed of only electronic resources.	
Public library buildings will function as art galleries.	
Public librarians will serve users through social media tools.	
User requirements in public libraries will ineradicably change.	
Public libraries will spend more money on electronic/digital resources.	
Maintaining security of sources in public libraries will be more important.	
Society will not be affected if public libraries disappear.	
Reference services will not be required in public libraries.	
Public libraries will have to develop new operating models.	
Public libraries will only meet technology-based information needs of society.	
Electronic books will change the objectives of public libraries.	
Public libraries will not exist physically (as buildings); they will continue their existence only in an electronic environment.	
Training of public librarians will entirely be performed through distance electronic education systems.	
Public library users will be more educated and aware.	
Costs and expenses will increase in public libraries.	
The importance of international librarianship standards in public libraries will be reduced.	
Public libraries will be an indispensable part of the information society.	
The primary role of public libraries will be to teach how to use information technologies.	
Borrowing materials in public libraries will decrease.	
Public libraries will be the "third place" where individuals spend their time after their homes and workplaces.	
The importance of employees other than librarians in public libraries will increase.	
Traditional roles of public libraries will not change.	
The importance of mobile library services will diminish in public libraries.	
Circulation between public libraries will decline.	
Children and youth will use public libraries less.	
Public libraries will become more like museums and archives.	
The importance of "outreach" (taking service to where the old, the sick, the disabled, etc. are) will increase in public libraries.	
The instructive role of public libraries will decline.	
The importance of a national central system for public libraries will increase.	
Public library services towards cultural minorities will decrease.	
Public librarians will have to increase their specialized knowledge.	
Public libraries will increase their role in the development of democracy in the country.	
Public libraries will offer totally user-oriented services.	
Public libraries' role of reducing inequality of access to information (digital divide) will strengthen.	
There will not be an institution called "public library".	

(continued)

**Appendix (continued)**

To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

I agree I don't agree I have no idea

Cultural activities will be more required in public libraries.  
 Public libraries will be perceived as “outdated” places.  
 Automation systems in public libraries will further suffer and fail.  
 Public libraries will have to pay much more attention to copyright.  
 Public libraries will organize services separately for various groups according to features like age, gender, education level, occupation, etc.

1. In how many years do you think very radical changes will take place in Turkish public libraries?  
 1 ( ) in 10 years  
 2 ( ) in 11–20 years  
 3 ( ) in 21–30 years  
 4 ( ) in 31 years and more  
 5 ( ) Other . . . . .
2. Which socio-economic class or classes will use public libraries more in future? (You can choose more than one option.)  
 1 ( ) upper 2 ( ) middle 3 ( ) low
3. “I have not given much thought about the future of public libraries”.  
 1 ( ) yes 2 ( ) no

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### Author biographies

**Prof. Dr Bülent Yılmaz** graduated from Hacettepe University Department of Library Science, where he received both his MS and PhD. His theses were on reading habits and the public library in Turkey. He edited *Turkish Librarianship* and was the Vice President of the Turkish Librarians' Association 1996–1998 and Assistant Editor of *Information World* in 2000. He was the National Coordinator of PULMAN-XT, AccessIT, EMPATIC and LoCloud EU Projects 2005–2015. He is at present a member of the Editorial Advisory Board of *Turkish Librarianship* and *Information World* and Professor and Head of Department in Hacettepe University Department of Information Management. His academic interests are public libraries, reading habits, professional ethics, information policy, organization of information, communication.

**Nilay Cevher** completed her Bachelor's degree at the Department of American Studies at Hacettepe University, Ankara in 2009. She currently works as a research assistant and is a Master's student at the Department of Information Management at the same university. She is working on her Master's thesis which is about children's libraries and reading habits. She has also been a board member of Turkish Librarians Association for a year.



# Exploring reading habits and academic success in rural Kenya

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## Abstract

This study explores the relationship between reading habits and reading materials, and academic success of primary school students in the Ontulili community of Kenya. The study revealed high levels of satisfaction and contentment among the participants with respect to the availability of resources, reading abilities, educational performance, and overall preparedness for further education; yet, the data pointed to severe scarcity of learning materials, low reading skills, poor infrastructure, below average educational performance, and low preparedness for further education. It was concluded that lack of exposure to relevant reading materials, educational resources, and opportunities leads to subtle contentment alongside individual inability to excel as manifested by low test scores in the national examinations. In order to realize academic success in the study area and other comparable communities, well-designed interventions such as promotion of reading across the school curriculum and establishment of fully equipped libraries consistent with the rigors of modern academic demands, must be created.

## Keywords

Reading habits, reading materials, reading culture, community libraries, literacy, primary education, rural Kenya

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## Introduction

In 2003, Kenya introduced free and compulsory public primary school education, abolished school fees, and started providing textbooks to students for free. As a result, schools experienced an unprecedented surge in enrollments. However, the sudden growth in enrollment was not matched with proportional growth in learning resources. The learning environment in schools remained largely the same or declined and the actual gains in literacy and academic achievement have been minimal across time. Such is the case in Ontulili, according to a review of the results of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination for five schools in Ontulili for the years 2005 to 2012 (see Appendix). The yearly mean score for the five schools from 2005 through 2012 out of a possible 500 was as follows: 195.78 (2005), 197.07 (2006), 202.86 (2007), 206.88 (2008), 208.65 (2009), 198.26 (2010), 195.28 (2011), and 207.93 (2012). As the results indicate, the majority of eighth grade students in the study area performed far below average making it almost impossible to be selected to join

high school. KCPE is an annual national examination that is taken at the completion of eight years of primary school in Kenya. Individual KCPE scores are used in selecting eighth grade graduates for high school placement. The KCPE results data was publicly and freely available by school and year, through the Ministry of Education online portal<sup>1</sup> and the same data was obtained from the respective schools. This finding gave the impetus for this study.

This study hypothesized that underdeveloped reading habits and a lack of basic reading skills were key predictors of low scores in the KCPE examination. There are several variables – individual, familial, societal, cultural, and economic – to which the underdeveloped reading habits among primary school-age children in the study area of Ontulili and in rural Kenya in general could be attributed. To understand

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this underdevelopment, it is important to look beyond the formal education system and to recognize the broader literacy environment that characterizes the society as a whole (Barton, 1994; Parry, 2009). This environment may include the reading culture; availability of positive role models, career mentors, libraries; and a general culture that prioritizes education over other cultural aspirations.

The objectives of this study were: (1) to investigate the individual, familial, societal, cultural, and economic barriers to proper reading habits among school-age children in the Ontulili community; and (2) to examine how those barriers can be removed.

### **A review of the literature**

As a response to low literacy levels in developing countries and the need to address literacy concerns, the Education for All movement was formed in 1990 at the World Conference on Education for All. The frequent reviews of the movement over the years culminated in the adoption of the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2010). The Framework committed governments to achieving quality basic education for all by the year 2015. This commitment led to the now-witnessed expansion of formal education in Africa and other developing countries. Kenya abolished all tuition fees in public primary schools and made it compulsory for all school-age children to attend school. The subsidiary effect of the mass enrollment was a strain on the already limited educational resources. This led to a steady decline in the quality of education and academic performance (Improving Institutions for Pro-Poor Growth, 2009). Test results and other alternative indicators of learning such as ability to read basic text, showed that students were not achieving the standard expected of their grade levels. For example, 25-75 % of children in grades two to four in low-income countries cannot read any words in the first line of a simple, grade-appropriate reading passage (Global Partnership for Education, 2012).

Reading of printed materials, as well as formal education as we know it today, have a relatively short history in Kenya (Chakava, 1996; Parry, 2009). Books and reading were introduced by colonialists and given impetus by the early missionaries but they did not promote reading as something to derive pleasure from (Commeyras and Inyega, 2007). To encourage reading, people were promised rewards and once they achieved the rewards they quit reading since there was nothing more to read for (Chakava, 1982). This attitude of reading for rewards has continued and as a result, the concept of voluntary leisure reading is rare in many Kenyan communities today, yet existing

literature shows that there is a positive relationship among voluntary leisure reading, print exposure, and academic success (Agak, 1995; Elley, 2000; Mol and Bus, 2011).

Reading habits in many Kenyan rural communities and other parts of East Africa are average at best and dismal at worst (Chakava, 1992; Elley, 1992; Mazrui and Mazrui, 1995; Parry, 2009). The fact that Kenya is a multi-ethnic society with hundreds of languages and dialects plays an important role in the poor rating of reading habits. There is scarcity of reading materials in the various languages and dialects for school-age children, students are mostly instructed using the English language which they have not learned yet, and teachers with their students are on their own to sort out the acquisition of the new skills of reading and writing in at least three different languages concurrently (Chakava, 1982; Commeyras and Inyega, 2007; Muthwii, 2004; Ogechi, 2002). Teacher preparedness in language skills is inadequate and curriculums tend to emphasize how to pass national examinations even in the wake of low reading levels (Commeyras and Inyega, 2007; Elley, 2000; Shiundu and Omulando, 1992).

A stable reading culture is recognized as a fundamental factor in quality education, yet studies have shown that many African countries lack the said reading culture (Doiron and Asselin, 2011; Obanya 2003; Magara and Batambuze, 2005). "To develop the culture of reading in a society, it requires knowledge to utilize existing information materials and resources. A reading culture involves a daily activity as essential as a habit" (Magara and Batambuze, 2005: 35). Schools in rural areas face particular challenges in gaining access to books, and even where books are available, they are usually not enough for all students, and most are textbooks (Arden, 2001; Arua, 2001; Greaney, 1996). Similarly, the low socio-economic status of most families in rural areas makes it difficult to afford reading materials. This scarcity of reading materials means that African children rarely have the opportunity to read for enjoyment or for other non-school purposes, and when they leave school, they enter a nearly bookless culture (Walter, 1996). Family support and family literacy are also major factors in facilitating learning and development of reading habits in children (Commeyras and Ketsitlile, 2013; Smith and Barrett, 2011). Early readers come from homes where adults read to them regularly and where books and reading materials are readily available (Neuman, 2006 as quoted by Debruin-Parecki, 2008; Krolak, 2006).

Yet another factor responsible for low reading habits is the failure to use locally intelligible languages in publishing reading materials. In cases where books and

other reading materials are available, they are hardly written in languages of the intended readers and do not draw upon their daily life experiences (Carnegie Corporation of New York, 2000; Chakava, 1982; Commeyras and Inyega, 2007; Parry, 2009). The reader has to constantly think in their most fluent language in order to make sense of the reading materials. Illustrations and examples provided in most reading materials also hardly relate to the intended readers. Education in the local language is vital especially in the first few years of instruction and children who are required to learn in a language other than their mother tongue score extremely low in national assessments (Perry, 2008; Sampa 2003; Williams, 1996).

All these factors have generated considerable interest towards promotion of reading from various local and international organizations in the hope that a culture of reading will eventually take root, especially in rural communities. For example, The Reading Tent Approach, which began in the 1990s under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation, has been used by such national agencies as Egerton University Reading Tent Project, Kenya National Library Services, Kenya Library Association, Maendeleo ya Wanawake, Reading Association of Kenya, Kenyatta University Basic Education Resource Center, and the National Book Development Council of Kenya to promote reading. Yet, there are many far-flung areas that have no access to library services (Makenzi, 2004). To ensure that reading thrives in Africa, concerted action would be required in three main areas, namely, improvement of the social and reading infrastructure, promotion of reading across the school curriculum, and development of reading extension services (Obanya, 2003). The same can still be said of the reading landscape in much of Africa today. As Krashen (2004: 1) recaps:

Evidence for the value of free voluntary reading, or recreational reading, continues to accumulate. In the last few decades, evidence from several areas continues to show that those who do more recreational reading show better development in reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary. These results hold for first and second language acquisition, and for children and adults.

## Methods and sample description

This study was conducted in the fall of 2011 in Ontulili Location of Meru County, a rural community in eastern Kenya. The study site was chosen due to its low educational performance and the author's familiarity with the area. The study was approved by the Purdue University Institutional Review Board. A

standardized questionnaire was developed in English and translated into the native language, Kimeru. The questionnaire was used as an interview schedule by the author on first, second, and third grade students, who could hardly read or write. For fourth through eighth grade students, the same questionnaire was distributed to each student participant to complete on their own with guidance from the author. The initial sample size was 200 students. Overall, 171 questionnaires were found to be adequately completed and were included in the sample. Some questionnaires were returned blank or with too little and incoherent information to be of use. The students included 98 girls and 73 boys who ranged in age from six to 17 years.

To obtain the sample, a multi-stage sampling process was used. Five out of seven public primary schools in the location were purposively included in the sample. The initial intention was to include all seven schools, but two of them proved virtually inaccessible for the study. Each of the five schools in the sample had eight grade levels and all eight were included in the study. A total of five students were randomly selected from each grade for all five schools, with a target of 200 respondents. The students were given an opportunity to withdraw from participation if they chose to. As is the practice with all research involving human subjects, the students were also informed that participation was voluntary and that they could stop participation at any time during the interview process without adverse consequences. Once the list of participants was drawn, parents/guardians were contacted for consent.

Upon parental consent and students' assent, the students were asked a range of questions that pertained to their reading habits. These questions focused on how often they read on their own in and outside of school, and the frequency and intensity of such reading sessions. They were also asked questions that measured their attitude towards leisure reading. In addition, they were asked questions pertaining to the ownership of materials that they read. The students were further asked questions to measure how well they associated leisure reading with academic success, as well as questions about their socio-demographic characteristics that included gender, age, and family background, among others. Finally, they were asked about their academic performance, which was used to create the main dependent variable – academic success. This variable was hypothesized to be influenced by the amount of leisure reading. The survey responses were used to create variables that were analyzed using descriptive statistics of the SPSS software. The study combined both quantitative and qualitative methods.

**Table 1.** Respondents' family structure.

Family support	Percentage of respondents
Both parents and other family (PO)	59.1
Mother and other family (MO)	24.6
Father and other family (FO)	4.7
Grandmother and other family (GO)	8.8
Siblings and other family (SO)	2.3
Other (O)	0.5
Total	100

## Data analysis

### *Students' family support in educational endeavors*

Stability of the family and family support are both important in a child's development including educational performance and overall success. Parental involvement has a significant effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after such factors as social class, maternal education, and poverty, have been taken out of the equation between children's aptitudes and their achievement (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003: 86). As Morrow et al. (1995: 72) points out, parents are the first teachers that children have, and, beginning at birth, children's experiences affect their success in becoming literate individuals. In order to gain an understanding of the students' family support, students were asked to state whom they lived with as their primary guardians. The responses were categorized into five groups as presented in Table 1.

The category PO consisted of a family in which the respondent lived with both parents as the primary guardians; MO consisted of a family structure in which the respondent lived only with the mother; FO was a family structure in which the respondent lived only with the father; GO consisted of a family structure in which the respondent lived only with the grandmother; SO consisted of a family arrangement that had the respondent living with a sibling as the primary guardian although other members of the extended family lived within the homestead. In all, the number of families where the respondent was not living with both parents as the primary guardians was slightly over 40%.

### *Students' reading obligation*

In order to establish the people who may have an active involvement in the educational process of the respondents, the study sought to find out if students were required or at least encouraged to read and if so, by whom. About 93% of the students said they

**Table 2.** Rank-ordering of reading ability.

Rank	Kimeru	Kiswahili	English
1	18 (11%)	0	1 (1%)
2	49 (29%)	4 (2%)	8 (5%)
3	59 (35%)	14 (8%)	20 (12%)
4	22 (12%)	30 (18%)	74 (42%)
5	23 (13%)	123 (72%)	68 (40%)
Total	171	171	171

were required to read. Out of these, 59% said they were required to read by their teachers; 15% by their mothers; 12% by their grandmothers; 10% by their siblings; and 5% by their fathers. In order to establish the level of collaboration in educational activities, students were asked to state who they read with. About 55% said they read with friends. This was the single most mentioned category of reading partners. Other responses included classmates, teachers, and siblings, but a significant observation was that parents were the least involved as reading-mates, accounting for only 3% of reading partners. Tutors were not a known category of reading partners in the sample. In their review of teaching reading in Kenyan primary schools article, Commeyras and Inyega (2007) discuss information from non-empirical literature that points to the importance of teachers encouraging students to read. In Botswana, interviews with parents revealed that they did not usually read with their children, but children who read at home reportedly did so because their parents encouraged them to do so (Commeyras and Ketsitlile, 2013).

### *Students' ability to read in local languages*

A basic assumption of this study was that students would be more fluent in reading in the language that is used at home. The Kimeru language, which is the mother tongue, is the language spoken at home and sometimes in school, although it is generally not encouraged in school. To find out their ability to read in their spoken languages, students were asked to rank-order their reading ability for the languages they commonly used both at home and at school. They were to use a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 represented no reading ability at all and 5 was the highest reading ability. The languages were Kimeru, which is the mother tongue for the residents in the study area, Kiswahili, which is the national language and sometimes language of instruction in school, and English, which is the official language and language of instruction in schools especially after the fourth grade. The results are presented in Table 2.

According to the results in Table 2, a significant number of students (10.5%) expressed that they had no reading ability in Kimeru. Considering that Kimeru is the mother tongue and the fact that most reading materials come in languages other than Kimeru, it is evident that students develop reading skills depending on availability of and sustained exposure to reading materials and the language in which the materials are published. This finding is also consistent with the fact that there are relatively more reading materials in Kiswahili and English, which further explains the high self-reported ability to read Kiswahili and English. In addition, Kiswahili is used in informal daily conversations especially where there are people who possess a different mother tongue. Piper et al. (2015) explored assessment data for 2000 Kenyan children in two or three languages and found that many children could read English words more easily than words in Kiswahili or their mother tongue. Nevertheless, their reading comprehension was significantly lower in English than in Kiswahili and mother tongue. A similar language scenario has been reported in many other countries and this is attributed to the fact that the local people in those countries perceive English as a higher status language.

