

DEFINING PHILIPPINE LIBRARIANSHIP

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Abstract

The paper argues that the definition of Philippine librarians and Philippine librarianship is artificial if these are based solely on Republic Act 9246 and other similar legislative literature. It attempts to naturally define these concepts using the method of division by comparing and differentiating it with similar concepts. It also explores the differences in the meaning of Philippine Librarianship if the silent prepositions in or of are pronounced.

Keywords: Philippine librarianship, Filipino librarians

Introduction

This paper was conceptualized in one of the discussions between us, the authors, about the scope of Philippine Librarianship in light of ASEAN integration. If librarians from our ASEAN neighbors would come to the Philippines, would they be practicing Philippine Librarianship for the sole reason that they are librarians here in the Philippines? On the other hand, if Filipino Librarians would be going elsewhere, would they be practicing Philippine Librarianship by virtue of their being Filipino Librarians? These two questions would lead us to a more pressing question: What is the essence of Philippine Librarianship? In other words, what is it that makes it what it is?

We realized that before defining the scope, defining its essence of should be foremost in the discussion. Definitions and the scope of practice of librarianship are already stipulated primarily in Republic Act 6966 and later on in Republic Act 9246 which both cover the practice of librarianship in the Philippines. However, we beyond the definitions stipulated in the laws and sought to determine what it means to practice Philippine Librarianship and consequently define the Filipino Librarian.

In as much as essences and accidents were used as in the discussion, the works of Aristotle, the foremost philosopher in the art and science of definition, were consulted. Definition for Aristotle does not merely convey what the word means but it should present the essence of the real object to which the word corresponds (Deslauriers, 2007). Central to his process of definition is the process of division where the specifics of the element being defined is extracted and thus differentiated from the elements to which it has similarities. Aristotle argues that it is natural for man to determine characteristics of objects in reality and divide them into groups. It is this natural definition that we wish to have for Philippine Librarianship which may be its true essence. We have nothing against the definitions put forth by various sectors in the field but for the purposes of discourse and discovery, we embarked into this pursuit.

Even when the terms in question are defined and provided in Republic Act 9246, we argue that defining and limiting the concept of Philippine librarianship to a license to practice is artificial. It may establish the scope and limitations but this is not entirely the essence. What we aim to find is a more natural definition of Philippine librarianship, one that can be arrived at by the mind's natural rendering of its characteristics or properties of such in reality.

Definitions

Defining something is an age old process but can be attributed to Plato and Aristotle. Although it can be said that their processes of definition are different from one another, it can't be denied that these are related. Plato's process of definition can be implied from his works, especially in *The Republic* where concepts like justice, just life, unjust life, virtues, the good and more have been elucidated. These concepts were not defined straightforward but the characteristics of these were examined and the applications or instances of each were carefully discussed as to whether the definition would hold true in each instance. For Aristotle, the process is more clear-cut in his books where he discusses his categories, subjects and predicates and how each of these play in defining concepts.

The process of definition entails the provision of the term being defined, situating it within the class to which it belongs and then providing the qualities, characteristics etc. which differentiates the term being defined from the other beings from the same class. This method of division, espoused by both Aristotle and Plato, necessitates that the division must be natural and not arbitrary. By natural, this means that the mind can readily grasp its characteristics and can situate such with objects to which it can have similarities in character. Likewise, the mind can readily delineate such other objects with differing characteristics.

Defining Librarianship

Through the years and across cultural and social territories, there have been discourses on the definition of librarianship and what libraries should be. From the surface, it appears that there is a universal acceptance or understanding of the concept and functions of library and librarianship but an

actual statement of philosophy for the field of librarianship has not been institutionalized to coherently present why libraries and librarians do their respective functions. Osburn (2009) observed that in the absence of a fundamental philosophy and defining characteristics, libraries operate and develop theories with a narrow focus placing librarianship in a condition that “does not instill confidence either within the profession, the local community, or the greater society” (p. 6). Moreover, the linguistic and conceptual derivatives of the word library, such as librarian, librarianship, library science, as well as information science, tend to be used indiscriminately which therefore adds to the confusion on the concept of library itself.