#### *Students' ownership of reading materials*

It is recognized that reading is enhanced not only by availability of the reading materials, but also by personal ownership of the materials. In a global study of comparative reading scores, countries with high reading scores are those in which learners have greater access to reading material at home, in the community, in libraries, and at school (Elley, 1992).

To find out ownership of such materials, students were asked what type of reading materials they personally owned. Only 30% said they owned anything, if at all. This finding was similar to those of several other studies that have reported a lack of ownership of books and other reading materials by rural families in Africa (e.g. Arua, 2001; Dent and Goodman, 2015; Dent and Yannotta, 2005; Elley, 2000; Walter, 1996) which they refer to as "book famine", "bookless homes", and "a bookless culture." Of the 30%, 69% reported that they owned Bibles, 59% owned textbooks, and 54% owned storybooks. Less than 1% of the respondents reported that they owned newspapers and magazines. These percentages are not mutually exclusive and therefore do not total to 100% because some respondents owned more than one category of reading materials. For those who indicated that they did not own any reading materials, a

follow-up question was asked about where they got their reading materials from. Over 38% reported that they borrowed reading materials from friends while a negligible number reported that they borrowed from their teachers, neighbors or extended family. When the respondents were asked whether there was anything they have wanted to read but had no access to, 62% answered in the affirmative. When they were asked to specify what materials they had desired to read but had no access to, 64.9% singled out the encyclopedia and storybooks. It was not clear why or what encyclopedia, but almost all respondents (98.8%) were aware that reading storybooks could help them perform better in school in some way. Similarly, in their Uganda study, Dent and Yannotta (2005) found that very few families surveyed owned reading materials with the exception of the Bible and the Koran.

#### *Types of materials students read*

Once a list of the locally available reading materials was established, students were asked if they read those materials, which included textbooks, storybooks, Bibles, newspapers, and magazines. All the respondents (100%) answered in the affirmative. When they were asked to specify what they read, 99.4% reported that they read textbooks; 95.3% read storybooks; 87.7% read Bibles; and 47.4% read newspapers and magazines. These reading material categories are not mutually exclusive as students read from more than one category. A direct observation on school collections showed that four of the five schools in the study area had no collections of any type at all besides textbooks. Only one school reported having about 100 storybooks, but that could not be verified as the books could not be easily located.

It must be noted that the educational policy requires that students be provided with textbooks, although in many cases there is one copy to be shared among several students. This increases the odds of each student having read a textbook, and explains the high percentage of students who said they had read a textbook. High textbook readership can also be explained by the fact that education seems to be the driving force of literacy in rural areas, as Mathangwane and Arua (2006) note from their study in Botswana. The existing scarcity of books left students reading the few storybooks that were circulating among friends, and the downside of this was that on most occasions, the storybooks were not age-, interest- or reading level-appropriate. Cases of eighth grade students reading third and fourth grade level books were very common.

### *Students' after school reading routines*

A tremendous amount of reading takes place after school, and this includes not only leisure reading but also homework assignments and other school-related reading activities. To find out how the respondents spent their time after school and other free time, they were asked to describe how they spent such time. Three major response categories emerged. They included household chores, reading, and playing. About 82% of the students indicated that they spent much of their free time doing chores that included washing dishes, fetching water, fetching firewood, farm activities, cooking, looking after animals, and washing clothes. Another 59% said they spent a part of their free time reading; while those who mentioned play as one of their free time activity accounted for 30%. These response categories were not mutually exclusive as respondents mentioned more than one category, so the total of the percentages exceeds 100%.

Studies exploring the impact of reading frequency to academic achievement have concluded that the amount of reading can explain differences in students' academic achievement (Dent and Goodman, 2015). To establish the routine and frequency of their reading, the participants were asked to estimate on average how many days in a week they read. About 21% said they read every day, 14% read six days in a week, 30% read five days in a week, 13% read for four days in a week, and 19% read for about three days a week. To find out the intensity of reading per session, the participants were asked to estimate how long they read per day. In response 13% said they read for less than 30 minutes, 27% said they read for about an hour, and 49% said they read for over two hours.

### *Homework help and library use*

High test scores and ultimate academic success co-vary with how seriously homework is taken and success in homework is largely dependent on availability of help as needed. Being able to study or read in the home enhances learning, while from the many forms of parental involvement, the 'at-home' relationships and modelling of aspirations play the most important part in impact on school outcomes (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Smith and Barrett, 2011). To establish availability of help for homework, the respondents were asked to state who helped them with the homework. Friends and siblings jointly accounted for 48% of responses while parents accounted for 23% and teachers 16%. Another 23% had no help at home.

Several studies, as reviewed by Dent and Goodman (2015), have found that libraries positively impact



**Figure 1.** Book shelves in the deputy head teacher's office.

academic achievement. Since regular visits to the library bear a direct relationship with learning and especially enhanced reading, the study sought to find out if students indeed visited any libraries by asking them if and how often they visited a library. A majority of them (67%) said they had never been to any library. Out of these, 11% said they did not even know what a library was. All the 33% who said they had visited a library specified that they visited their own school library. When they were asked to describe the library, some said the library consisted of a few shelves inside the deputy head teacher's office while others said it was the cabinet at the corner of their classroom. Yet others said their library was inside the school storage room. This correlation is confirmed by Elley (2000) who reports that in South Africa, school and classroom libraries are rare and most children come from virtually bookless homes. During the fieldwork visit, photographs of the various library conceptions were taken and are reproduced as Figures 1 and 2.

### *Self-assessment of academic performance*

Confidence in one's own ability to meet a challenge has a direct relationship with the odds of succeeding in meeting the challenge. In order to establish the students' confidence in their academic performance, the respondents in this study were asked to rank themselves with respect to the overall class performance and reading ability on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest. Most students rated themselves very highly with 65% of them believing their ability to be at level 5 while 28% rated themselves at level 4 and another 7% rated themselves at level 3. In reality however, most of the students could



**Figure 2.** Storybook section of the school library.

barely read texts at their grade level. Furthermore, of the 171 students involved in the study, 41.5% had been held back in a grade at least once. The two major reasons for being held back were low grade scores and inability to demonstrate an adequate reading ability. Other less significant reasons included change from one school to another; congestion in the classrooms thereby necessitating that some students stay back until sitting space was available; and parental decrees whereby parents felt that for their student, taking a year longer in the same grade would enhance test scores. In some cases, parental decision to have the students repeat a grade was prompted by anticipated financial difficulty in supporting the more financially demanding higher grade levels, mostly high school.

## Discussion

In this study, attempts were made to find out the relationship between reading habits and availability of reading materials, on one hand, and academic success, on the other. It was hypothesized that underdeveloped reading habits contribute to low academic achievement. The study therefore investigated the students' home and school environments, their study habits, availability of reading materials, and the nature of their interaction with those materials, in order to establish how these factors impact the students' academic success. The study aimed at meeting two main objectives: (1) To investigate the societal, individual, familial, cultural and economic factors that influence reading habits and educational success among school-age children; and (2) To examine how those factors can be improved in order to establish a sustainable culture of reading and enhance academic performance.

The study found that over 40% of the respondents' families did not have both parents present and living with the respondents. Although single-parent families

do not necessarily present a notable challenge to the educational success of a child as long as the present parent or guardian is able to provide the necessary support, the data for this study did not demonstrate that the present parent or guardian was capable of providing all the necessary support. This was especially true as evidenced by the anecdotal confessions of some respondents that the parent or guardian was either not literate enough to help with homework, or was too busy providing for the day-to-day subsistence to find the time for the often low prioritized school activities. Moreover, research has established that the degree of parental involvement is diminished by single parent status (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003).

The study also found that almost 40% of the respondents were either entirely unable to read in their mother tongue or had a bare minimum ability. While only 13.5% of the entire sample reported that they were fluent readers of their mother tongue, 72% reported fluency in Kiswahili and 40% in English. This finding was consistent with the fact that of the few available reading materials, most were in Kiswahili and English, with almost nothing available in Kimeru. Another important finding was that in spite of students' inability to read in their mother tongue, all 171 participants said they read something, whether it was a textbook, a storybook, or a Bible. This demonstrates the students' eagerness to read and points to the strong need to provide relevant reading materials in order to orient the students toward academic success. Furthermore, school instruction especially in the early years of education would be more effective in the language that the students know best. Benson (2005) notes that mother tongue-based bilingual education not only increases access to skills but also raises the quality of basic education by facilitating classroom interaction and integration of prior knowledge and experiences with new learning. It is essential to address the near-total absence of materials published in local languages through a purposeful effort to publish and distribute storybooks, and other educational materials in the local language especially for beginning readers.

The analysis of the students' reading frequency as well as the intensity of reading per day showed an overall strong inclination to read. However, since the data also shows that students read what is available to them, a sound mechanism of providing leisure reading materials that enhance lifelong learning is warranted. Of the students 64% indicated that they read at least five days a week, yet most of the materials that are available to them are narrow in scope, e.g. religious books or education-focused text books, which perhaps may explain their low overall grade average. Dent and

Goodman (2015) conducted a study in Uganda whose results showed that both reading frequency and certain types of reading materials read for recreational purposes are correlated with higher overall grade average.

It is instructive to note that students generally projected significant confidence in their ability to do well on the final tests, which, in itself, is an important characteristic of personal drive. However, a review of individual scores in yearly examinations revealed that confidence was not related to actual performance as the percentage of students who passed the final examinations well enough to transition to high school was hardly 2% from any given school in the study area. The low examination scores in the midst of much confidence might be indicative of students' limited worldview, which gets substantially challenged by the broad nature of national examinations. To widen their perspectives, the students need to be exposed to a broader reading scope by the provision of adequate reading and other academic materials.

### Conclusion and recommendations

This study revealed high levels of satisfaction and contentment among participants with respect to the availability of resources, reading abilities, general educational performance, and overall preparedness for further education. Yet, at the same time, the data points to severe scarcity of learning materials, low reading skills, poor infrastructure, below average educational performance, and low pupil preparedness for further education. Overall the students come from low social economic status households, and attend schools that noticeably lack adequate resources. As for the reading infrastructure, there is shortage of age-, language-, and interest-appropriate reading materials and a lack of school libraries. This state of affairs deprives the students of the opportunity to read even when the reading desire is high. Majority of the students cannot read at grade level and more significantly they cannot read in their mother tongue. Studies by Nassimbeni and Desmond (2011) and Van der Berg et al. (2011) revealed that pupils from schools where books and libraries were available scored better than those at schools without those resources, emphasizing the link between disadvantage and poor performance. In addition majority of the parents and guardians are not literate and this diminishes their level of involvement in their children's education. Given the family circumstances, mainly parents' literacy levels and presence in the home, the students are faced with an enduring inability to get homework help at home.

The findings, therefore, emphasize the underlying need for creating well-designed interventions aimed at creating equal educational opportunities for communities such as Ontulili, in which children are struggling for the basic educational necessities. Such interventions include the establishment of libraries as one way of creating the requisite exposure for the children. The libraries would provide supportive spaces with adequate amenities, access to a wide variety of appropriate learning materials and technology, and suitable reading infrastructure. They would also create and offer quality and relevant programs to the community. Indeed, the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development (IFLA, 2015) recognizes that information intermediaries such as libraries have the skills and resources to help governments, institutions and individuals communicate, organize, structure, and understand data that is critical to development. In addition, a study by Dent and Goodman (2015) found that library access and reading frequency in rural Uganda were correlated with higher overall student grade point averages and recommend support for establishment and growth of the rural village library and related programs in Africa. In the case of Ontulili, among the most critical programs would be a focus on family and adult literacy so that parents, guardians and basically the entire community is able to participate more productively in the reading and lifelong learning process.

Where possible, communities should come together to design local programs that will meet their particular needs. Quality early childhood programs such as reading, games, and other group activities at the library would help instill healthy reading and learning habits. Moreover, the school environments including infrastructure and learning resources need to be improved to facilitate learning. Reading for enjoyment should be championed and highlighted as a pillar for academic success and lifelong learning to the communities and should be integrated into the curriculum. Instruction in the mother tongue should be encouraged and publishing reading materials in the mother tongue should be equally supported. In Ontulili, peer mentors (friends and neighbors) are thriving and taking the place of unavailable or uneducated parents. A mechanism of encouraging and supporting such mentors should be established as their contributions in learning cannot be gainsaid.

### Limitations

It is generally understood that there is no successful field study without some type of limitations and this study is no exception. The study was conducted in one

location of a multiethnic country where cultural differences might have significant effects on prioritizing reading and education in general. Although valid generalizations can still be made from the findings of the study, replication in other areas of the region is encouraged. In addition, this study focused mainly on students. Studies that establish the role of other key players – including teachers, parents, and the larger community – in the reading habits and educational attainment of students are also recommended. The study methodology could also have been modified if all factors were equal. The study utilized a purposive sample of schools for practical purposes but while still ensuring that there were no obvious disparities between the purposive sample and a random sample. Five out of the targeted seven schools were included in the sample while two were practi-

cally inaccessible for the purpose of this study due to their remote locations. Although the validity of the findings from five out of seven schools cannot be statistically challenged, a complete count is always preferable to any fraction. Moreover, the study utilized self-reporting of reading abilities and habits, and academic performance. It is understood, however, that self-assessment is much more prone to biased reporting than assessment that is made by a second party. Although there was no clear evidence that this was the case with this study, the likelihood that a second-party assessment would yield a slightly different outcome cannot be ignored. In spite of these limitations, however, the findings of this study still serve as a strong pointer to the type of reading challenges that exist in not only the rural parts of Kenya, but also other developing parts of the world.

### Appendix: Scores in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination for 2005–2012 (out of a possible 500 points).

Year	School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	Mean
2005	190	N/A	199.48	N/A	197.85	195.78
2006	174	N/A	219.4	N/A	197.8	197.07
2007	201.41	190.72	218.92	N/A	200.37	202.86
2008	202.05	168.81	244.38	N/A	212.29	206.88
2009	211.77	194	262	180	195.5	208.65
2010	194.76	169.9	241.35	203	182.31	198.26
2011	164.08	179.38	249.09	168.19	215.66	195.28
2012	197.04	170	228.22	237.77	186.82	207.93
Mean	191.89	178.8	232.86	197.24	198.58	

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#### Note

1. Kenya Ministry of Education <http://www.education.go.ke/ShowPage.aspx?department=1&id=285>

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# The role of public libraries in promoting reading within the family

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## Resumo

Preende-se, com esta comunicação, dar conta de alguns exemplos de boas práticas de promoção da leitura, realizadas em contexto de biblioteca pública, tendo como destinatários as famílias, em particular os pais e os filhos.

Partindo do pressuposto de que o processo de formação de leitores se inicia muito antes da entrada da criança no sistema educativo e da sua alfabetização formal e de que a família desempenha, praticamente desde o nascimento, um papel determinante na aproximação ao universo da leitura, algumas bibliotecas têm disponíveis atividades que visam aproximar pais e filhos, em conjunto, dos livros e da leitura, associando-os a atividades lúdicas, capazes de suscitar o interesse e a sensibilização precoce dos leitores. Estas atividades atuam a vários níveis, colaborando na formação dos pais ao nível da sua crescente consciencialização sobre os benefícios da leitura, a seleção de livros e obras de qualidade, fortalecendo, além disso, a relação familiar e afetiva e promovendo um crescimento mais saudável e equilibrado das crianças.

## Palavras-chave

Biblioteca pública, família, literacia familiar, literacia emergente

## Abstract

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate some examples of good practice carried out in public libraries and their role in promoting reading within the family and in particular with parents and children. In this case, the family takes on the responsibility of bringing the book into the life of the child almost from the time they are born. Some libraries hold events which aim to bring parents and children, books and reading and ludic activities together and thus stimulate early interest in reading on the part of the child. These activities work on various levels, with a view to training parents on how to take full advantage of books, to make them more aware of the benefits of reading and how to make a good selection of reading material in order to strengthen family bonds and promote a healthier and more balanced upbringing for the child.

## Keywords

Public library, family, family literacy, emergent literacy

## The promotion of reading: The importance of the family unit

The process of promoting reading is gradual and occurs in different contexts (family, school and library) as a result of a variety of factors. Close and regular contact with books, particularly at home with the family, and in particular with parents (Hannon 1995, 1998; Spiegel 2001), together with ludic activities, all play an

important role in this process. The objective is to familiarise the child with books and allow them from an early age to have positive and concrete representations

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of books, which have an important impact on the child's future reading and writing skills.

It is generally accepted that these skills begin long before the child starts school and their success largely depends on previous learning experiences connected to emergent literacy (Gillen and Hall, 2003; Pressley, 1999; Sulzby and Teale, 1991; Whitehurst and Lonigan, 2001), and family literacy, which occur on an informal level or through specific programmes (Cairney, 2003; Cruz, 2011; Mata, 1999, 2006; Purcell-Gates, 2000; Villas-Boas, 2010). These experiences, which to some extent may be connected to literacy theory (Goodman, 1987), also help in the development of oral competence, including a wider and richer lexical repertoire, a grasp of complex grammatical structures, as well as increased phonological awareness and exposure to a wide range of written material. Reading activities have the ability to provide significant experiences related to books, introducing the child to the world of books and thus enhancing their awareness of different types of publications, initially through oral production (e.g. songs, rhymes, chants, tongue twisters and poems) and at a later stage, in written publications, through reading out loud. Regular storytelling by parents has a positive effect on the linguistic development of the child and provides concrete examples of how language is structured, both linguistically and in terms of narrative structure. This occurs through the association between the oral and the written word, as well as the sheer pleasure of listening to a story and the discovery of symbolic meanings of the child's mother tongue and their increasing awareness of aesthetics. Literature has the ability to provide the child with a linguistic repertoire which challenges them and motivates them to experiment with language. In cognitive terms, the relationship established between language development and organised narrative thinking is highly relevant. Narrative structures favour the acquisition and development of notions of time and of cause and effect. Many narratives for very young readers also enable the creation of familiar settings, thus establishing associations with the world around them, or clarify more abstract concepts through specific examples. Other advantages which have been widely demonstrated include increased mental awareness of the child, improved social skills and the development of their personality, a greater ability to find solutions to existential dilemmas, the development of the child's imagination and creativity, greater personal enrichment and increased contact with culture and tradition, all of which strengthen the child's identity, as well as providing entertainment and ludic representations associated with reading.

Ensuring that reading takes place in a positive and comfortable setting within the home (Poslaniec, 2004, 2006; Rigolet, 1997, 2009) is crucial; however, it is not the norm for the vast majority of children and their families. Even though the social value of reading is widely recognised and present in everyday discourse, parents are still not sufficiently aware of its advantages and often leave the development of reading skills to the schools their children attend and school and public libraries.

## The mission of public libraries

'Creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age'. (IFLA/UNESCO, 1994)

Public libraries were created for people from all walks of life and for all generations; however, children are one of their main target audiences and libraries pay particular attention to them and develop activities which are geared towards them:

If children can be inspired by the excitement of knowledge and by works of the imagination at an early age, they are likely to benefit from these vital elements of personal development throughout their lives, both enriching them and enhancing their contribution to society. (Koontz and Gubbin 2010: 7)

The guidelines put forward by IFLA highlight the importance of motivating parents and other adults to use libraries and perceive children as decisive in the success of the libraries in their local communities.

The work carried out by libraries goes far beyond lending out books and other publications or for storing books. Their role in non-formal education and the promotion of extended literary competences have been the basis for the development of events programmes in the majority of public libraries. These activities offer children a wide range of services and publications which promote 'the enjoyment of reading and the excitement of discovering knowledge and works of the imagination' (Koontz and Gubbin 2010: 38). Research shows that inculcating reading habits from an early age is crucial and that these activities aimed at children are particularly important, especially story time.

The *Guidelines for Library Services to Babies and Toddlers* (IFLA, 2007) are even more explicit, and state that libraries should increase the number of activities they provide for children. Due to the fact that the target audience is so young, the involvement of the family or a guardian is crucial to their success, where the ludic and emotional aspect of the activities awaken curiosity and interest in the child in a variety

of ways and bring them into close contact with books and reading. The objectives of this service for children and their families are to make a wide range of publications available (not just books), promote the development of oral competence, make parents aware of the importance of motivating early reading habits through the use of specific stimuli, namely books and storytelling, promote regular use of the library and the services it offers and the building of an environment<sup>1</sup> (both physical and emotional) which is friendly and motivating for children and their families.

Studies<sup>2</sup> presented in recent years have shown that in Portugal public libraries play a crucial role in promoting reading and are an important complement to school when it comes to inculcating reading habits. However, a study from 2007 on promoting reading habits in children in Portugal demonstrated that only 11.4% of parents said they participated in reading activities promoted by public libraries, which is far less than attendance at other organised events to promote reading.<sup>3</sup>

### **Reading clubs for parents and children: An example of best practice**

When images invade the intimacy of the family and substitute the word, the attitudes of adults, parents, teachers and other people who play a role in the child's life, will determine to a great extent, if the child will be a good reader in the future, or if they will be incapable of feeling the pleasure that comes from reading a good book. (García Sobrino, 2000: 44 – authors' translation)

Ílhavo Public Library (IPL) was opened in 2005 and one of its objectives has been to follow the guidelines laid down by UNESCO (IFLA/UNESCO, 1994), which state that it is important to attract readers, including children, adolescents and adults to the library. These objectives have a greater chance of success when the pleasure gained from reading and having contact with books starts at an early age, promoted by parents and nursery school staff long before children start school. This first contact with books will hopefully transform future adolescents and adults, into *bona fide* readers who take pleasure in reading a book.

Because IPL is a local library, it presented a project called 'Read to Grow' (RTG) in 2007 to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Its objectives were to increase library use by children, particularly pre-readers. The project revolved around children of pre-school age and aimed to promote and develop regular and ongoing contact with books and reading and to contribute to the development of competences with

the help of the people involved in the project, namely nursery school teachers, library staff and families.

During the three school years<sup>4</sup> in which RTG took place on a fortnightly basis:

the library staff visit nursery schools to tell stories. The children then visit the library, accompanied by their parents, to listen to more stories. They can also take home publications provided by the library. The success of the project depends on the involvement of all the participants and on the commitment to books. (Dissemination Leaflet of the Project<sup>5</sup> – authors' translation)

However, even though there was a large degree of involvement from nursery school staff and the children, facilitated by the fortnightly visits of the IPL team to the schools, and despite the reading activities developed and the gradual improvement of the classroom libraries in the schools since the beginning of the project, it was difficult to involve the families, particularly the parents. Contrary to what was initially hoped, they did not attend the library or the activities as regularly as expected.

With a view to overcoming this obstacle, on 5 April 2008, all the parents were invited to a session at IPL which aimed to provide more information about the project and during which they were asked to sign a 'Book Commitment' with the library. This document clearly puts the onus on the library, making it proactive in the development of readers and committing itself, together with the parents, to developing reading habits in the children and creating physical and emotional conditions for that relationship to grow. The library offered families involved in the Book Commitment special activities as well as special books that were reserved for them, together with formation and information regarding reading promotion habits. Out of a total of 80 families invited, 18 attended, in a session which included a dissemination/awareness activity using children's literature. However, the signing of the Book Commitment was still not enough to achieve the two main objectives of the project: to promote reading in the home, thus motivating more library lending and stimulating an appreciation of books and reading from an early age within the home.

The next step was taken on 16 May 2009, almost a year after the Book Commitment, when the IPL held its first session 'Reading and Growing Go Hand in Hand: Book Club for Parents and Children'. All the families<sup>6</sup> of the 80 children registered at the local nursery schools included in the project were invited to participate in the first Book Club (BC) meeting. A total of 28 families attended the first session, where the first part dealt with issues related to children's

literature and was aimed at parents, and story time for parents and children. A Book Club Card was given to all the families with the dates of the upcoming activities and the challenge/task to be completed by the family before the following session.

In this way, Reading and Growing Go Hand in Hand: Book Club for Parents and Children was created, a monthly gathering of children between the ages of three and seven and their parents, which took place over several months with a range of different reading activities such as reading games, book talks, book presentations. Due to the large number of participants, two groups were set up who met at specific times. The meetings were held on Saturday morning at IPL and in the afternoon at the library's satellite in Gafanha do Carmo. A theme was chosen for each session and was then fully developed by the children and their parents. At the end of each session, the theme for the following session was announced and a new 'task' was given for the family to carry out before the next meeting. The task always involved the participation of the children and the adults (or family members) and revolved around children's literature and storytelling.

Throughout the five years during which the BC meetings took place, the themes covered and tasks carried out by the families in each of the two groups were wide-ranging: imagination, spring, fear, wolves, friendship, family, winter, colours, animals and the stars are just a few examples of the topics. The work done by the children and their families was presented at the BC meetings and each session started or finished with a story pertaining to the theme of the session. The pieces of work were exhibited during that month in the children's and adolescents' section of IPL until the following session. During each meeting, as well as the task card, the IPL team also prepared a selection of books related to the theme of the meeting, which families could take home. In this way, the library staff who held the sessions and maintained close contact with the families throughout the project could encourage families to lend books. Further contact with books was also promoted when the children carried out the tasks, gave reading suggestions to other BC members (e.g. at Christmas and during the holidays) and presented the books they had read during the holiday or were reading at the time.

From its inception until December 2014, a total of 49 Reading and Growing Go Hand in Hand: Book Club for Parents and Children sessions were held, with an average of 15 families per session at IPL and 12 at the library's satellite in Gafanha do Carmo (27 in total).

From the beginning of the project and the BC, the children grew and developed, as did their competences

and needs as individuals and as readers and consumers of books. As a result, to develop the project and fulfil the desire expressed by the families involved for it to continue, another BC was created, called 'Grown-up and Reading – Book Club for Parents and Children' for children aged eight to ten. It is clear that the children have grown as readers during this process, as has their constant desire to share their feelings about and relationship with books. In this way, the sessions and tasks set by this BC demanded greater involvement with books. Since September 2011, a total of 30 sessions have been held with 11 families participating in the activities promoted by the library. In total, around 30 families are involved in the project activities each year.

## Conclusion

It is widely accepted that children's performance and their success in terms of reading and writing largely depend on their social and economic class, where such factors as their parents' qualifications, their attitudes towards education and their expectations with regard to their children, as well the presence of books and other reading material in the home play an important role. In the case of the project presented in this paper, it included families from different socio-economic backgrounds with a wide range of reading practices. If it is not possible to change the qualifications of the children's parents, or their social background, it is certainly possible to intervene in terms of the participants' expectations and the representations they have about books and reading. This will hopefully increase family dialogue, the number of cultural activities the family attend and the participation of parents in reading activities with their children (Bus, 2001 and Haney and Hill, 2004) such as storytelling, all of which are important for the development of basic reading and writing competences (Viana and Teixeira, 2002).

The children involved in this project were not subjected to formal assessment, so as a result we cannot show any concrete improvements in terms of their reading competences. Nevertheless, there are many reports from children and teachers about the special bond between the participants and books. The project aimed to promote competences in emergent literacy, particularly in the pre-reading group, especially in terms of motivation, oral language development, the construction of positive and concrete representations and meaningful experiences related to books and reading. The BC meetings provided a wide range of contexts and experiences which allowed the children to develop their oral competence and apply it in

concrete situations. The opportunity to discuss and share opinions and points of view occurred on a regular basis, with the objective of stimulating specific relevant lexical areas, particularly those related to the world around the child (e.g. colours, animals, letters, clothes, parts of the body and toys).

The underlying principle on which the project is based is continuity and the creation of specific group dynamics, including a shift in the traditional perception of the library, which has become a personal and familiar place for the children and their families. The bonds of empathy between the members of each group and the library staff create opportunities for further reading suggestions and recommendations, even outside the time slots for the formal reading sessions. However, possibly its greatest impact is on the family itself, creating enriching experiences which revolve around books and parents reading more to their children.

Contact with books occurred in every session, as well as the sharing of the children's reading experiences with their family at home. Reading and writing were given added importance in the meetings and the children were encouraged and praised when they took books home and gave their opinions on the books they had read. The creation of an enriched literary setting within the context of the library, and by extension in the home, promotes reading and positively reinforces these activities, which are associated with pleasure, well-being, emotions and play, creating habits which will hopefully encourage the gradual and long lasting development of reading habits, very often before children have been exposed to books at school.

This project has clearly had a positive impact on the local community, creating loyal library members of different generations and generating an enthusiastic response from them.

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### Notes

1. See Ramos, 2012.
2. Compare with Neves et al (2008).
3. Compare with the following results 'range of appropriate books available (76%), initial contact with books through the "toy book" (73%), reading books to children before have even learnt to read (70%); events which have been reasonably well attended: Recommend that time is set aside to read (56%) and Talk to them about the books they read (51%) and lastly, events which have been poorly attended: Take them to bookstores (23%), Participate in programmes organised by

- schools to promote reading (21%), Take them to libraries/media libraries (15%)' (Santos, 2007: 198).
4. 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010.
5. More detailed information about the project, including an overview and analysis, are available at [http://195.23.38.178/casadaleitura/portalpha/bo/documentos/proj\\_crescer\\_a\\_2.pdf](http://195.23.38.178/casadaleitura/portalpha/bo/documentos/proj_crescer_a_2.pdf).
6. By family, we mean a child accompanied by at least one adult family member, in most situations by parents or grandparents. In total, this year (2014/2015) 32 families are participants of the project, divided into 3 different clubs.

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# Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in public library development in India

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## Abstract

The 19th- and 20th-century Bengal Province in India was a nerve-centre with hosts of socio-cultural and religious reform movements due to its early association with secular liberal western education. Modern institutions of higher learning, established by colonial rulers, European missionaries and contemporary social reformers, led to the awakening of Bengali educated communities. This Bengal Renaissance had contributed towards strengthening production of Bengali literature and the development of the Bengali language. Socially active reformers established community libraries as community learning space in their respective localities. Many century-old libraries are still in existence. These community libraries extended their access to the youth, students, industrial workers and lifelong learners. With this background, this paper aims at in-depth analysis of the legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in the development of public libraries in India during colonial British rule. This paper also looks into the role of the individual reformist genres in the design and delivery of effective public library services and library outreach services in the province.

## Keywords

History, community libraries, public libraries, metropolitan libraries, India, South Asia, Bengal Province, Bengal Renaissance, British Raj

## Introduction

As indicated by many scholars, the ‘Bengal Renaissance’ refers to the socio-religious-cultural reform movement during the 19th and early 20th century in the undivided Bengal Province in India.<sup>1</sup> The Bengal Renaissance was influenced by the western secular education imparted initially by western missionaries and later by secular and nationalist agencies. While the European Renaissance impacted European societies for centuries on various fronts such as science, arts, culture, education and democratic values, the influence of the Bengal Renaissance related mainly to changing socio-religious-cultural values brought on by the early adoption of western education in Bengali society. Later these values were diffused to Eastern India and other parts of India.

The University of Calcutta was the first modern university in the Indian subcontinent established by the British colonial government in 1857, the year better known for India’s first war of independence or the Indian Mutiny. The university was established on 24 January 1857 as a multidisciplinary and secular

western style university (Das, 2015). In the same year, the University of Bombay and University of Madras were established. The University of Calcutta was preceded by other institutions such as Fort William College (1800), Serampore College (1817), Hindu College (1817), Sanskrit College (1824), Calcutta Medical College (1835), Presidency College (1855) and St Xavier’s College Kolkata (1860), providing the foundations for secular western education and leading to the awakening of Bengali intellectuals towards socio-cultural and religious reform through newly found spiritual institutions. The Bengal Renaissance also contributed towards strengthening production of Bengali literature and the development of the Bengali language. Many contemporary writers of that time, such as Sivanath Sastri (1907), Raja Ram Mohun Roy

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(Collet, 1914) and Debendranath Tagore (1909), expressed their views favouring socio-religious reform movements.<sup>2</sup>

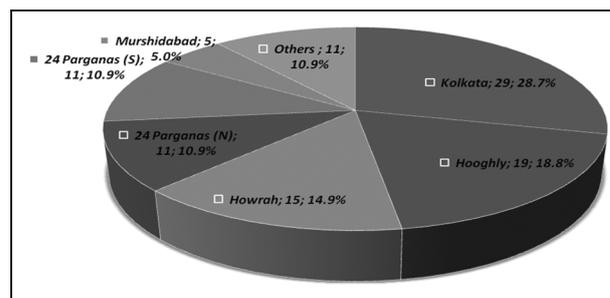
The modern public library system in India began during British colonial rule with the establishment of community libraries across Bengal Province. Many of the community libraries were established with the generous support from the local zamindars (royal families), individual philanthropists, social reformers, and other influential or eminent personalities. Many of the public libraries were meant for the educated youth and neo-literates to enrich knowledge and provide continuous education. The Calcutta Public Library, established in 1836, became the first modern public library in South Asia to be established to supplement the secular western education system in India. The Uttarpara Jaykrishna Public Library, established in 1859 by Jayakrishan Mukherjee, an eminent personality in the locality, was the first free public library in colonial India. Gradually, many public libraries were established and became centres for adult learning and non-formal education.

During the early period of the 20th century the Swadeshi movement, a nationalist movement against British colonial rule, emerged. This movement intensified resistance against the partition of Bengal Province. The participants in the Swadeshi movement became engaged in boycotting western consumer products and started producing some of those items indigenously in the country. Historically, many public libraries in Bengal were established with the help of the activists of the Swadeshi movement and other contemporary political, social and religious reform movements of that time.

While activists and supporters of the Bengal Renaissance were engaged in the creation of literature supporting socio-cultural and religious reform movements, there was urgent need for the creation of public space for reaching out to the general public and engaging them with the neoliberal reform movements. Public libraries were considered an appropriate public space for engaging local communities and supporting public discourse.

### Genesis of the public library system in colonial Bengal

Bengal Province was the national headquarters for colonial British rulers from the 17th to the early 20th century, until 1911. During the British colonial period many public libraries were established through community efforts that did not involve the patronage of local colonial rulers. In addition, other libraries were established through support from the local

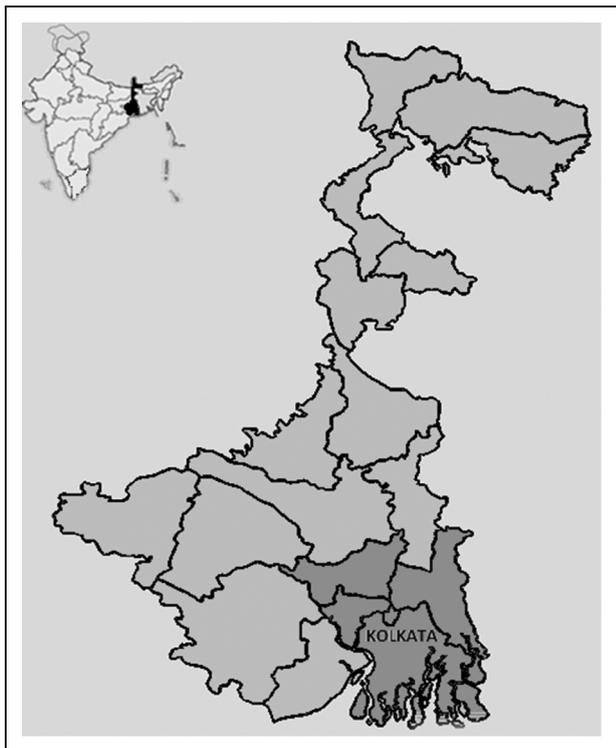


**Figure 1.** Distribution of century-old libraries in West Bengal.

rulers. Obviously, the public libraries which received the support of local communities flourished with diversified services. Public libraries became a community space for social functions, intercultural interactions, debating on contemporary issues, and sometimes with political motives of raising awareness against the governing practices and abuses of the British colonial rulers.