Meijer (1982) argued that a good definition is necessary for a scientific study of librarianship as it will make understanding of librarianship viable as well as its central functions, its place in society and whether the profession itself has a right to exist. He also provided several attempts to defining librarianship as surveyed from literature. The first is the *pars pro toto* definition which regards one particular aspect as the essence of the concept. As such, books, in this particular definition have become the center of librarianship. The second one is that of the *genus-differentia* where a definition is made by situating something having similar characteristics within a bigger class while differentiating the other members of the class by their unique or specific characteristics. In a more familiar example, we know that librarianship belongs to a broader group which then is differentiated from the other members of the group through its specific characteristics. The genus definition presents four types of genera to which librarianship may belong and these are as: a business enterprise, as a system –whether independent or dependent system, a communication center and a social center. In this case, librarianship can be regarded as belonging to these groups regardless of the center or focus of service or of essence. The third definition for librarianship is that of a conglomerate of heterogeneous components and that there is no center or nucleus. It is and has always been accepted that librarianship is a profession. We have a specialized body of knowledge and skills which we learn via organized approach to learning instead of apprenticeship. We belong to associations that promulgate code of ethics that serve as means of controlling and monitoring the practice of the profession. We are differentiated from the medical profession and all other professions out there. Suffice to say that we are no longer questioning the matter of librarianship under the family of professions.

As a profession, we have our clients and we have services that we provide to our clients. This in a way defines librarianship – our clients, our collection and our services. Thus having a more specialized collection and clientele is a sub-classification of the practice of librarianship like school librarianship, medical librarianship, etc. In relation to this, Meijer posits a scientifically defensible definition for librarianship which focuses on its true properties, and situate this to a genus and relate this with its fellow species for differentiation. The true properties of librarianship include collection, users, and access. It is a universal function for libraries to have these functions which also serve as the differentiating factors across libraries. Libraries fall under the genus of a cultural enterprise while librarianship falls under the genus of professions. As a cultural enterprise, the profession of librarianship and the library as a space emerge as potential venues where cultures and other innovations

start to progress through the collection and preservation of cultural heritage for their intended and at the same time potential community of users. Bringing forward the significant link between librarianship and culture, particularly how culture likewise affects libraries, Butler (1933) remarked that “every major change in the social ideal has produced an alteration in the constitution of the library” (pp. 79-80).

Alongside the cultural standpoint in defining librarianship, part of the attempts to define librarianship is to trace the roots of the profession, its purpose, and shifting paradigms. Historically, libraries are most intently associated with books and documents, and during the twentieth century, libraries are seen as information channels with emphasis on access to materials and information retrieval due to the rise of information practice (Meijer, 1982). Information practice in the discipline of library science entails demonstration of multi-disciplinary approaches and various possibilities of providing more access to information sources and bridging different knowledge domains through classification, storage, and interpretation of knowledge (Buchanan & Hérubel, 2011). Moreover, it was in the mid-1990s when the significant shift in focus from ownership to access had started to take place side by side the emergence of new technologies (Bobinski, 2007). This shift has become the impetus for a considerable change in how individuals within and outside the field of library science use and share information. The paradigm shift from libraries being repositories of books and documents to centres of learning and communication through access to various information resources has been the core of copious discussions of best practices, library management strategies and creation of technological tools for information retrieval. This shift has influenced the vision and purpose of libraries and the profession of librarianship, which consequently affects the library mandates and practices. International library associations such as American Library Association (ALA), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), Special Libraries Association (SLA), etc., and regional associations such as Congress of Southeast Asian Librarians (CONSAL) have been continually coming up with guidelines and recommendations on the effective and efficient management of libraries as well as the competencies and technical skills that librarians must possess. Schools and universities offering library and information science education also reflect this focus and through the development and use of new tools and resources such as web, wireless and multimedia technologies. These events have significantly caused changes and progress in the information dissemination and information services (Hu, 2013).

While it is true that there is some sort of universality among libraries and the practice of librarianship, based on literature, it appears that other types or forms of librarianship concentrating on areas particularly Asia arose. Examples of these include East Asian Librarianship, South Asian Librarianship, Chinese Librarianship and Philippine Librarianship. It would appear however that these terms have different meanings, and that they don't just denote the practice of librarianship in these areas. South Asian Librarianship and East Asian Librarianship denote librarianship in these area studies. As Troost (2009) describes, these are practiced in North America and not as practiced in their respective geographic locations (i.e., India, China, Korea, etc.). Due to the collection (i.e., having a

non-Roman script) there is a need for particular skills from librarians. These include language and content proficiency. Chinese Librarianship, while belonging in the broad category of East Asian Librarianship, was used by Ying Shen (2006) to denote the practice of academic librarianship in China and not as area studies librarianship. American librarianship, while uncommon, was used in the paper once in the introduction to differentiate between Chinese and American librarianship (i.e. the practice of librarianship in these geographic locations). Philippine Librarianship on the other hand does not seem to fit well within the groupings seen above. For one, it is not an area studies librarianship, but it denotes more than the practice of librarianship in the Philippines.

Defining Philippine Librarianship

The term *Philippine Librarianship* has been widely used in the Philippines which is virtually understood and used by Filipino librarians to refer to the practice of librarianship in the Philippines. It is a known fact that it is only in the Philippines where the professional practice of librarianship is covered by several legislations. As a term, Philippine Librarianship was used in the Republic Act 6966 as equivalent to the practice of librarianship in the Philippines. The Republic Act 6966, otherwise known as the *Philippine Librarianship Act of 1990* is the first law regulating the practice of librarianship in the Philippines. After more than a decade, Republic Act 6966 was repealed by Republic Act 9246 or *The Philippine Librarianship Act of 2003*, which seeks not only to regulate but also to modernize the practice of librarianship in the Philippines.

The general compositions of both laws in Philippine librarianship deal with the licensure, registration, and professionalization of librarians in the Philippines, qualifications and development competencies of librarians, ethical practice of librarianship, integration of librarians in one national professional association, and the structure of the Professional Board for Librarians. The aforementioned compositions of the Republic Act 6966 and 9246 outline the major facets of Philippine librarianship. Even in the different literature on the history of Philippine librarianship, these facets are likewise discussed – starting from the contribution of colonial powers (Spain and United States) to libraries and practice of librarianship, establishment of libraries, with emphasis on academic and public library services, development of printing, library education and training, the needed skills and competencies of librarians, and institution of library associations in the country. This gives an impression that these facets help us define and understand Philippine librarianship and its progress as a field and profession.

In terms of research and scholarship, the *Journal of Philippine Librarianship (JPL)*, the first open access refereed journal in LIS in the Philippines, has been in existence since 1968. It is published by the Institute of Library Science at the University of the Philippines Diliman (UP ILS), forerunner of the UP Institute of Library and Information Science (UP ILIS), and the present-day School of Library Information Studies (UP SLIS). In the introduction of the very first issue in 1968, to set the tone of the vision of the JPL as the first refereed scholarly library journal in the Philippines, the editor, Mae Furbeyre, articulated that each issue of the JPL would try to cover various interests of librarianship, and “as long as the articles fall within the area over which *Philippine librarianship* [emphasis added] has

spread its wings, they are in the province of the *Journal*” (p. iii). This area being referred to as the realm of Philippine librarianship and the Journal, in relation to the previously mentioned facets, is mostly focused on the practice of librarianship such as management of libraries and their collections in the Philippines, creation of bibliographies, and acquisition and preservation of Filipiniana materials or information resources made by or about the Filipinos and the Philippines.

Despite the ubiquitous use of Philippine librarianship in the literature, legislations, and actual practice of the profession, it is not yet clear whether Philippine librarianship is indeed specie or type of or an instance of librarianship. It seems that Philippine librarianship as a substance or an entity separate from but still very much related to librarianship is yet to be defined and profoundly explicated. Nonetheless, this paper is an attempt to map the nature of Philippine librarianship and construct its reality as inferred by the ‘accidents’ that form and even modify Philippine librarianship as librarianship. This paper attempts to define Philippine librarianship using Aristotle’s *Categories* as the main framework.