The West Bengal Public Library Network (WBPLN) (2014) has documented a list of century-old libraries in the state of West Bengal in India as a part of an undivided Bengal Province before India's independence. This list is shown in Table 1 found in the Appendix. Figure 1 indicates the distribution of these century-old public libraries in different districts of West Bengal. The Bengal Renaissance was centred on Calcutta (now Kolkata) and its surrounding districts, which are namely Howrah, Hooghly and 24 Parganas. Some parts of Calcutta were included in the undivided 24 Parganas district. This Figure also indicates that Calcutta district has the highest number of century-old libraries with a 28.7% overall share. Hooghly district stands second with a 18.8% share, whereas Howrah district stands third with a 14.9% share. 24 Parganas (South) and 24 Parganas (North) cumulatively have a 21.8% share. Century-old libraries do exist in other districts of West Bengal as well, namely Murshidabad, Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, Coochbehar, Malda, Midnapur (West), Midnapur (East) and Nadia, as recorded in Table 1.

As shown in Figure 2, the geographical concentration of century-old libraries in West Bengal state is mainly across the districts surrounding Calcutta metropolitan city. Several districts were part of the undivided Bengal Province in the early 20th century, which is shown in Figure 3. The districts in the eastern side became part of Bangladesh after Bengal's partition and India's independence in 1947, whereas districts in the western side became part of India (Bose, 1993: 85). The map in Figure 2 indicates that the geographical proximity to the centres of the

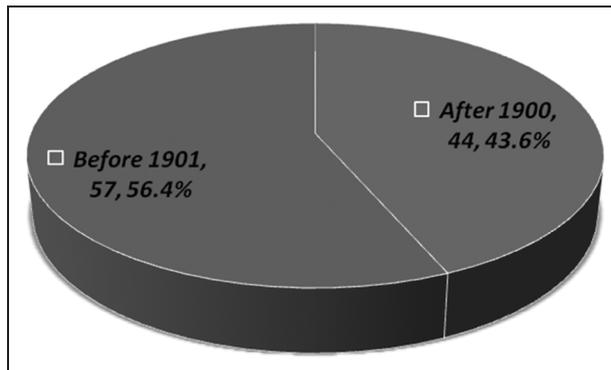


**Figure 2.** Concentration of century-old libraries in West Bengal surrounding the city of Calcutta.



**Figure 3.** Bengal districts in the early 20th century.

Bengal Renaissance triggered the high occurrence of public libraries in the surrounding districts during the 19th and early 20th centuries. This tradition continued



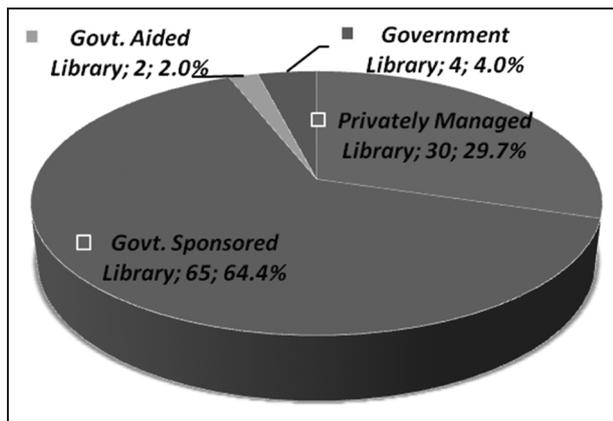
**Figure 4.** Distribution of century-old libraries based on year of establishment.

until the enactment of the West Bengal Public Libraries Act in 1979, which ensures equitable development of a public library system across West Bengal state covering all districts (WBPLN, 2013).

To help in understanding the present status of the century-old libraries in West Bengal state, the management structure of WBPLN is briefly mentioned here. The State Central Library is positioned at the pinnacle as an advisory and policymaking body in WBPLN, followed by district libraries, sub-divisional libraries, town libraries and rural libraries. The state government also introduced a three-tier library system in every district, namely (1) district library, (2) town or sub-divisional libraries, and (3) rural or area or primary unit libraries to serve the local citizens. Through the transition, many of these century-old libraries were transformed into town libraries or rural libraries.

The Bengal Renaissance had a great influence in the development of community libraries in the 19th century. These libraries helped to increase adult literacy in rural and semi-urban areas through inculcating reading habits in young people, neo-literates and school-going children. As indicated in Table 1, century-old libraries can be categorized based on their year of establishment, primarily during the 19th century and then early 20th century till 1913. Figure 4 shows the distribution of these libraries in the last two centuries. Their impact is still a physical presence with 19th-century libraries representing 56.4% of public libraries in the region.

Many of these century-old libraries are now operational through voluntary efforts, while some others receive government support to continue their public services. Thus, another round of categorization is done based on the present management status and the distribution can be seen in Figure 5. This shows that government-sponsored libraries stand highest in number with a 64.4% share, and privately managed libraries stand second with a 29.7% share. This figure



**Figure 5.** Distribution of century-old libraries based on management type.

also indicates that the state government took over the responsibility of running these century-old libraries through sponsorship and ensuring inclusion of library personnel in the governmental payroll. The state government also offers sustainable career options to library personnel in government-sponsored libraries, while retaining autonomy in the management of the respective libraries. On the other hand privately managed libraries are run by the volunteers and core members from the local communities, without involving state government funding or absorption of library personnel in the governmental payroll. Government-aided libraries sometimes seek governmental support for infrastructure development, but usually they do not ask for recurring expenses. On the other hand 4% of the century-old libraries belong to the government library category. These include the National Library of India, Asiatic Society Library, Uttarpara Jaykrishna Public Library and North Bengal State Library. The former two libraries belong to the Government of India, and latter two belong to the Government of West Bengal.

### Influence of the Brahmo Samaj movement

The Brahmo Samaj movement was part of the first wave of religious reform movements that marked the beginning of the Bengal Renaissance in the Indian subcontinent. The Brahmo Samaj was started at Calcutta on 20 August 1828 by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Debendranath Tagore. Both Roy and Tagore were products of western secular and liberal education, and the Brahmo Samaj engaged in establishing educational institutions for spreading liberal education. They founded many schools and colleges for girls and boys. The educational institutions for girls became a turning point towards the emancipation of women in society through liberal education. Some of the

significant schools and colleges founded by the Brahmo Samaj during the British colonial rule were: City College (1881), City School (1879), Brahmo Balika Shikshalay/ Brahmo Girls' School (1890), besides many which were established in the 20th century through its educational wing, the Brahmo Samaj Education Society.

The Sadharan Brahmo Samaj Library which was founded in Calcutta in 1895 was initially restricted to the followers and members of the Brahmo Samaj. This library later expanded its access to the general public and became a prominent public library in the city. It is still running through self-sustainable resources and member contributions, without any governmental support. Other public libraries established in Bengal during the 19th century also have direct or indirect influence from eminent members of the Brahmo Samaj.

Many of the public libraries and academic libraries adjoining educational institutions were established by the core members of Brahmo Samaj in the areas surrounding Calcutta. Many eminent writers and educationists were born in Brahmo families, who took part in the advancement of knowledge and social reforms. Nobel Prize winner Rabindra Nath Tagore was one of them. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913 for his poetical work *Gitanjali – Song Offerings*, becoming its first non-European winner. Tagore utilized his Nobel Prize money to establish Visva Bharati University in 1921, which is an experimental university for embracing nature and creativity in pursuit of the advancement of knowledge and universal understanding. Tagore also became the founding President of the All Bengal Library Association, which was established in 1925 to co-ordinate the activities of existing public libraries and to organize the library movements in the province. Tagore himself was closely associated with the development of many rural and institutional libraries surrounding the Santiniketan Sriniketan areas – the birthplace of Visva Bharati. The Brahmo Samaj continues to influence eastern India, helping to construct a library-based society, educating and preparing citizens with liberal minds (Brahmo Samaj, 2014; Kopf, 1979).

### Influence of the Ramakrishna Mission movement

The Ramakrishna movement was part of the second wave of religious reform movements during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Swami Vivekananda, born at Calcutta in 1863 as Narendranath Dutta, was the founder of the twin organizations, Ramakrishna Mission (RKM) and Ramakrishna Math. Sri Ramakrishna

was the great 19th-century saint of Bengal who rediscovered the new pathways in Hindu spirituality, called the Vedanta movement. The Mission aims at:

the harmony of religions, harmony of the East and the West, harmony of the ancient and the modern, spiritual fulfilment, all-round development of human faculties, social equality, and peace for all humanity, without any distinctions of creed, caste, race or nationality. (Horiuchi, 2013: 119)

Here, Swami Vivekananda ignited the concepts of spiritual accomplishment and universal brotherhoods through his Ramakrishna movement, which was later carried on successfully by dedicated monks and followers.

Similarly to the Brahmo Samaj movement, followers of the Ramakrishna movement engaged in the establishment of new educational institutions as a means to all-round development of human faculties. They also developed public libraries to spread the teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and other reformers of the Bengal Renaissance. Swami Vivekananda's sudden death in 1902 did not deter the organizations from establishing new centres and new educational institutions across the country. Many of the public libraries run by the RKM were equipped with state-of-the-art services, which also became exemplary for other community-driven public libraries. The state-of-the-art facilities included study carrels for serious readers and prospective authors, desktop computers for accessing the library catalogue database and other online information, etc. Table 1 also indicates some names of different century-old public libraries affiliated to RKM which continues to maintain public libraries for youth, the general public and followers in the state of West Bengal and in other Indian states. Most of these libraries also have a reading room, a supplementary facility which allows students to pursue their studies using their personal books and textbooks. Presently RKM maintains 269 libraries across the country – 140 public libraries and 129 school/college libraries – located in different branch centres of the Ramakrishna Mission (2013). Some important public libraries maintained by the RKM are namely, Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture Library, Calcutta; Swami Vivekananda's Ancestral House and Cultural Centre Library, Calcutta; Ramakrishna Sarada Mission Ashram Library, Calcutta; Ramakrishna Mission Library, Narendrapur; Ramakrishna Mission Janashiksha Library, Belur Math; and Ramakrishna Mission Student Home Library, Belghoria. These are also government-aided public libraries and listed on the website of the West Bengal Public Library Network.

## Influence of the Swadeshi movement

While the Brahmo Samaj and Ramakrishna movements were religious reform movements during the Bengal Renaissance period, the Swadeshi movement became a nationalist movement against British colonial rule in India. Through this movement many young people became socio-politically motivated towards greater participation in nation-building by following the principles of *swadeshi* (i.e. self-sufficiency). The Swadeshi movement is the precursor to the Indian independence movement, and helped to make Swadeshi enterprises flourish in Bengal Province as pointed out by Sumit Sarkar (1973). This movement involved boycotting British products and the revival of domestic products and production processes. The movement intensified with the announcement of the partition of Bengal by the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon in 1905. This bifurcation plan was taken to weaken the nationalist movement in Bengal, which intensified during the beginning of the 20th century. The British planned to divide the province into eastern and western parts to reduce the cumulative effects of the nationalist movement. Many eminent personalities including Nobel-laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Bipin Chandra Pal among others were involved in this movement.<sup>3</sup>

The early revolutionary secret societies were founded in Bengal Province around the time of the Swadeshi movement. These extremist groups maintained their own libraries for motivating educated youth towards participation in freedom struggles. Many of these groups went underground, while maintaining collections of revolutionary literature gathered from different parts of the world. Their politically motivating literatures helped inspire the young people to achieve freedom from British rule. The Anushilan Samiti's Calcutta branch, for example, had a library collection of 4000 books. Another revolutionary society, the Suhrid Samiti had a library collection of 230 books. The Suhrid Library and Indian Association Library, both listed in Table 1, belong to century-old libraries of this genre (WBPLN, 2014). Historian Sumit Sarkar (1973) gives a detailed account of how library resources were built up during the Swadeshi period and for what purposes.

Sarkar delved into the detailed functioning of some influential youth patriotic Samitis (or societies or associations) in Bengal. From the very beginning some of these societies combined physical culture with moral and intellectual training. Many of them also had a system of regular classes on socio-political issues. Their members were encouraged to

read biographies of patriotic leaders, world literature on radical movements, radical ideologies and other socialist literature. Jogendranath Vidyabhusan wrote numerous biographies of Mazzini, Garibaldi, Kropotkin and other patriotic leaders – both Indian and foreign. Chattopadhyay's (1882) book *Anandamath* which became essential reading for radical leaders and freedom fighters, was set against a background of the Sannyasi rebellion in the late 18th century. The book became synonymous with the struggle for Indian independence from British colonial rule. Thus, this book was banned by the Government. These patriotic societies maintained libraries with good collections of books in order to increase members' interest in radical movements and 'revolutions' (Sarkar, 1973: 484). Some of the books in their collections were already banned by the Government. The Calcutta Anushilan Samiti had a library of 4000 books. Mymensingh Suhrid Samiti had a good library collection, out of which a list of 230 titles was preserved in the home political files of the colonial government (Sarkar, 1973: 483). Sister Nivedita arranged to supply Irish nationalist literature for motivating some early recruits to these societies. Their intellectual influences were extremely diverse. The Imperial Library of Calcutta was a good source of literature on socialism, and despite the librarian's discouragement, Bhupendranath Dutta was able to get from there a book by Hyndman (Sarkar, 1973: 483–484). Sarkar further writes: 'The library of the (Mymensingh Suhrid) Samiti had 230 books when the police raided it in November 1908; these included lives of Cromwell, Washington and Napoleon, Condemned as a Nihilist, Nabya Japan and several books on Ramakrishna and Vivekananda' (Sarkar, 1973: 397).

The late 19th-century Bengal Renaissance also witnessed the establishment of many factories and mills in the vicinity of Calcutta. This increased migration of factory labourers from neighbouring states and their settlement at different districts around Calcutta. Swadeshi leaders took this opportunity to spread awareness amongst factory workers of exploitation by the British factory owners. The historian Sarkar observes the attempts made by Swadeshi leaders and social reformers to improve the material and moral conditions of Indian workers. The Brahmo social reformer Sibnath Sastri started night schools for labourers, a Workingmen's Club in 1870, a monthly journal *Bharat Sramajeebi* in 1874 (for which he wrote a poem, beginning with the lines 'Awake, Arise, O Workingman'), and an institute for workers in Baranagore in 1876. In addition to that Sastri established a library for factory workers in 1906 (Sarkar, 1973: 190; Sastri, 1907). This was the beginning of

inculcating reading culture and the initiation of adult education for industrial workers in Bengal.

Many of these Swadeshi efforts influenced educated communities in Bengal to participate in neo-liberal movements as well as to sympathize with freedom struggles against the colonial rulers in India. Community libraries obviously helped in spreading literacy and encouraging socio-political awareness amongst the youth and working class.

### Launching of free reading rooms

With the expansion of western education in colonial Bengal during the late 19th and 20th centuries, there was a proliferation of first-generation learners across Bengal province, particularly at Calcutta and surrounding districts. Many of these first-generation learners did not have suitable learning space or access to modern amenities such as electricity at home. Community libraries offered these learners a conducive learning space, called 'free reading rooms', for effective learning as well as for group study or collaborative learning. These libraries also organized study circles for discussing queries and clearing doubts related to their study. Table 1 consists of some of the century-old libraries offering a free reading room service to walk-in users. Still relevant today, many of the existing free reading rooms across the state of West Bengal also help students preparing their competitive examinations and school or college-level final examinations. Later many public and academic libraries across India constructed free reading rooms for walk-in users. Now, many of them even offer free Wi-Fi access for attracting young people to public libraries.

### Calcutta Public Library and its successors

The Calcutta Public Library (CPL), established in 1836, is the oldest public library in modern India. This was a non-governmental effort, established collectively by colonial officers, Englishmen working in Calcutta in different capacities, and western-educated liberal Indians as its first proprietors. Membership was offered on a proprietary basis. In the Preface to the *Catalogue of the Calcutta Public Library* of 1846, a listing of 95 proprietors is found that includes both Englishmen and influential Bengali gentlemen (CPL, 1846: xvii–xviii).<sup>4</sup> Many of their successors contributed to the Bengal Renaissance and other social movements.

While advocating the establishment of Calcutta Public Library, the Editor of the *Englishmen* newspaper JH Stocqueler circulated an address in August

1835 among the principal inhabitants of city of Calcutta. He observed (CPL, 1846: iii):

As considerable inconvenience is sustained by almost all classes of the community of Calcutta, owing to the absence of any thing like a General Library, combining the advantages of a library of reference and resort with those of a circulating library, it is proposed to take measures for immediately establishing such an institution, upon a scale commensurate with the interest and wants of the reading population.

He further emphasized that this library should be based upon broad and liberal principles in order to receive very general support throughout the metropolis. To Stocqueler, an Indian Public Library should be a mighty reservoir for all who burn with the thirst for knowledge. He then wanted to dedicate CPL 'To All Ranks and Professions', to every citizen of the metropolis of Calcutta.

Honourable Sir John Peter Grant seconded the public appeal made by Stocqueler. In a public meeting in Calcutta on 31 August 1835, Grant observed (CPL, 1846: iv):

I believe this the only society of the same extent which has not a library of some description; at the Cape, at Bombay, they are better provided, and Madras has its Literary Society, but here in Calcutta, we are without the means of reading, except by purchasing books, from Humphrey Clinker up to Hume's History of England.

Grant thought this was a very great inconvenience, and even Europeans living in Calcutta had no means except the expensive one of procuring books of light literature which formed the main reading of the greater part of the community; or those books which no man would purchase or refer to, except for the purpose of seeking out some particular information or referring to some point. He then proposed to have a public library in Calcutta for 'the convenience of all classes of the community, by no means excepting those young men, natives of this country, who are most meritoriously pursuing their studies' (CPL, 1846: iv).

All these efforts led to the establishment of Calcutta Public Library (CPL) in 1836. At the time of its inception, CPL received donations of books from private individuals, the library of the erstwhile Fort William College, and Governor General Sir Charles Metcalfe. Many native Indians, Englishmen living in the city as well as functionaries of colonial government became regular users. Its services were later extended to many poor students and others free of charge for a specified period of time (NLI, 2014).

The British colonial government later founded a government library called the Imperial Library in 1891 at Calcutta by combining a number of secretariat libraries and with collections from different libraries such as the Home Department, East India College, Fort William College and the East India Board in London. Imperial Library later acquired CPL in 1903 for expanding its services to the general public and also became a repository of printed books published in the Indian subcontinent. Imperial Library declared its purposes in a notification in the *Gazette of India*, which states:

It is intended that it should be a library of reference, a working place for students and a repository of material for the future historians of India, in which, so far as possible, every work written about India, at any time, can be seen and read. (NLI, 2014)

The Imperial Library was widely used by contemporary progressive writers (Renaissance writers), social reformers, and also by the leaders of socio-political movements including the Swadeshi movement (Sarkar, 1973: 484). After independence, the Imperial Library became the National Library of India (NLI) in 1948 through the Imperial Library (Change of Name) Act, 1948. NLI also became an institution of national importance, dedicated to serving the whole nation with the largest collections of publications in all official Indian languages.

## Conclusion

The Bengal Renaissance strengthened the production of Bengali literature and the development of the Bengali language. Newly emerged educated liberal and empowered Bengali intellectuals started to establish scholarly societies, youth associations and public libraries across the undivided Bengal Province. Many renowned public libraries were founded during this period. In every district of the province, public libraries were established with support from the local communities. Many of these century-old libraries are still in existence as shown in the Appendix (Table 1). Scholarly societies which are still in existence such as Bangiya Sahitya Parishad (Bengal Literary Association), Bangiya Bigyan Parishad (Bengal Science Association), Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, and All Bengal Library Association also established their libraries and extended their access to the general public. The creation of social institutions also strengthened the nationalist science movement, first in Bengal province and later all over India.

Public libraries not only gave the necessary space for public engagement in socio-political issues, but

also helped in the development of literacy in local communities, inculcating reading habits to first-generation learners, inculcating a scientific temper and overall transformation of the character of Bengali-speaking communities. Social reformers at that time visualized a society with open-mindedness, liberal, free from superstitions and belief in black magic, free from social exclusions and negative doctrines. All these social reforms were also made possible with the development of a middle class, having access to affordable public education and public library services. Later, many public libraries also indirectly supported Swadeshi and other nationalist movements. Thus, the legacy of the Bengal Renaissance had an overarching impact on the lives of billion peoples rippling beyond the 19th- and 20th-century timeframes.

Currently, non-government organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations are developing rural libraries and reading rooms across South Asia to improve access to elementary, secondary and adult education, and to facilitate universal access to information as required for the development of livelihoods. Some of these NGOs are engaged in achieving United Nations Millennium Development

Goals (UN-MDGs) through improving access to information and mass education. For example, an NGO named READ Global has subsidiaries in India (READ India), Nepal (READ Nepal) and Bhutan (READ Bhutan) for establishing rural public libraries and information access points in the respective countries. Similarly, another NGO, Room to Read, is also active in South Asia in the development of rural libraries and community libraries.

However, there is a need to have in-depth research and analysis of the long-standing influence of these public libraries in South Asian society in general and their influence in the socio-economic empowerment of common citizens in particular. First- or second-generation learners derive significant impetus while visiting a public library and continuing their formal or non-formal learning. Changing reading habits due to improved access to smart phones, networked computers and satellite televisions can pose serious challenges to certain segments of the population, as discussed by several scholars and sociologists. Some research could also be carried out in that direction to improve services of public libraries in South Asia aligned with the livelihood requirements of public library users.

## Appendix

**Table 1.** Century-old libraries in West Bengal State.

Name of century-old libraries	Management status	Year of estb.	District
Agarpara Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1891	24 Parganas (N)
Panihati Bandhab Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1898	24 Parganas (N)
Sasadhar Pathagar	Privately managed library	1904	24 Parganas (N)
Arbelia Seva Samity Library	Govt-sponsored library	1904	24 Parganas (N)
Belgharia Parimohan Memorial Town Library	Govt-sponsored library	1904	24 Parganas (N)
Bhatpara Sahitya Mandir	Govt-sponsored library	1904	24 Parganas (N)
Karunamoyee Library	Govt-sponsored library	1905	24 Parganas (N)
Mulajore Bharatchandra Granthagar	Govt-sponsored library	1906	24 Parganas (N)
Bankim Sahitya Sammilani	Govt-sponsored library	1907	24 Parganas (N)
Sir Romesh Library	Govt-sponsored library	1910	24 Parganas (N)
Sriguru Granthashram	Govt-sponsored library	1910	24 Parganas (N)
Bandhab Library Joynagar	Govt-sponsored library	1869	24 Parganas (S)
Boral Priyanath Library	Privately managed library	1871	24 Parganas (S)
Mudiali Library	Govt-sponsored library	1876	24 Parganas (S)
Rajpur Sadharan Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1877	24 Parganas (S)
Hemkali Library	Govt-sponsored library	1902	24 Parganas (S)
Vidyabhushan Library	Govt-sponsored library	1902	24 Parganas (S)
Freserganj Bijoli Club & Library	Govt-sponsored library	1903	24 Parganas (S)
The Behala Town Library	Govt-sponsored library	1903	24 Parganas (S)
Prativa Library	Govt-sponsored library	1906	24 Parganas (S)
Purandar Smriti Mandir Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1910	24 Parganas (S)
Baharu Shyamsundar Public Library & Free Reading Room	Govt-sponsored library	1912	24 Parganas (S)

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

Name of century-old libraries	Management status	Year of estb.	District
Bishnupur Mahakuma Library	Govt-sponsored library	1904	Bankura
Ramranjan Poura Nigam O Vivekananda Granthagar	Privately managed library	1900	Birbhum
Raniganj Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1876	Burdwan
Bagila Bankim Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1900	Burdwan
North Bengal State Library	Government library	1869	Coochbehar
William Kerry Granthagar	Privately managed library	1818	Hooghly
Konnagar Public Library & Free Reading Room	Govt-sponsored library	1858	Hooghly
Uttarpara Jaykrishna Public Library	Government Library	1859	Hooghly
Mahesh Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1869	Hooghly
Serampore Public Library & Mutual Improvement Association	Govt-sponsored library	1871	Hooghly
Chandannagore Pustakagar	Govt-sponsored library	1873	Hooghly
Janai Sadharan Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1882	Hooghly
Sripur Kalyan Samity	Privately managed library	1891	Hooghly
Bansberia Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1891	Hooghly
Jamgram Nandi Sadharan Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1894	Hooghly
Mondalai Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1894	Hooghly
Chandra Saraswati Pathagar	Privately managed Library	1901	Hooghly
Bhadreswar Public Library	Privately managed library	1909	Hooghly
Uttarpara Saraswat Sammilan	Govt-sponsored library	1909	Hooghly
Young Men's Association	Govt-sponsored library	1909	Hooghly
Tarakeswar Yuba Sangha Town Library	Govt-sponsored library	1910	Hooghly
Uttar Bahini Library	Govt-sponsored library	1911	Hooghly
Garalgachha Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1913	Hooghly
Gopalnagar Saraswat Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1913	Hooghly
Shibpur Public Library	Privately managed library	1874	Howrah
Rashpur Peoples Library	Govt-sponsored library	1883	Howrah
Bantra Public Library	Privately managed library	1884	Howrah
Makardaha Saraswat Library	Govt-sponsored library	1885	Howrah
Bally Sadharan Granthagar	Govt-sponsored library	1885	Howrah
Mohiary Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1886	Howrah
Palli Bharati Granthagar	Govt-sponsored library	1888	Howrah
BelurSadharan Granthagar	Privately managed library	1895	Howrah
Jaipur Arya Samity	Govt-sponsored library	1896	Howrah
Friends Union Pathagar	Privately managed library	1898	Howrah
The United Reading Club & Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1898	Howrah
Ramakrishnapore Sansad	Privately managed library	1900	Howrah
Friends Club Library	Govt-sponsored library	1901	Howrah
Maju Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1905	Howrah
Amta Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1907	Howrah
Asiatic Society	Government Library	1784	Kolkata
Sashipada Institute Library & Free Reading Room	Privately managed library	1867	Kolkata
Ariadaha Association Library	Govt-sponsored library	1870	Kolkata
The United Reading Rooms	Privately managed library	1872	Kolkata
Baranagar Peoples Library	Privately managed library	1876	Kolkata
Indian Association Library	Privately managed library	1876	Kolkata
Dakhineswar Ramakrishna Library & Reading Club	Privately managed library	1879	Kolkata
Taltala Public Library	Privately managed library	1882	Kolkata
Bagbazar Reading Library	Govt-sponsored library	1883	Kolkata
Kumartuli Institute	Privately managed library	1884	Kolkata
Kalighat Library	Privately managed library	1886	Kolkata
Suburban Reading Club	Privately managed library	1888	Kolkata
Chaitanya Library	Privately managed library	1889	Kolkata
Bharati Prasad	Privately managed library	1890	Kolkata

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

Name of century-old libraries	Management status	Year of estb.	District
Suhrid Library	Privately managed library	1891	Kolkata
Asutosh Memorial Library	Privately managed library	1891	Kolkata
Mahabodhi Society	Privately managed library	1892	Kolkata
Bangiya Sahitya Parisad	Govt-aided library	1893	Kolkata
Sadharan Brahma Samaj Library	Privately managed library	1895	Kolkata
Belegkata Sandhya Samity	Privately managed library	1900	Kolkata
Hanifa Public Urdu Primary Library	Govt-sponsored library	1903	Kolkata
National Library	Government library	1903	Kolkata
Barisha Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1904	Kolkata
Ram Mohan Library & Free Reading Room	Govt-aided library	1904	Kolkata
The Bagbazar Free Reading Library	Govt-sponsored library	1907	Kolkata
The Boys Own Library and Young Men's Institute	Privately managed library	1909	Kolkata
Chetla Nityananda Library and Free Reading Room	Govt-sponsored library	1910	Kolkata
Kheyali Khelaghar	Govt-sponsored library	1910	Kolkata
North Entally Kamala Library	Govt-sponsored library	1911	Kolkata
Desikottam Bidhusekhar Town Library	Govt-sponsored library	1905	Malda
Bharati Bhaban Sadharan Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1910	Malda
Contai Club Sub-divisional Library	Govt-sponsored library	1905	Midnapur (E)
Rajnarayan Basu Smriti Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1851	Midnapur (W)
Sargachi Ramakrishna Mission Ashram Granthagar	Govt-sponsored library	1897	Murshidabad
Bankim Chandra Library	Govt-sponsored library	1905	Murshidabad
Saraswati Library	Govt-sponsored library	1910	Murshidabad
KandiSadharan Pathagar	Govt-sponsored library	1911	Murshidabad
Lalgola M.N. Academy Public Town Library	Govt-sponsored library	1913	Murshidabad
Krishnanagar Public Library	Govt-sponsored library	1856	Nadia
Ranaghat Public Library	Privately managed library	1884	Nadia

Source: West Bengal Public Library Network (2014) *Century Old Libraries*. Available at: [www.wbpublibnet.gov.in/content/century-old-libraries-0](http://www.wbpublibnet.gov.in/content/century-old-libraries-0) (accessed 9 April 2015).

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## Notes

1. Of many scholarly works referring to the Bengal Renaissance as a movement for socio-religious-cultural transformation in a provincial society, important ones are: *Ramtanu Lahiri, Brahman and Reformer: A History of the Renaissance in Bengal* by Sivanath Sastri (1907), *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance* by Amit Sen (1946), *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance: The*

*Dynamics of Indian Modernization 1773–1835* by David Kopf (1969), besides many others. Recently, Subrata Dasgupta (2010) wrote a comprehensive narrative of the Bengal Renaissance. This reform movement was the first of its kind in the Indian sub-continent to get rid of the rigidity of socio-religious dogmas crippling Indian society.

- Former Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru in his seminal work *Discovery of India* (1946) narrates the story of the Bengal Renaissance in a chapter which was later adapted as a popular television serial 'Bharat Ek Khoj'. One particular episode of this serial depicts the making of the Bengal Renaissance movement (Doordarshan India, 1988).
- The song 'Vande Mataram' (now the national song of India) written by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was widely used during the Swadeshi movement and later during India's freedom struggles. 'Vande Mataram' became a slogan against the British rulers. Similarly, 'Jana Gana Mana' (now the national anthem of India) written by Tagore was introduced during the Swadeshi movement. It was first sung in the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress on 27 December 1911. Tagore also encouraged communal harmony and conceived the Rakhi Bandhan festival in 1905. The

historian Sarkar (1973: 287) observes: 'At two meetings during the last week of September 1905, Rabindranath put forward his plan for observing rakhi-bandhan on the coming partition day, transforming a traditional popular rite into a symbol of the brotherhood and unity of the people of Bengal'. The exchange of rakhis (wristlets of coloured thread) took place on 16 October 1905 with a huge participation of inhabitants irrespective of their class, caste, creed or religion. The legacy of the Rakhi Bandhan festival still continues.

4. Out of these proprietors significant Bengali gentlemen who took ownership of CPL include Dwarkanath Tagore, Prosonnocomar Tagore, Ramanauth Tagore, Collyloll Tagore, Brojonauth Dhur, Pearymohun Chowdry, Peary Chand Mittra, Radhamadub Banerjea, Ramgopaul Ghose, Muttyloll Seal, Russomoy Dutt, and Suttwachurn Ghoshal.

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## Author biography

**Dr Anup Kumar Das** is an avid academic researcher and information specialist working in an interdisciplinary research centre at Jawaharlal Nehru University. His research interests revolve around information policies, cultural policies, open access to knowledge, digital libraries, history of librarianship, safeguarding documentary heritages, library advocacy, and South Asian studies. He is Book Review Editor of the *Journal of Scientometric Research*. He was a Consultant to UNESCO New Delhi and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA). He has published two books: *Open Access to Knowledge and Information: Scholarly Literature and Digital Library Initiatives – the South Asian Scenario* (2008); and *Collaboration in International and Comparative Librarianship* (2014). He also contributed four self-directed learning modules and 14 self-learning units in a set of UNESCO Open Access Curricula for Researchers and Library Schools, 2015. He has published about 60 research papers in different scholarly journals, edited books and international conferences.

## Abstracts

### قُطُفَات

#### Internship in LIS education : An international perspective on experiential learning

Nora J. Bird, Clara M. Chu, Fatih Oguz

العدد رقم 41,4 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخَص:

لقد دار جدل في أمريكا الشمالية لسنواتٍ عدة حول قيمة البرامج التدريبية كونها صورة عملية للتعلّم في مجال علوم المكتبات والمعلومات، ينظر البحث الحالي إذا ما كانت هذه الخبرة لازمة ولماذا وإذا يمكن القيام بها على مستوى دولي أو عبر الإنترنت، يتضمن المشاركون مكتبات وجمعيات وطنية، وكان هناك دعماً أكبر للتجارب الدولية، فهناك نقص في الدعم المؤسسي للتدريب الافتراضي، بغض النظر عن زيادة استخدام الأدوات لتقديم تعليم علوم المكتبات والمعلومات على الإنترنت، وتقتصر الورقة البحثية المزيد من البحث؛ لتناول النماذج مُتعددة التخصصات، والمترابطة، والدولية.

#### Information literacy and diginatives: Expanding the role of academic libraries

Johanna Kiviluoto

العدد رقم 41,4 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخَص:

يُعد الترويج لتنمية مهارات الثقافة المعلوماتية في مراحلها قبل الأكاديمية لمن يُطلق عليهم جيل جوجل، وخاصةً بين طلبة المرحلة الثانوية، واحداً من الموضوعات المطروحة للمناقشة حالياً في مجال محو الأمية الإعلامية والمعلوماتية، ويجب أن يكون للمكتبات الأكاديمية أيضاً دور في التدريب على المهارات اللازمة لمحو الأمية المعلوماتية. عادة ما تُقدم المكتبات العامة في فنلندا خدمات المكتبات المدرسية في المرحلة الثانوية وتقوم على تطويرها، ويجب أن يكون للمكتبات الأكاديمية أيضاً دور في التدريب على مهارات محو الأمية المعلوماتية. لقد اتخذت المكتبة المشتركة للتعليم العالي في مدينة لاهني الفنلندية خطوات عدة؛ لتلبية هذه المتطلبات بالتعاون مع المؤسسات التعليمية والفنية وعلى مستوى التعليم الثانوي والجامعي. يُناقش هذا المقال القضايا السابق تناولها ومهارات محو الأمية المعلوماتية، والتعلّم مدى

الحياة بدءاً من محو الأمية المعلوماتية والتعلّم مدى الحياة بدءاً من المرحلة الثانوية وصولاً إلى التعليم العالي.