Genus and Differentia, Substance and Accidents

The framework used in this paper is patterned from Aristotle’s *Categories* where he laid down the structures or hierarchies of being. Beings may be in the form of a substance or accident. Substances are things in themselves (i.e., individual man, individual horse, etc.) and this is the most fundamental of his categories. Accidents on the other hand are the ones that describe or provide qualification to these substances. Related to this is his process of definition by division which classes a concept into a general class and further specified by its unique characteristics that differentiates it from the other beings in that particular class.

In an attempt to determine the scope of Philippine librarianship via the categories of Aristotle, it is being established here that the primary substance or the thing in itself is Philippine Librarianship. Substance is that which is neither said of a subject nor in a subject (Ackrill, 1963, Cat. 2^a11). Secondary substances are those to which the primary substances belong, such that an individual man belongs to the species man, the secondary substance, the species of man belongs to the genus *homo* and *homo* belongs to the order primates and the class *mamalia* and so on. In this case, Philippine librarianship, the primary substance, belongs to librarianship, the secondary substance, which in turn belongs to the group of professions and so on.

Philippine librarianship is considered in this paper as a substance and the accidents related to it are its history and development, processes and practice as well as location. Each locale has its unique history of librarianship – whether it initiated there or just adopted from an originator. Its processes may be similar because of existing standards of practice but some have opted to deviate from standards for more important concerns of users. The location to which librarianship is practiced may offer uniqueness to the profession because of the needs of its clients (i.e., language, cultural information needs) as well as its collection (i.e., acquired from elsewhere or created by the agency).

Where Philippine librarianship is a primary substance, librarianship in general is a secondary substance. In its definition therefore, the qualifications or accidents of Philippine librarianship will serve to differentiate this from the other known types of librarianship (i.e., Japanese Librarianship, East Asian Librarianship, etc.) and the general form which is librarianship. It is important thus to determine first its accidents to have a sound differentiation, thereby definition of the concept.

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships of the terms profession (and related terms) and librarianship with its related terms as well.