#### Library anxiety among university students : A survey

Marisa Alicia McPherson

العدد رقم 41,4 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخَص:

يُعد القلق من المكتبة أحد العوامل المُساهمة في ضعف الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب، وهي الظاهرة التي تفرض على المكتبات تحدياً حقيقياً يتطلب الوصول لإستراتيجيات تُحد من هذه المُشكلة. سعت هذه الدراسة إلى تحديد مؤشرات وجود القلق من المكتبة وأجري استبيان على عينة من 150 طالب بكلية الإنسانيات والتعليم بجامعة ويست إنديز. أشارت نتائج البحث إلى وجود قلق مكتبي قصير المدى بين الطلاب لعوامل عديدة. تتضمن هذه العوامل عدم صلة المهارات المعلوماتية وانعدام الخبرة المكتبية، ومن العوامل المؤسسية كبر حجم المكتبة نسبياً وترتيب الأدوار والمُقتنيات. قدمت الورقة البحثية في النهاية توصيات للمُساعدة في الحد من المشكلات التي خلقها القلق المكتبي.

#### At home in the world : International library staff exchange program highlights

Mary M. Somerville, Liz Cooper, Catta Torhell,  
Cindy Hashert

العدد رقم 41,4 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخَص:

لقد بدأت المكتبات الأكاديمية بجامعة لينوس بالسويد بالتعاون مع جامعة كولورادو دنفر بالولايات المتحدة الأمريكية في برنامج لتبادل الموظفين والعمل معاً في مشروعات، وقد بدأت هذه المُبادرة في إطار عمل أوسع ضمن أهداف تدويل الجامعة ومُتطلبات الكفاءة الثقافية، بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كانت المكتبتان تمران بتغيرات كبيرة في بيئة العمل، بما فيها مرافق تم تصميمها حديثاً، وبرامج، وخدمات، والتي تتطلب من العاملين نظرة جديدة لمؤسساتهم وفهم مُختلف لأدوارهم.

## Future of public libraries : Opinions of public librarians in Turkey

Bülent Yilmaz, Nilay Cevher

العدد رقم 4، 41 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخص:

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى تحليل منظور المكتبيين العاملين في المكتبات العامة حول مستقبل هذه المكتبات في تركيا، وتم ترتيب البحث تحت ستة عناوين: الحالة العامة للتغيير في المكتبات العامة، والخدمات، والتعلم مدى الحياة ومحو الأمية المعلوماتية، والتكنولوجيا، والإدارة والمقتنيات، والمباني، والمكتبي، والمستخدم، وغيرها من العوامل مثل الشؤون المالية. تم استخدام منهجًا وصفيًا عبر عمل استبيان إلكتروني من 62 سؤال، وتم إرساله إلى 481 مكتبي من العاملين في مكتبات تركيا العامة عام 2014، جاب على الاستبيان 201 مكتبي، 185 إجابة كانت صالحة للاستخدام في البحث. تُوضح النتائج أن المكتبات العامة التركية مُتفائلة بمستقبلها وإمكانية بقائها ونموها.

## Exploring reading habits and academic success in rural Kenya

Florence N. Mugambi

العدد رقم 4، 41 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخص:

تبحث هذه الدراسة العلاقة بين عادات القراءة وموادها والنجاح الأكاديمي الذي يُحققه طلاب المرحلة الابتدائية في كينيا، وكشفت الدراسة ارتفاع مستوى رضا المُشاركين بالمصادر، وقدرات القراءة، والأداء التعليمي، والاستعداد العام للتعلّم أكثر، ولكن أشارت البيانات إلى نقص شديد في المواد التعليمية، وهارات القراءة، وسوء البنية التحتية، وعدم ارتقاء الأداء التعليمي للمستوى المتوسط، وعدم الاستعداد للمزيد من التعلّم. اختتم البحث بأن هناك نقص في الحصول على مواد القراءة، والمواد التعليمية، والفرص التي تؤدي إلى رضا الفرد، وذلك لتحقيق النجاح الأكاديمي في المجال الأكاديمي في المُجتمعات الشبيهة وتصميم برامج مُناسبة، للترويج للقراءة داخل المناهج الدراسية، وعمل مكتبات مُجهزة بما تتطلبه الحياة الأكاديمية.

## The role of public libraries in promoting reading within the family

Ana Margarida Ramos, Inês Vila

العدد رقم 4، 41 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخص:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى توضيح بعض نماذج الممارسات الجيدة التي تقوم بها المكتبات، ودورها في الترويج للقراءة داخل الأسرة وخاصةً بين الآباء والأبناء. تعتقد بعض المكتبات فعاليات تهدف إلى جمع الآباء والأبناء في أنشطة مُتعلقة بالقراءة وهو ما يخلق شغفًا مُبكرًا بالقراءة، وتعمل هذه الأنشطة على مستويات مُختلفة تتطلع إلى تدريب الآباء على كيفية تحقيق أكبر استفادة من الكتب، وجعلهم أكثر وعيًا بفوائد القراءة، وكيفية اختيار مجموعة جيدة من الكتب؛ لتقوية الروابط الأسرية، وخلق بيئة تُنشئ طفلًا سويًا وأكثر توازنًا.

## Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in public library development in India

Anup Kumar Das

العدد رقم 4، 41 من مجلة الإفلا المتخصصة:

المُلخص:

كانت مقاطعة بنجال الهندية خلال القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين مركزًا حيويًا يحتضن العديد من حركات الإصلاح الاجتماعي والثقافي، ذلك لارتباطه منذ مرحلة مُبكرة بالتعليم اللبيرالي. لقد خلقت المؤسسات المُعاصرة التي أسسها الاحتلال، والبعثات الأوروبية، والمُصلحون الاجتماعيون، صحوةً في مُجتمعات بنجال المُتعلمة. ساهم ازدهار بنجال في زيادة مُعدل الإنتاج الأدبي وتنمية اللغة البنجالية. أسس المُصلحون الاجتماعيون مكتبات مُجتمعية؛ لتكون مساحة للتعلّم. مازالت الكثير من هذه المكتبات القديمة موجودة، وتوسعت هذه المكتبات في نشاطها لتصل للشباب، والطلاب، والعمال، وكل من يتعلّم في أي وقت. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل عصر نهضة بنجال في تنمية المكتبات العامة في الهند خلال عصر الاحتلال البريطاني تحليلًا عميقًا، وينظر في دور وأنواع الإصلاح في تصميم المكتبات العامة، وتقديم خدمات، وخدمات توعوية فعالة لسكان المقاطعة.

## 摘要

### Internship in LIS education : An international perspective on experiential learning

图书馆学情报学教育实习：国际视角下的体验式学习

Nora J. Bird, Clara M. Chu, Fatih Oguz

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 298-307

## 摘要：

实习作为图书馆学情报学(LIS)教育体验式学习的一种形式，其价值一直是北美地区多年来争论不休的话题。为获取各国对这一话题的不同观点，本研究探究了实习经历的必要性以及安排国际化或虚拟化实习的可行性。对世界各地69个国家的国家图书馆、协会和学术性图情项目进行调研。研究表明，在美国图书馆协会认可的机构之

外,对实习的需求更频繁,当需求不存在时,参与度不高。另外,各国普遍重视国际实习经历。尽管我们越多越多地利用在线工具提供图情教育,但是对虚拟实习的制度保障却存在明显缺失。本文对今后研究提出了建议,探讨了21世纪图情教育实习模式的一种跨学科、有目的且相互联系的国际化模式。

### **Information literacy and digital natives: Expanding the role of academic libraries**

信息素养和数字原住民: 拓展学术图书馆的作用  
Johanna Kiviluoto

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 308-316

摘要:

促进所谓的“谷歌一代”,特别是高中生的早期信息素养技能的发展,是媒介和信息素养领域当前探讨的话题之一。芬兰高中图书馆服务历来由公共图书馆提供,并随其共同发展,但是拥有特殊专长和数字资源的学术图书馆,也应该参与到早期信息素养技能的培养中。位于芬兰拉赫蒂的联合高等教育图书馆(Joint Higher Education Library)已经通过与当地的职业、高中和大学层次的教育机构合作,采取了多项措施来满足上述要求。本文探讨了这些问题,呈现了我们在高中到高等教育阶段为支持和促进知识创新、培养早期信息素养技能和开展终身学习所采用的方法。

### **Library anxiety among university students : A survey**

大学生的图书馆焦虑调查

Marisa Alicia McPherson

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 317-325

摘要:

图书馆焦虑现象被认为是导致学生成绩低下的因素之一,图书馆需要认真考虑这一现象,以找到缓解这一问题的策略。本研究旨在以西印度大学莫纳分校人文教育系的150名大学生为样本,探讨是否存在图书馆焦虑表现的指标,以及促使焦

虑产生的一些因素。研究结果表明,学生短期的图书馆焦虑表现由多个因素引起。部分因素包括缺乏相关的信息素养技能,以及没有图书馆经验。制度性因素包括图书馆相对较大,楼层和馆藏的布局与配置。针对看似会引起图书馆焦虑现象的问题,本文给出了减轻这些问题的建议。

### **At home in the world : International library staff exchange program highlights**

国际图书馆工作人员交流项目亮点

Mary M. Somerville, Liz Cooper,  
Catta Torhell, Cindy Hashert

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 326-335

摘要:

自2011年起,瑞典林奈大学和美国科罗拉多大学丹佛分校的学术图书馆合作设立了开展人员交流与相关项目的计划框架。这一举措是基于大学的国际化目标和文化能力需求这一背景下提出的。此外,两所图书馆的工作场所都在发生显著的变化,包括全新设计的设施、开展的项目和服务,这要求工作人员以崭新的方式看待他们的机构,理解自身的角色。

### **Future of public libraries : Opinions of public librarians in Turkey**

公共图书馆的未来: 土耳其公共图书馆员的观点

Bülent Yilmaz, Nilay Cevher

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 336-352

摘要:

本文旨在分析土耳其公共图书馆员对公共图书馆的未来这一问题的看法。

研究包括6个部分: 公共图书馆整体变化状况; 服务; 终身学习和信息素养; 技术; 管理和馆藏; 建筑、图书馆员、用户和其他因素(如资金)。研究的每个方面都在这6个主题范围内进行了探讨。本研究使用描述性研究方法: 通过在线调查技术收集数据, 调查内容包括2个李克特三点量表形式的问卷调查表。问卷发放给了2014年

在土耳其公共图书馆工作的481位图书馆员。201位图书馆员对问卷做了答复，其中185份调查答案有效。研究表明，土耳其公共图书馆员对公共图书馆在未来的生存与发展持乐观态度。

### **Exploring reading habits and academic success in rural Kenya**

探讨肯尼亚农村地区的阅读习惯和学术成就

Florence N. Mugambi

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 353-363

摘要：

本研究探讨肯尼亚Ontulili社区小学生的阅读习惯、阅读资源与学业成就的关系。研究显示，就资源可获取性、阅读能力、教育绩效，以及继续教育整体安排而言，参与者的满意度和满足感较高；然而，数据也指出学习材料严重匮乏、阅读技能低下、基础设施落后、教育绩效低于平均水平、继续教育准备不足等问题。研究得出结论，缺乏对相关阅读材料、教育资源和机会的接触，会导致个人无法出类拔萃，在国家考试中得分低。为了实现研究地区和其他类似社区的学术成就，需要精心设计介入措施，如在学校课程中倡导阅读，建立设备齐全、符合现代学术严格要求的图书馆。

### **The role of public libraries in promoting reading within the family**

公共图书馆在促进家庭阅读中的角色

Ana Margarida Ramos, Inês Vila

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 364-369

摘要：

本文旨在展示公共图书馆开展的一些优秀实践案例，及其在促进家庭阅读特别是父母和孩子阅读中所发挥的作用。一些图书馆举办的活动意在将父母和孩子、书籍和阅读与游戏活动结合在一起，从而激发孩子的早期阅读兴趣。这些活动在不同的层面发挥效用，以期让家长如何充分利用书籍提供指导，让他们更好地了解阅读的好处，知道怎样精选阅读材料，以此增强家庭纽带，实现对孩子更为健康与平衡的养育。

### **Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in public library development in India**

印度公共图书馆发展进程中的孟加拉文艺复兴遗产

Anup Kumar Das

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 370-380

摘要：

缘于与世俗自由的西方教育的早期渊源，19-20世纪的印度孟加拉省成为举行社会文化和宗教改革运动的大本营。由殖民统治者、欧洲传教士和当代社会改革家创办的现代高等学校，促进了孟加拉受教育群体的觉醒。孟加拉文艺复兴进一步带动了孟加拉文学的创作和孟加拉语言的发展。社交活跃的改革家在各自的地区创建社区图书馆作为社区学习空间。

许多有着百年历史的图书馆至今仍然存在。这些社区图书馆面向青年、学生、产业工人和终生学习者开放。在此背景下，本文旨在深入揭示英国殖民统治时期印度公共图书馆发展进程中的孟加拉文艺复兴遗产。本文也探究个体改革派在该省公共图书馆设计和实施有效的服务和图书馆延伸服务中所发挥的作用。

## **Sommaires**

### **Internship in LIS education : An international perspective on experiential learning**

Le stage dans le cadre d'une formation SIB : une perspective internationale de l'apprentissage par l'expérience

Nora J. Bird, Clara M. Chu, Fatih Oguz

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 298-307

Résumé :

En Amérique du Nord, la valeur d'un stage comme moyen d'apprentissage par l'expérience lors d'une

formation aux Sciences de l'Information et des Bibliothèques (SIB) fait l'objet de discussions depuis de nombreuses années. Pour obtenir une perspective globale, cette étude examine dans quelle mesure et pour quelles raisons une telle expérience peut être nécessaire, et si les placements peuvent avoir lieu au niveau international ou de façon virtuelle. Parmi les participants à l'étude, des bibliothèques nationales, des associations et des programmes de formation universitaire aux SIB de 69 pays à travers le monde. Les résultats semblent indiquer que, sauf en ce qui concerne les organismes accrédités par l'Association des Bibliothèques américaines (ALA), un stage est plus fréquemment exigé et que lorsque ce n'est pas le cas, les taux de participation sont faibles. En outre, il y a un soutien bien plus important en faveur des expériences internationales. Malgré l'usage croissant d'outils en ligne pour procurer une formation SIB, il y a un manque indéniable de soutien institutionnel pour les stages virtuels. L'article suggère d'effectuer des études plus poussées, qui tiennent compte d'un modèle de stage interdisciplinaire, volontaire, interconnecté et international, adapté à la formation SIB du 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.

#### **Information literacy and digitatives: Expanding the role of academic libraries**

Maîtrise de l'information et enfants du numérique : élargir le rôle des bibliothèques universitaires

Johanna Kiviluoto

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 308-316

Résumé :

Promouvoir le développement d'aptitudes pré-universitaires de maîtrise de l'information chez la « génération Google », en particulier chez les lycéens, est l'un des thèmes actuels de discussion dans le domaine des médias et de la maîtrise de l'information. Traditionnellement, les services proposés par les bibliothèques des lycées finlandais sont développés et fournis en collaboration avec les bibliothèques publiques, mais les bibliothèques universitaires, qui disposent d'une expertise particulière et de ressources numériques, devraient également participer à l'enseignement des aptitudes pré-universitaires de maîtrise de l'information. La bibliothèque communautaire de l'enseignement supérieur de Lahti en Finlande a pris diverses mesures pour satisfaire cette demande, en collaborant avec les organismes régionaux d'enseignement professionnel, secondaire et universitaire. Cet article aborde ces questions et présente notre approche pour soutenir et promouvoir la création de savoir, les aptitudes pré-

universitaires de maîtrise de l'information et l'apprentissage permanent depuis le lycée jusqu'à l'enseignement supérieur.

#### **Library anxiety among university students : A survey**

Étude de l'angoisse de la bibliothèque chez les étudiants

Marisa Alicia McPherson

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 317-325

Résumé :

L'angoisse de la bibliothèque a été identifiée comme un facteur contribuant à de mauvaises performances universitaires chez les étudiants, et les bibliothèques se doivent d'étudier sérieusement ce phénomène afin de mettre au point des stratégies visant à le réduire. Cette étude a cherché à déterminer s'il existait des signes de la présence de l'angoisse de la bibliothèque parmi un échantillon de 150 étudiants de la faculté des Sciences humaines et de l'Éducation à l'Université des Indes occidentales à Mona en Jamaïque, ainsi que certains des facteurs contribuant à ce problème. Les conclusions indiquent la présence d'une angoisse de la bibliothèque sur le court terme chez les étudiants, due à plusieurs facteurs.

Parmi ces facteurs, un manque d'aptitudes correctes de maîtrise de l'information et l'absence d'expérience bibliothécaire antérieure. Les facteurs institutionnels comprennent la taille relativement importante de la bibliothèque ainsi que l'agencement et l'organisation des étages et des collections.

Des recommandations sont faites pour aider à réduire les problèmes qui semblent déclencher l'angoisse de la bibliothèque.

#### **At home in the world : International library staff exchange program highlights**

À l'aise dans le monde : des bibliothécaires internationaux échangent les points forts de leurs programmes

Mary M. Somerville, Liz Cooper, Catta Torhell, Cindy Hashert

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 326-335

Résumé :

Depuis 2011, les bibliothèques de l'Université Linnaeus en Suède et de l'Université du Colorado à Denver aux États-Unis ont conçu en collaboration une

approche-programme des échanges de personnel et des projets associés. Cette initiative a eu lieu dans le cadre plus large des objectifs d'internationalisation des universités et des exigences en matière de compétences culturelles. De plus, ces deux bibliothèques ont subi des modifications significatives de leurs cadres de travail, notamment avec des équipements, programmes et services nouvellement créés, ce qui a incité les membres du personnel à reconsidérer leurs organisations et à réinterpréter leurs fonctions.