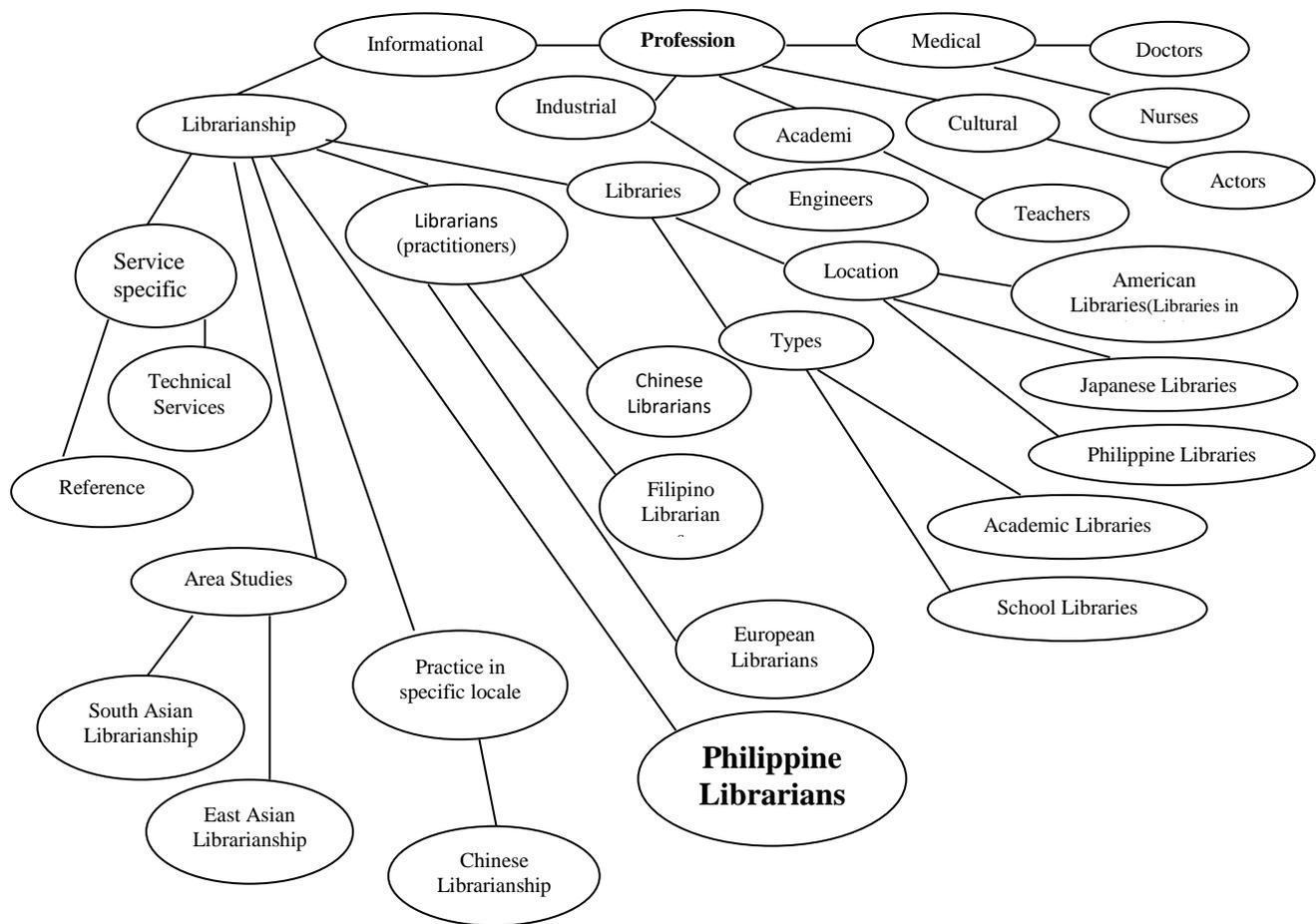


Figure 1. Relating the term Philippine Librarianship to similar concepts: an ontology.

The figure above was designed merely as representational and illustrational ontology showing facets and stems or specific examples or instances. It differentiates librarianship as a profession with

other instances of professions like the medical, academic, industrial professions. Among the informational professions (to include archivists and documentalists) is the librarianship profession. Under librarianship, it shows the various instances of observed terms along with the illustration of the differentiation in their usage.

This illustration however is not exhaustive of all the examples or specific instances. Philippine Librarianship, unlike East Asian Librarianship or Chinese Librarianship that stem from specific facets as area studies or practice in specific locale, stem directly from the librarianship as a direct instance of librarianship. As mentioned earlier, it is not an area studies librarianship because it is widely used as a terminology in the Philippines, while for other area studies these are not popularly used in their respective geographic locales. What makes it so that merits a specific and definite delineation from all the other practices and/or instances of librarianship?

In and Of

Librarianship has been defined but Philippine Librarianship is a tricky concept because of the silent preposition in the middle of the two terms. The meaning varies depending on what preposition is used – *in* or *of*. Arguably, the deliberate omission of any preposition for that matter makes the term more encompassing, less limiting but more ambiguous and equivocal.

Philippine librarianship is a term that involves the combination of two terms – Philippine and librarianship. The combination of these two terms posits a signifier (the term Philippine librarianship) that signifies the concept of Philippine librarianship. At this point, it is understood that the first concept, Philippine, denotes the geographic location and also the people belonging to the locale, and in this sense the nation. The term librarianship is clearly denoted with the given definition above. In this combination there are two possible linking words combining them and these are *in* and *of* such that the term may be Librarianship of the Philippines or Librarianship in the Philippines. The difference leads to two different interpretations. The preposition *in* denotes the practice of librarianship in the locality specified which is the Philippines as may be restated as [the practice of] librarianship in the Philippines. On the other hand, the preposition *of* denotes several meanings where one is *belonging to or connection with something*. As such librarianship of the Philippines would mean librarianship belonging to the Philippines.

Librarianship in the Philippines

If Philippine librarianship is interpreted as *librarianship in the Philippines*, this may mean as the practice of the profession in a particular location – the Philippines. Librarianship in itself is a western concept and in the history of the profession, it can be seen that indeed the practice did not start in the Philippines but rather as an assimilated practice. Therefore, if Philippine Librarianship would be interpreted as “the practice of librarianship in the Philippines” there would not be much difference in the way other countries practice librarianship. The principles, processes, rules and other related practices will be universal across geographic jurisdictions.