### **Future of public libraries : Opinions of public librarians in Turkey**

L'avenir des bibliothèques publiques : les opinions des bibliothécaires du secteur public en Turquie

Bülent Yılmaz, Nilay Cevher

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 336-352

Résumé :

Cet article est consacré à l'analyse des opinions des bibliothécaires du secteur public à propos de l'avenir des bibliothèques publiques en Turquie.

L'étude est répartie en six thèmes : évolution générale des bibliothèques publiques ; services ; apprentissage permanent et maîtrise de l'information ; technologie ; administration et collections ; bâtiment, bibliothécaire, utilisateur et autres aspects y compris/tels que finances. Chaque point de l'étude a été examiné à la lueur de ces six thèmes. L'étude a utilisé une méthode descriptive de recherche ; les données ont été rassemblées au moyen d'une enquête en ligne comprenant 62 questions sous forme d'échelle de Likert à trois points. Ce questionnaire a été envoyé à 481 bibliothécaires travaillant dans des bibliothèques publiques en Turquie en 2014. 201 bibliothécaires y ont répondu et 185 de leurs réponses ont été considérées comme valables.

Les résultats montrent que les bibliothécaires du secteur public en Turquie sont optimistes en ce qui concerne la survie et l'évolution future des bibliothèques publiques.

### **Exploring reading habits and academic success in rural Kenya**

Étude des habitudes de lecture et de la réussite scolaire dans le Kenya rural

Florence N. Mugambi

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 353-363

Résumé :

Cette étude examine la relation entre les habitudes et le matériel de lecture d'une part et la réussite scolaire des élèves d'école primaire dans la communauté Ontulili au Kenya. L'étude montre des niveaux élevés de satisfaction et de contentement parmi les participants en ce qui concerne la disponibilité des ressources, les aptitudes de lecture, les performances scolaires et le niveau global de préparation en vue de poursuivre l'éducation ; cependant, les données montrent un manque cruel de matériel éducatif, de faibles aptitudes de lecture, une mauvaise infrastructure, des performances scolaires au-dessous de la moyenne et un faible niveau de préparation pour poursuivre l'éducation. Il en est conclu que le manque d'exposition à un matériel de lecture requis ainsi qu'à des ressources éducatives et des possibilités appropriées produit un faible niveau de contentement, à côté d'une incapacité des individus à exceller, comme le montrent les faibles scores obtenus à des tests dans le cadre d'examens nationaux. Afin de parvenir à la réussite scolaire dans la région étudiée et dans d'autres communautés comparables, il faut concevoir des processus d'intervention adaptés, par exemple la promotion de la lecture pendant tout le trajet scolaire, et mettre en place des bibliothèques entièrement équipées selon les exigences académiques modernes.

### **The role of public libraries in promoting reading within the family**

Le rôle des bibliothèques publiques dans la promotion de la lecture au sein de la famille

Ana Margarida Ramos, Inês Vila

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 364-369

Résumé :

L'objectif de cet article est de montrer quelques exemples d'expériences positives menées par des bibliothèques publiques et leur rôle dans la promotion de la lecture au sein de la famille, en particulier chez les parents et les enfants. Certaines bibliothèques ont organisé des manifestations rassemblant les parents et les enfants autour des livres et de la lecture avec des activités ludiques, afin de stimuler un intérêt précoce pour la lecture chez l'enfant. Ces activités fonctionnent à différents niveaux et visent à apprendre aux parents comment tirer pleinement avantage des livres, à mieux leur faire prendre conscience des avantages de la lecture et à bien choisir les ouvrages à lire, afin de renforcer les liens familiaux et de promouvoir une éducation plus saine et plus équilibrée pour l'enfant.

### **Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in public library development in India**

L'héritage de la Renaissance bengalie dans le développement des bibliothèques publiques en Inde

Anup Kumar Das

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 370-380

Résumé :

Dans l'Inde du dix-neuvième et du vingtième siècle, la province du Bengale était un centre névralgique qui abritait des mouvements réformistes socioculturels et religieux, en raison de son association précoce avec des structures d'enseignement occidentales laïques et libérales. Les instituts modernes d'enseignement supérieur mis en place par les puissances coloniales, les missionnaires européens et les réformateurs sociaux de l'époque ont favorisé l'éveil des

communautés bengalies éduquées. La Renaissance bengalie a contribué à renforcer la production de littérature et le développement de la langue bengalie. Des réformateurs socialement actifs ont mis en place dans leurs localités respectives des bibliothèques communautaires faisant office d'espace d'apprentissage. Un grand nombre de bibliothèques centenaires existent encore aujourd'hui. Ces bibliothèques communautaires ont étendu leur accès aux jeunes, aux ouvriers et aux apprenants permanents. Dans ce contexte, cet article effectue une analyse en profondeur de l'héritage de la Renaissance bengalie dans le développement des bibliothèques publiques en Inde sous le régime colonial britannique. Cet article s'intéresse également au rôle des genres réformistes individuels dans la conception et l'offre de services bibliothécaires publics efficaces et de services de sensibilisation aux bibliothèques au sein de la province.

### **Zusammenfassungen**

#### **Internship in LIS education : An international perspective on experiential learning**

Praktika im Rahmen des LIS-Studiengangs: Eine internationale Perspektive zu erfahrungsbasiertem Lernen

Nora J. Bird, Clara M. Chu, Fatih Oguz

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 298-307

Zusammenfassung:

Der Wert eines Praktikums als eine Form erfahrungsbasierten Lernens im Rahmen des Universitätslehrgangs *Library and Information Science* (LIS) wurde in Nordamerika über viele Jahre hinweg diskutiert. Um sich einen Überblick zu verschaffen, untersucht die vorliegende Studie, ob eine solche Erfahrung erforderlich ist, und aus welchen Gründen und ob Praktikumsplätze international oder virtuell gestaltet sein sollten. Zu den Teilnehmern gehören Nationalbibliotheken, Verbände und akademische LIS-Studiengänge aus 69 Ländern in aller Welt. Eines der Ergebnisse lautet, dass außerhalb des amerikanischen Bibliotheksverbands (American Library Association) häufiger ein Praktikum verlangt wird. Sobald kein Praktikum vorgeschrieben ist, sind die Beteiligungsraten niedrig. Ferner gab es eine deutlich stärkere Befürwortung für das Sammeln von internationalen Erfahrungen. Trotz der gestiegenen Verwendung von Online-Tools

im Rahmen des LIS-Studiengangs besteht seitens der Einrichtungen zu wenig Unterstützung für virtuelle Praktika. Vorschläge für weitere Studien beziehen sich auf den interdisziplinären, gewollten, vernetzten und internationalen Ansatz für Praktikumsmodelle für LIS-Studiengänge des 21. Jahrhunderts.

#### **Information literacy and digital natives: Expanding the role of academic libraries**

Informationskompetenz und *Digital natives*: Größere Rolle von Universitätsbibliotheken

Johanna Kiviluoto

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 308-316

Zusammenfassung:

Die Förderung der Entwicklung voruniversitärer Informationskompetenz der sogenannten Google-Generation, und besonders unter Schülern der sekundären Oberstufe, ist eines der aktuellen Diskussionsthemen im Bereich Medien und Informationskompetenz. Im Allgemeinen sind die Oberstufen an finnischen Schulbibliotheken gut von öffentlichen Bibliotheken und mit ihrer Unterstützung bestückt und entwickelt. Doch auch die Universitätsbibliotheken, mit ihrer besonderen fachlichen Expertise und ihren digitalen Ressourcen, sollten sich an der Vermittlung voruniversitärer Informationskompetenz beteiligen. Die Joint Higher Education Library in Lahti, Finnland, hat nun in diesem

Rahmen mehrere Maßnahmen eingeleitet, indem sie mit den regionalen Bildungsinstituten für berufsbildenden Unterricht, Sekundarunterricht der Oberstufe und mit Universitäten zusammenarbeitet. Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit diesen Fragen und präsentiert unseren Ansatz zur Unterstützung und Förderung von Wissens-erzeugung (*knowledge creation*), voruniversitären Informationskompetenzen und lebenslangem Lernen von der sekundären Oberstufe bis zur akademischen Bildung.

### **Library anxiety among university students : A survey**

Bibliotheksangst unter Universitätsstudenten:  
Eine Erhebung

Marisa Alicia McPherson

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 317-325

Zusammenfassung:

Die Bibliotheksangst gilt inzwischen als einer der Faktoren für unzureichende Leistungen unter Studenten. Die Bibliotheken sind daher aufgefordert, sich ernsthaft mit diesem Phänomen zu befassen und Strategien zu entwickeln, um diesem Problem entgegenzuwirken. In dieser Studie sollte unter 150 Studenten im Grundstudium der Fakultät *Humanities and Education* an der University of the West Indies, Mona (Jamaika), festgestellt werden, ob es Indikatoren für das Vorhandensein von Bibliotheksangst gibt und welche Faktoren dazu beitragen. Aus den Ergebnissen ergab sich das Vorliegen einer kurzfristigen Bibliotheksangst unter den Studenten aus unterschiedlichen Gründen.

Einer der Gründe war eine fehlende relevante Informationskompetenz und sowie nicht vorhandene frühere Erfahrungen mit Bibliotheken. Faktoren aufseiten der Einrichtungen waren die relativ großen Ausmaße der Bibliothek, sowie die Anordnung und Organisation der Geschosse und des Bibliotheksangebots.

Die Studie enthält ferner Empfehlungen zur Beseitigung der Probleme, die offensichtlich zur Entwicklung der Bibliotheksangst geführt haben.

### **At home in the world : International library staff exchange program highlights**

Zu Hause in der ganzen Welt: Highlights des internationalen Austauschprogramms für Bibliotheksmitarbeiter

Mary M. Somerville, Liz Cooper, Catta Torhell, Cindy Hashert

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 326-335

Zusammenfassung:

Seit 2011 verfügen die Universitätsbibliotheken der Linnaeus Universität Schweden und der Universität von Colorado Denver, USA, über ein gemeinsam erarbeitetes Programm zum Austausch von Mitarbeitern und damit zusammenhängenden Projekten. Diese Initiative entstand in dem größeren Rahmen der Ziele zur Internationalisierung der Universitäten und den Anforderungen an die Kulturkompetenz. Zusätzlich vollzogen sich an beiden Bibliotheken grundlegende Arbeitsplatzveränderungen, einschließlich neu entwickelter Einrichtungen, Programme und Dienstleistungen, die von den Mitarbeitern verlangten, dass sie ihre Einrichtungen und die eigene Rolle darin in einem neuen Licht sehen und verstehen lernen.

### **Future of public libraries : Opinions of public librarians in Turkey**

Die Zukunft öffentlicher Bibliotheken: Meinungen von Mitarbeitern öffentlicher Bibliotheken in der Türkei

Bülent Yılmaz, Nilay Cevher

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 336-352

Zusammenfassung:

Diese Arbeit soll eine Analyse der Zukunftsperspektiven sein, die öffentliche Bibliotheken in der Türkei für sich selbst sehen.

Die Studie ist anhand von sechs großen Themenkomplexen aufgebaut: Stand der allgemeinen Veränderungen in öffentlichen Bibliotheken; Dienstleistungen; lebenslanges Lernen und Informationskompetenz; Technologie; Verwaltung und Sammlung; Gebäude, Bibliothekare, Nutzer und andere Elemente wie beispielsweise Finanzen. Jeder Aspekt dieser Studie wurde vor dem Hintergrund dieser sechs Hauptfragen untersucht. In der Studie wurde ein beschreibendes Forschungsverfahren angewendet. Die Erhebung der Daten erfolgte anhand von Online-Fragebögen mit 62 Fragen in Form der dreistufigen Likert-Skala. Diesen Fragebogen erhielten 481 Bibliothekare, die im Jahr 2014 in öffentlichen Bibliotheken in der Türkei angestellt waren. 201 Bibliothekare haben geantwortet und 185 dieser Rücksendungen galten als valide.

Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass Bibliothekare in öffentlichen Bibliotheken in der Türkei hinsichtlich des Überlebens und der Entwicklung öffentlicher Bibliotheken in Zukunft eine optimistische Grundhaltung einnehmen.

**Exploring reading habits and academic success in rural Kenya**

Untersuchung von Lesegewohnheiten und Schulerfolg im ländlichen Kenia

Florence N. Mugambi

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 353-363

Zusammenfassung:

Diese Arbeit befasst sich mit dem Zusammenhang zwischen Lesegewohnheiten und Lesematerial und Schulerfolg von Grundschulern in der Gemeinde Ontulili in Kenia. Unter den Teilnehmern stellte diese Studie einen hohen Grad der Zufriedenheit hinsichtlich der Verfügbarkeit von Ressourcen, Lesekompetenzen, Bildungsleistung und der allgemeinen Bereitschaft für anschließende Ausbildung fest. Allerdings ergaben die Daten auch einen erheblichen Mangel an Lernmaterial, geringe Lesefähigkeiten, schlechte Infrastruktur, unterdurchschnittliche Bildungsleistungen und eine unzureichende Bereitschaft zur weiteren Ausbildung. Fazit war, dass der fehlende Kontakt mit Lesematerial, fehlende Mittel für Bildung und fehlende Gelegenheiten zu einer gewissen Zufriedenheit führt, neben der individuellen Unfähigkeit, gute Leistungen zu erbringen, wie die schlechten Ergebnisse bei landesweiten Prüfungen zeigen. Um Schulerfolge in diesem Gebiet und in vergleichbaren Gegenden zu erreichen, sind speziell zugeschnittene Maßnahmenpakete erforderlich, wie die im Schulcurriculum verankerte Leseförderung und die Einrichtung gut ausgestatteter Bibliotheken entsprechend den modernen Bildungsanforderungen.

**The role of public libraries in promoting reading within the family**

Die Rolle von Mitarbeitern öffentlicher Bibliotheken bei der Leseförderung in den Familien

Ana Margarida Ramos, Inês Vila

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 364-369

Zusammenfassung:

Diese Arbeit enthält mehrere Beispiele guter Praxis in öffentlichen Bibliotheken und ihre Rolle bei der Leseförderung in der Familie und insbesondere zwischen Eltern und Kindern. Manche Bibliotheken organisieren Veranstaltungen, in denen sie Eltern und Kinder,

Bücher und Lesen und spielerische Aktivitäten miteinander in Verbindung bringen und damit das frühe Interesse am Lesen bei Kindern fördern. Diese Aktivitäten erfolgen auf mehreren Ebenen und sollen Eltern vermitteln, wie sie die Vorteile von Büchern voll nutzen können, welche Vorteile das Lesen bietet und wie sie eine gute Auswahl aus der Vielfalt des Bücherangebots treffen, um die familiären Beziehungen zu stärken und eine gesündere und ausgewogenere Erziehung ihrer Kinder zu erreichen.

**Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in public library development in India**

Erbe der bengalischen Renaissance in der Entwicklung öffentlicher Bibliotheken in Indien

Anup Kumar Das

IFLA-Journal, 41-4, 370-380

Zusammenfassung:

Im neunzehnten und zwanzigsten Jahrhundert war die Provinz Bengalen in Indien eine Schaltzentrale, von der aufgrund ihrer frühen Nähe zur säkularen und liberalen westlichen Erziehung sozio-kulturelle und religiöse Reformbewegungen ausgingen. Von den Kolonialherren, europäischen Missionaren und zeitgenössischen Sozialreformern gegründete moderne höhere Bildungseinrichtungen führten zur Entstehung gebildeter bengalischer Gemeinschaften. Die bengalische Renaissance hat einen wesentlichen Beitrag zur verstärkten Produktion bengalischer Literatur und zur bengalischen Sprache geleistet. Sozial eingestellte Reformer richteten Bibliotheken in den Gemeinden als öffentliche Räume zum Lernen in ihren jeweiligen Orten ein. Noch heute gibt es viele dieser hundert Jahre alten Bibliotheken. Diese Bibliotheken stehen der Jugend und Studenten, aber auch Arbeitern und anderen zum lebenslangen Lernen offen. Vor diesem Hintergrund bietet die Arbeit eine Tiefenanalyse des Erbes der bengalischen Renaissance bei der Entwicklung öffentlicher Bibliotheken in Indien während der britischen Kolonialherrschaft. Darüber hinaus befasst sich diese Studie mit der Rolle, welche die Richtung einzelner Reformer bei der Entwicklung und Einrichtung effektiver öffentlicher Bibliotheksdienste und die Verbreitung von Bibliotheksdiensten in der Provinz gespielt hat.

## Рефераты статей

### **Internship in LIS education : An international perspective on experiential learning**

Стажировка при изучении библиотековедения и науки об информации: Взгляд на практическое обучение в международной перспективе

Нора Д. Берд, Клара М. Чу, Фатих Огуз

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 298-307

Аннотация:

Значение стажировки как формы обучения на собственном опыте в сфере изучения библиотековедения и науки об информации (LIS) обсуждается в Северной Америке в течение многих лет. Для получения масштабной картины в рамках настоящего исследования рассматривались вопросы: является ли подобный опыт необходимым, и почему, а также можно ли получать практические знания за рубежом или дистанционно. В рамках настоящего проекта проведена работа с национальными библиотеками, объединениями и программами обучения библиотековедению и науке об информации из 69 различных стран со всего мира. Результаты показывают, что среди учреждений, не аккредитованных Американской библиотечной ассоциацией, потребность в стажировке является более высокой, и при ее отсутствии уровень соответствующей активности является низким. Кроме того, наблюдалась более высокая заинтересованность в международном практическом опыте. Несмотря на рост использования интерактивных средств в процессе преподавания библиотековедения и науки об информации бесспорно существует недостаток организационной поддержки в сфере дистанционной стажировки. Предлагается проведение дополнительных исследований, предметом которых станет формирование междисциплинарной, продуманной, интегрированной и международной модели, являющейся основанием для концепции стажировки при обучении библиотековедению и науке об информации в 21 веке.