Arguably, it is indeed different from other countries precisely because of how it came about. It can be seen in the succeeding paragraphs that the concept is transplanted by our colonizers. The theories and practices were learned from outside by several *Pensionados* and these theories were subsequently assimilated, practiced, implemented and proliferated.

The history of librarianship in the Philippines tells us that Spain and America had contributed to the development of library practice and establishment of libraries in the country. Moreover, the commencement of library science education in the Philippines is also attributed to American scholars and librarians such as James Alexander Robertson, the Director of the Philippine Library, and Mary Polk, Head Librarian of the Bureau of Science Library. This shows that both the practice of librarianship and library science education in the Philippines have been influenced by western principles and practices. Vallejo (1981), stated in her paper entitled *Philippine Librarianship: A Historical Perspective* the definition of librarianship by the American Library Association as the "application of knowledge of books and certain principles, theories, and techniques to the establishment, preservation and use of collections of books and other materials in libraries and to the extension of library services" (p. 3). She further said that in order to correlate this definition to her paper about Philippine librarianship, there must be a discussion of the "beginnings of the establishment of libraries and the organizational aspects involved in the preservation and use of collections and other materials in the Philippines" (p. 3). Although Vallejo did not precisely define what Philippine Librarianship is, she reflected in her abovementioned statement as well as in her description of Philippine librarianship as a "combination of Spanish, American and European library traditions" (p. 21) that Philippine librarianship as well as its development is basically an assimilated practice and recognition of western concept of librarianship in the Philippines.

Similarly, Hernandez (2001) discussed the trends in Philippine library history that covered the development of Philippine libraries from pre-colonial, colonial, and modern library period. The historical facts that he presented in his paper are nonetheless tied with western influences or the contributions of the colonizers to Philippine libraries and librarianship. Hernandez asserted that the origins of modern Philippine library may be attributed to the Age of Enlightenment in Europe that created the *Sociedad Economicas* in Spain and the colonies. Hernandez reiterated that during this era, "the trend was Enlightenment through humanitarian and political goals and social progress" (p. 332). With the foundation of *Sociedad Economica* in the Philippines in 1781 by Governor Jose de Basco y Vargas, libraries were created and popular and public reading marked a new period in Philippine library history (Hernandez, 2001). Progress in Philippine libraries and librarianship was again perceived as a phenomenon very much aligned with the development and enactment of western principles and practices.

While Spain ended its more than three centuries of colonization in the Philippines, the libraries founded under its regime remained until the coming of the Americans. Vallejo (1981) alleged that

Spain also expressed its concern for the education of the Filipinos, albeit quite late, through the establishment of schools and 12 public libraries as listed in the census of 1903. However, the concept of public library then was different from the American model of tax-supported and free public library. Under the American rule, the first public library in the Philippines, the American Circulating Library, was established. Public Law no. 96 was approved on March 5, 1901 by the U.S. Congress authorizing the U.S. commission in the Philippines to accept book donations to form the library in memory of American officers who lost their lives in the Philippines (Ferrer, 1970). The American Circulating Library was not originally established to assume and perform public library services as it was intended to limit its services to military personnel, but later on it opened its doors and extended its services to “all residents in Manila regardless of race, creed, or nationality” (Ferrer, 1970, p. 45). The first library, where the identifying word “Philippines” or “Philippine” was first attached to its name, was the *Philippine Public Library* that was established by virtue of Public Law no. 848 (Ferrer, 1970). After series of changes in the names of the after the foundation of Philippine Library, finally with the passage of Republic Act No. 3873 in 1964, the Philippine Library assumed its present name – The National Library of the Philippines. Vallejo (1981) outlined the changes in the name and functions of the National Library of the Philippines and the different agencies that took over the library. Reflecting on the vicissitudes in the transfer of authority of the National Library, history of its name and identification, she remarked that “it is very confusing and reveals the uncertain role and place of libraries in the Philippines which is not conducive to the healthy growth and development of libraries” (p. 17). Nevertheless, the National Library of the Philippines continues to be the national repository for Filipiniana materials as well as support its affiliates in the provinces and municipalities.