### **Information literacy and digital natives: Expanding the role of academic libraries**

Информационная грамотность и "цифровое поколение": Расширение роли академических библиотек

Йоханна Кивилуото

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 308-316

Аннотация:

Содействие формированию навыков информационной грамотности до поступления в учебные заведения у так называемого "поколения Google" и в особенности среди учащихся старших классов средней школы является одной из современных тем для обсуждения в сфере информационной грамотности и обращения с носителями информации. Традиционно в Финляндии библиотечные услуги, ориентированные на старшие классы средней школы, оказывались публичными библиотеками и разрабатывались при их участии, однако и академическим библиотекам с их специализированными знаниями и электронными источниками информации следует принимать участие в обучении навыкам информационной грамотности до поступления в учебные заведения. Объединенная библиотека высшего образования в Лахти, Финляндия, предприняла несколько шагов для соответствия указанным требованиям путем сотрудничества с региональными заведениями профессионально-технического обучения, старшими классами средней школы и высшими учебными заведениями. В настоящей статье обсуждаются указанные вопросы, здесь также представлен наш подход к оказанию поддержки и содействия формированию знаний, навыкам информационной грамотности до поступления в учебные заведения и непрерывному обучению от старших классов средней школы до получения высшего образования.

### **Library anxiety among university students : A survey**

Боязнь библиотек среди студентов высших учебных заведений: Исследование

Мариса Алисия МакФерсон

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 317-325

Аннотация:

Было выявлено, что боязнь библиотек является фактором, способствующим снижению успеваемости среди студентов, и перед библиотеками стоит ответственная задача, которая заключается в серьезном изучении данного явления с целью выработки мер, направленных на борьбу с указанной проблемой. Целью настоящей работы было определить, имеются ли какие-либо признаки наличия боязни библиотек у выборки из 150 студентов факультета гуманитарных наук и образования Университета Вест-Индии, Мона, а также выявить

некоторые из факторов, влияющих на данную ситуацию. Результаты показали наличие непродолжительной боязни библиотек у студентов, обусловленной несколькими факторами. В число указанных факторов входили недостаток соответствующих навыков в области информационной грамотности и отсутствие предшествующего опыта обращения в библиотеки. Организационные факторы включали в себя большой размер библиотек, планировку и оформление залов и коллекций.

Были даны рекомендации, направленные на решение проблем, ставших причиной возникновения боязни библиотек.

### **At home in the world : International library staff exchange program highlights**

В мире, как дома: Основные моменты программы международного обмена персоналом библиотек

Мери М. Сомервилль, Лиз Купер, Катта Торхелл, Синди Хашерт

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 326-335

Аннотация:

С 2011 года академические библиотеки Университета Линнея, Швеция, и Университета Колорадо Денвер, США, совместно выработали программный подход к обмену кадрами и сопутствующим проектам. Данная инициатива возникла в рамках более масштабных задач по интернационализации университета и требований к профессионализму в вопросах культуры. Кроме того, обе библиотеки претерпевали существенные перемены в части организации рабочих мест, включавшие в себя помещения, оформленные согласно новому дизайну, программы и услуги, которые требовали от работников изучения структуры своих организаций и нового понимания своей роли.

### **Future of public libraries : Opinions of public librarians in Turkey**

Будущее публичных библиотек: Мнение работников публичных библиотек Турции

Бюлент Йилмаз, Нилай Джевхер

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 336-352

Аннотация:

Целью настоящей работы является анализ перспективного видения работниками публичных

библиотек будущего публичных библиотек в Турции.

Исследование разделено на шесть частей: состояние всеобщего изменения публичных библиотек; услуги; непрерывное обучение и информационная грамотность; технология; управление и коллекция; здание, библиотекарь, пользователь и иные элементы, включая/ как финансы. Каждый вопрос исследования был рассмотрен в разрезе указанных шести факторов. В рамках данной работы был использован описательный метод исследования; сбор данных осуществлялся согласно методу онлайн-опроса, включающего в себя 62 вопроса в виде шкалы Лайкерта с тремя градациями. Опросный лист был разослан 481 библиотекарь, работавшему в публичных библиотеках Турции в 2014 году. Ответы получены от 201 библиотекаря, действительными признаны 185 ответов на вопросы вернувшихся анкет.

Согласно полученным результатам, работники публичных библиотек Турции с оптимизмом смотрят на вопросы выживания и развития публичных библиотек в будущем.

### **Exploring reading habits and academic success in rural Kenya**

Исследуем читательские привычки и академические успехи в сельских районах Кении

Флоренс Н. Мугамби

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 353-363

Аннотация:

В рамках настоящего исследования рассматривается взаимосвязь между читательскими привычками, материалами для чтения и академическими успехами учеников младших классов в общине Онтулили, Кения. Исследование показало высокую степень удовлетворенности и довольства среди участников в части доступности источников информации, способности к чтению, успеваемости и общей подготовленности к дальнейшему образованию; тем не менее, полученные сведения указывают на существенный дефицит учебных материалов, низкие навыки чтения, бедную инфраструктуру, низкую успеваемость и низкий уровень подготовленности к дальнейшему обучению. Был сделан вывод, что недостаточная работа с соответствующими материалами для чтения, образовательными материалами, а также недостаток возможностей приводят к низкому уровню удовлетворенности наряду с индивидуальной неспособностью достичь

существенных успехов, о чем свидетельствуют низкие результаты тестов в рамках государственных экзаменов. Для достижения академических успехов в сфере обучения и в других подобных общинах необходимо реализовывать хорошо спланированные оперативные меры, такие как поощрение чтения в рамках программы обучения в школах, а также организация полностью оснащенных библиотек, отвечающих строгим современным академическим запросам.

### **The role of public libraries in promoting reading within the family**

Роль публичных библиотек в популяризации чтения в семье

Ана Маргарита Рамос, Инес Вила

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 364-369

Аннотация:

Цель данной работы заключается в демонстрации некоторых примеров рациональных методов работы, используемых публичными библиотеками, и их роли в популяризации чтения в семье и в особенности среди родителей и детей. Некоторые библиотеки организуют мероприятия, цель которых состоит в том, чтобы объединить родителей и детей, книги, чтение и игровые мероприятия и таким образом стимулировать ранний интерес к чтению со стороны ребенка. Такие мероприятия работают на различных уровнях, их цель заключается в том, чтобы научить родителей в полной мере использовать потенциал книг, чтобы помочь им полнее осознать преимущества чтения, а также показать, как правильно подобрать материал для чтения, чтобы укрепить семейные узы и способствовать более здоровому и гармоничному воспитанию ребенка.

### **Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in public library development in India**

Наследие Бенгальского Возрождения в развитии публичных библиотек в Индии

Ануп Кумар Дас

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 370-380

Аннотация:

В девятнадцатом и двадцатом столетиях провинция Бенгалия в Индии являлась своеобразным нервным центром и источником социально-культурных и религиозных движений за проведение реформ, что объяснялось ранним взаимодействием со светским либеральным западным образованием. Современные высшие учебные заведения, основанные колониальными правителями, европейскими миссионерами и современными социальными реформаторами, привели к активизации образованных сообществ Бенгалии. Бенгальское Возрождение внесло свой вклад в рост бенгальской литературы и развитие бенгальского языка. Социально активные реформаторы основывали библиотеки общин в качестве источников образования общины в соответствующей местности. Все еще существуют библиотеки с вековой историей. Эти библиотеки общин расширили свою аудиторию, включив в нее молодежь, студентов, промышленных рабочих и вечных учеников. На фоне такого исторического багажа данная работа направлена на углубленное исследование наследия Бенгальского Возрождения в области развития публичных библиотек в Индии во время британского колониального правления. Также в настоящей работе приводится взгляд на роль индивидуальных реформаторских жанров в разработке и эффективном оказании услуг публичными библиотеками, а также в информационно-разъяснительной деятельности библиотек в провинции.

### **Resúmenes**

#### **Internship in LIS education: An international perspective on experiential learning**

Практики в ByD: una perspectiva internacional en el aprendizaje práctico

Nora J. Bird, Clara M. Chu, Fatih Oguz

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 298-307

Resumen:

El valor de las prácticas como forma de aprendizaje práctico en los estudios de biblioteconomía y documentación (ByD) lleva muchos años siendo tema de debate en Norteamérica.

Para conseguir una perspectiva global, las recientes investigaciones estudian si tal experiencia es necesaria y por qué razones, y si estas prácticas pueden realizarse internacional o virtualmente.

Entre los participantes se encuentran bibliotecas nacionales, asociaciones y programas académicos en ByD de 69 países de todo el mundo.

Los resultados muestran que fuera de las instituciones acreditadas por la Asociación Americana de Bibliotecarios, estas prácticas son cada vez más necesarias, y cuando no, las tasas de participación son bajas.

Además, había mucho más interés en experiencias internacionales.

A pesar del creciente uso de herramientas en línea para ofrecer estudios de ByD, existe una clara falta de apoyo institucional para realizar prácticas virtuales.

Se han propuesto sugerencias para futuras investigaciones que aseguren un modelo de prácticas interdisciplinario, voluntario, interconectado e internacional para el siglo XXI en ByD.

### **Information literacy and digital natives: Expanding the role of academic libraries**

Alfabetización informacional y nativos digitales: ampliación del papel de las bibliotecas académicas

Johanna Kiviluoto

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 308-316

Resumen:

Promover el desarrollo de las competencias de alfabetización informacional preuniversitaria de la llamada generación Google, especialmente entre los alumnos de educación secundaria, es uno de los debates de actualidad en materia de medios de comunicación y alfabetización informacional.

Tradicionalmente, los servicios bibliotecarios de la escuela secundaria superior finlandesa han sido desarrollados por y con las bibliotecas públicas, pero las bibliotecas universitarias también deberían participar en la enseñanza de competencias de alfabetización informacional preuniversitaria con su particular experiencia y recursos digitales.

La biblioteca de educación superior Joint Higher Education Library de Lahti, Finlandia, ha tomado varias medidas para satisfacer estas demandas en formación profesional, educación secundaria y universitaria mediante la colaboración con las instituciones educativas de la región.

Este artículo aborda estos temas y presenta nuestro enfoque para apoyar y promover la creación de conocimientos, las competencias de alfabetización informacional preuniversitaria y el aprendizaje permanente desde la educación secundaria hasta la enseñanza superior.

### **Library anxiety among university students: A survey**

Ansiedad provocada por la biblioteca entre estudiantes universitarios: encuesta

Marisa Alicia McPherson

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 317-325

Resumen:

La ansiedad provocada por la biblioteca se ha identificado como un factor que contribuye al bajo rendimiento académico de los estudiantes. Por ello, las bibliotecas tienen como desafío el considerar seriamente este fenómeno con el fin de desarrollar estrategias para reducir el problema.

Este estudio intentaba determinar si había alguna señal de la presencia de ansiedad provocada por la biblioteca y algunos de los factores que contribuyen a este fenómeno en una muestra de 150 estudiantes universitarios de la Facultad de Humanidades y Educación de la Universidad de las Indias Occidentales, localizada en Mona.

Los resultados mostraron que la presencia de ansiedad de corta duración provocada por la biblioteca entre los estudiantes se debía a varios factores, como la falta de las pertinentes competencias de alfabetización informacional y la ausencia de experiencia previa en la biblioteca.

Los factores institucionales incluían el tamaño relativamente grande de la biblioteca, el diseño y la organización de los pisos y de la colección.

Se hicieron recomendaciones para ayudar a aliviar los problemas que parecen haber desencadenado la ansiedad provocada por la biblioteca.

### **At home in the world: International library staff exchange program highlights**

En casa, en el mundo: aspectos más destacados del programa internacional de intercambio del personal de la biblioteca

Mary M. Somerville, Liz Cooper, Catta Torhell, Cindy Hashert

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 326-335

Resumen:

Desde 2011, las bibliotecas académicas de la Universidad Linneo, Suecia, y la Universidad de Colorado en Denver, EE. UU., han creado conjuntamente un enfoque programático para el intercambio de personal y los proyectos asociados.

Esta iniciativa se desarrolló en el marco más amplio de objetivos universitarios de internacionalización y demandas de competencias culturales.

Además, ambas bibliotecas estaban experimentando cambios significativos en el lugar de trabajo, incluyendo las instalaciones, programas y servicios recientemente diseñados, por lo que era necesario que el personal aprendiera a ver sus organizaciones y comprender su papel de forma diferente.

### **Future of public libraries: Opinions of public librarians in Turkey**

El futuro de las bibliotecas públicas: opiniones de los bibliotecarios públicos en Turquía

Bülent Yilmaz, Nilay Cevher

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 336-352

Resumen:

El propósito de este estudio es analizar las perspectivas de los bibliotecarios públicos sobre el futuro de las bibliotecas públicas en Turquía.

La investigación se organiza en seis apartados: el estado del cambio general en las bibliotecas públicas; los servicios; el aprendizaje permanente y la alfabetización informacional; la tecnología; la administración y la colección; el edificio, el bibliotecario, el usuario y otros elementos, como las finanzas.

Se examinó cada aspecto del estudio en el marco de estos seis temas.

Se utilizó un método descriptivo de investigación en el estudio; se llevó a cabo una encuesta en línea que constaba de 62 preguntas utilizando la escala Likert de tres puntos para recopilar información.

Se envió el cuestionario a 481 bibliotecarios de las bibliotecas públicas en Turquía en 2014.

Devolvieron los cuestionarios cumplimentados 201 bibliotecarios, de los cuales fueron válidos 185.

Los resultados muestran que los bibliotecarios públicos de Turquía son optimistas acerca de la supervivencia y el desarrollo de las bibliotecas públicas en el futuro.

### **Exploring reading habits and academic success in rural Kenya**

Estudio de hábitos de lectura y éxito académico en zonas rurales de Kenia

Florence N. Mugambi

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 353-363

Resumen:

Este estudio investiga la relación entre los hábitos y los materiales de lectura y el éxito académico de los alumnos de primaria en la comunidad de Ontulili en Kenia.

El estudio reveló altos niveles de satisfacción y contento entre los participantes con respecto a la disponibilidad de recursos, capacidades lectoras, rendimiento educativo y preparación general para la educación superior. Sin embargo, los datos señalaron una escasez importante de materiales de aprendizaje, capacidades lectoras bajas, infraestructura deficiente, promedio bajo de rendimiento educativo y poca preparación para la educación superior.

Se concluyó que la falta de materiales de lectura, recursos educativos y oportunidades relevantes conduce a una sutil satisfacción acompañada de una incapacidad individual de sobresalir tal y como se manifiesta en los malos resultados logrados en los exámenes nacionales.

Para lograr el éxito académico en el área del estudio y otras áreas comparables, deberían crearse intervenciones bien estructuradas, como la promoción de la lectura en todo el programa educativo y el establecimiento de bibliotecas bien equipadas y acordes con las demandas académicas modernas.

### **The role of public libraries in promoting reading within the family**

El papel de las bibliotecas públicas en la promoción de la lectura en la familia

Ana Margarida Ramos, Inês Vila

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 364-369

Resumen:

El objetivo de este estudio es mostrar algunos ejemplos de buenas prácticas llevadas a cabo en las bibliotecas públicas y su papel en la promoción de la lectura en la familia, en particular con padres e hijos.

Algunas bibliotecas organizan eventos que tienen como objetivo juntar padres e hijos, libros y actividades lúdicas y de lectura para estimular en el niño el interés temprano por la lectura.

Estas actividades funcionan en varios niveles con el fin de enseñar a los padres cómo sacar el máximo provecho de los libros, hacer que sean más conscientes de los beneficios de la lectura y cómo hacer una buena selección del material de lectura para fortalecer los lazos familiares y promover una educación más sana y equilibrada para el niño.

**Legacy of the Bengal Renaissance in public library development in India**

Legado del renacimiento bengalí en el desarrollo de las bibliotecas públicas de la India

Anup Kumar Das

IFLA Journal, 41-4, 370-380

Resumen:

Durante los siglos XIX y XX, la provincia india de Bengala fue el centro neurálgico de multitud de movimientos de reforma socioculturales y religiosos gracias a su temprana asociación con la educación occidental liberal laica.

Las instituciones modernas de educación superior, establecidas por gobernantes coloniales, misioneros europeos y reformistas sociales contemporáneos provocaron el despertar de las comunidades bengalíes cultas.

El renacimiento bengalí había contribuido a fortalecer la producción de literatura bengalí y el desarrollo de la lengua bengalí.

Los reformistas comprometidos socialmente establecieron bibliotecas municipales como espacio de aprendizaje comunitario en sus respectivas localidades.

Todavía existen muchas bibliotecas centenarias.

Estas bibliotecas municipales ampliaron su acceso a jóvenes, estudiantes, trabajadores industriales y personas que siguen aprendiendo a lo largo de toda su vida.

Con estos antecedentes, el presente estudio tiene como objetivo el análisis en profundidad de la herencia del renacimiento bengalí en el desarrollo de las bibliotecas públicas en la India durante el dominio colonial británico.

Este estudio también estudia el papel de los géneros reformistas individuales en el diseño y la prestación de servicios eficaces de bibliotecas públicas y servicios de extensión bibliotecaria en la provincia.