Librarianship as practiced in the Philippines does not vary much from how it is practiced elsewhere. Libraries in the Philippines maintain catalog cards and/or OPACs, with the standard classification systems (i.e., Dewey Decimal Classification, Library of Congress Classification), and description standards (i.e., AACR, MARC, RDA). While there are specific subject headings and classification schedules for topics pertaining and relating to the Philippines, these are mandated or allowed and accommodated by said classification standards. Reference services, collection development, management of personnel, hours of operation, facilities, furniture, floor lay-out are similar with practices in other libraries elsewhere. We still share in the same vision of serving the educational, recreational and informational needs of our clients. Therefore, delineating it as “Philippine” should be more for differentiating it with the practices in other locales rather than referring to it as such.

Librarianship of the Philippines

Unlike the preposition in which merely denotes location, the preposition of, denotes ownership. Librarianship *of* the Philippines would clearly convey the message that it is the practice of librarianship truly unique of the Philippines. The semantics of the use of the terms and the suffixes attached to the base names of countries are used to form their respective nationality adjectives, and imply an act of possession or ownership to the practice or field of librarianship. The word Philippine in Philippine

librarianship may not only signify a place of practice, but it is also an adjective describing a kind of practice of librarianship, which is unique to the Philippines. This supposed unique practice of librarianship may or may not be necessarily done in the Philippines.

What does it mean then for librarianship to be of the Philippines? Looking at the practices and processes, what we have in the Philippines are from elsewhere and not entirely coming from, invented if you may or originating from the Philippines. The practices of cataloguing, reference service, selection, acquisition etc. have all originated elsewhere and are merely used to our purposes. Can we truly say, given these circumstances that there is a certain practice of librarianship to be truly originating from the Philippines and by Filipinos? That there is a real object to which the term Philippine Librarianship corresponds?

The laws passed that pertain to the practice of librarianship in the Philippines can be considered as among those that make Philippine librarianship unique in that the Philippines, so far, is the only country who has laws regulating the practice of librarianship.

It was stated earlier in the paper that Philippine legislations, specifically Republic Act 6966 and Republic Act 9246, prescribe the scope of librarianship. In this law, the scope of the practice of librarianship in the Philippines:

...shall constitute in holding out oneself as skilled in the knowledge, art and science of the organization, dissemination, preservation and conservation of recorded information; the rendering, furnishing and contracting of professional services such as consultations and advice on the organization and management of libraries, data banks, research and information centers to clients on a fee basis or otherwise; the teaching of subjects in the library and information sciences; and the signing or authenticating for clients of documents or reports when called for. (Republic Act 6966, Art. I, Sec. 2(b)).

While legislation outlines the scope of the practice of librarianship, this is no different from the scope of practice of librarianship elsewhere. There may be variations from one country to another but nevertheless, the scope outlined is universal.

In addition to the scope of librarianship, it is stipulated in the law the inhibition against the practice of librarianship in the country, which states that:

Unless exempt from registration, no person shall practice or offer to practice librarianship in the Philippines or be appointed as a librarian to any position calling for a librarian and documentalists or information specialist working in a library, without having previously obtained a certificate of registration from the Board. (Republic Act 6966, Art. III, Sec. 11)

This licensing perhaps delineates the practice of librarianship in the Philippines from other countries. It is evident in the law that the practice of librarianship in the Philippines is more than the practice of actual functions of librarianship. There is a required legitimacy in practicing Philippine librarianship. A certificate of registration has to be obtained through licensure examination administered by the Philippine Regulatory Board for Librarians before practicing librarianship in the Philippines.

In Republic Act 9246 that repealed Republic Act 6966, the scope of practice of librarianship is expounded in Section 5 as follows:

- 1) Selection and acquisition of multi-media sources of information which would best respond to clientele's need for adequate, relevant and timely information;
- 2) Cataloging and classification of knowledge or sources of information into relevant organized collections and creation of local databases for speedy access, retrieval or delivery of information;
- 3) Development of computer assisted/computer-backed information systems which would permit online and network services;
- 4) Establishment of library system and procedures; dissemination of information; rendering of information, reference and research assistance; archiving; and education of users;
- 5) Teaching, lecturing and reviewing of library, archives and information science subjects, including subjects given in the licensure examination;
- 6) Rendering of services involving technical knowledge/expertise in abstracting, indexing, cataloguing and classifying or the preparation of bibliographies, subject authority lists, thesauri, and union catalogue/lists;
- 7) Preparation, evaluation or appraisal of plans, programs and/or projects for the establishment, organization, development and growth of libraries or information centers, and the determination of library requirements for space, buildings, structures or facilities;
- 8) Provision of professional and consultancy services or advice on any aspect of librarianship; and
- 9) Organization, conservation, preservation and restoration of historical and cultural documents and other intellectual properties. (Republic Act 9246, Art. I, Sec. 5)

Legislation has defined Philippine Librarianship – its scope and the people who can or may practice librarianship.

Analysis

Arguably there is nothing different in the scope and practice of librarianship elsewhere other than this legislation. If we anchor the essence of Philippine librarianship to this, such argument will not hold. In the first place, it is very artificial, very political and really elitist in nature. There was Philippine librarianship before these laws were enacted, therefore Philippine librarianship can still be Philippine librarianship even without these laws. Is it? Looking into the matter deeper, the legislation was able to improve the condition of Philippine librarians. Being a librarian in the Philippines before the legislations has always been a struggle with the many misconceptions (i.e., just keepers of books) and stereotypes (i.e., *Miss Tapia* image for librarians). Those employees who were not performing well, especially in the context of academic and school libraries are being relegated to the library given the task of staying in the library to take charge of loan and return or just being there waiting for the occasional visitor to come their way. This condition has improved both in the employers' side and the employees or the librarians. This paved the way for professionalizing the field of which the improvement in salaries and employment status for the librarians came along. If so, is Philippine Librarianship different before and after the laws were enacted? We would argue that the practice is still the same as there procedures, the frameworks, models and standards are still the same only that the "implementers" have been professionalized. They are now properly delineated from the rest of the "support staff" by their PRC license that has now become their badge. As such, we can say that this is not the essence of Philippine Librarianship but this is an important aspect of its history, and this makes it different from others. But when other countries will try to implement laws similar to ours, then we won't be much different.

Meijer (1982) posited three general properties of librarianship based on the global analysis of librarianship and information practice: functions with a view to library collections, their accessibility, and the library users (p. 13). He further clarified that in discussing and developing library collection, the universal and divergent character of the collection is included. It is in this context that the Filipiniana Collection was formed, which is a collection of materials written by Filipino authors (regardless of topic) and materials about the Philippines (regardless of nationality of authors). While there is a Filipiniana Collection, there is no Filipiniana Librarianship, similar to the sense of how East Asian Librarianship is used – as an area studies. Arguably, there is no special skill needed since the language is in Roman script and a number of Filipiniana materials are written in English. If there are those written in the local languages, these are easier to translate and/or understand than that of East Asian or South Asian languages.

Aside from the geographic and assimilated practice of western librarianship in the Philippines, it is also noticeable that the use of the term Philippine librarianship denotes another meaning – a sense of ownership, possession, and nationality. To define Philippine Librarianship is the practice of librarianship *in* the Philippines and *of* the Filipino librarians may reconcile the problem but the question still stands, if non-Filipino Librarians would come to the Philippines, would they be practicing Philippine librarianship? Are we limiting Philippine Librarianship only to Filipinos? By virtue of the

law, yes we are, but in the context of ASEAN integration and internationalization, should we? One other argument would be the infusion of Philippine culture and tradition to the practice makes it *of* the Philippines. As such, when Filipinos, by virtue of their being Filipinos with their history and culture, practice librarianship, it is already a different version of librarianship. But then again, how would a non-Filipino librarian practice Philippine Librarianship when they would have a different culture of their own? Are we not allowing others to experience or practice so? Is this not against the goal of internationalization?

We have laid the arguments in this paper but the process is far from over. There are various perspectives to this and ours is but one of the many.

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