

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, IT & MANAGEMENT

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- Garg, Sambhav (2011): "Business Ethics" Paper presented at the Annual International Conference for the All India Management Association, New Delhi, India, 19–22 June.

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**STANDARDIZING GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL LIBRARIES: WHERE ARE WE NOW?**

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**ABSTRACT**

Standards are increasingly important in the practice of all library fields. Hospital libraries are considered to be the basic unit of the medical information system. Hospital librarians provide the right information at the right time to enhance medical staff effectiveness, optimize patient care, and improve patient outcomes. They save clinicians time, thereby saving the institution money. They provide an excellent return on investment for the hospital, playing a vital role on the health care team from a patient's diagnosis to recovery. Their services are also a valuable employee and community benefit, building staff satisfaction with their jobs and patient and family satisfaction with the health care they receive. A hospital libraries in order to survive, their existence must be validated and their contributions must be shown to be consistent with the overall goals of the hospitals they serve. The purpose of this study was to describe and evaluate government hospital libraries by observing and interviewing librarians and library users as key participants. Overall aim of this study is to identify needs and gaps, and make recommendations for further development of a government hospital library standard. This study used a framework and perspectives from which to view these government hospital libraries function and would be within or below the standards. Throughout this study a number of factors regarding the assessment of hospital libraries were examined. Finally, it was anticipated that based on the findings of this study, government hospital libraries would be standardized with competent full time professional librarians, sufficient and well-balanced collections, adequate facilities and with excellent library services. The study followed a qualitative research approach, involving the use of the unstructured in-depth interview, observations and other related documents as the primary methods and tools in gathering the data. It involved a preliminary descriptive examination of the services, collections, facilities and management of government hospital libraries. It was limited to no more than 5 government hospital libraries because of the time constraints involved in interviewing and subsequent data analysis. The person interviewed was the head / chief librarian of each institution knowledgeable enough and with authority to manage the library and must be in the field of medical and health / government hospital library. The study was conducted at five (5) prominent government hospital libraries namely; Department of Health Libraries (San Lazaro Manila), Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center Library (San Lazaro, Manila), RITM (Alabang), Heart Center Library (Quezon City) Lung Center of the Philippines (Quezon City). Based on the results the following conclusions were formulated; 1. The administration of government hospital library's objectives was based on their mission/vision and the types of institution they serve; library's not directly administered by a president or director of the institution, and their concept of an ideal library should have the library staff or personnel that are qualified for the job (professional librarian); hiring of employees shall be vested on the library administrator or director who shall be directly responsible for the appropriate hierarchy of the governing body of the institution they serve and should be clearly defined in the organizational set-up of the institution. 2. Government hospital library is under staff since it is manned by a one-man professional librarian only. 3. Government hospital libraries lack budget thus affecting collection development policy also resulting to obsolete and insufficient library collection. 4. Librarians rendered basic library services with intervening factors due to limited library staff. 5. Government hospital library is not centrally located and not conveniently accessible; as to equipment and furniture they showed fair and within the minimum standard as compared to other kinds of libraries.

**KEYWORDS**

Library standards, Government Hospital Library, Library Evaluation, Library Assessment, Hospital Library Research,

**INTRODUCTION**

Standards are increasingly important in the practice of all library fields. Hospital libraries are considered to be the basic unit of the medical information system. Efficient and timely access to evidence-based health literature is an important element in the provision of safe patient care. Given the complexity and time constraints involved in care delivery, locating the right information at the right time is increasingly difficult for many health practitioners. A strong Library and Information Service creates the bridge between the evidence and patient care decisions. (Funk, 2008) The rapid changes in health care have presented the medical community with a number of challenges. Some national organizations have recommended actions to address these challenges, including training for the healthcare workforce, adoption of new technologies, focusing on patient-centered care, and changes in hospital design. The roles of hospital librarians have evolved to meet the needs of this changing environment and to help hospitals keep their competitive edge.

Hospital librarians provide the right information at the right time to enhance medical staff effectiveness, optimize patient care, and improve patient outcomes. They save clinicians time, thereby saving the institution's money. They provide an excellent return on investment for the hospital, playing a vital role on the health care team from a patient's diagnosis to recovery. Their services are also a valuable employee and community benefit, building staff satisfaction with their jobs and patient and family satisfaction with the health care they receive.

A hospital libraries in order to survive, their existence must be validated and their contributions must be shown to be consistent with the overall goals of the hospitals they serve. The librarian is rightly called the friend, the philosopher and the guide but the person must be well-read and well-acquainted with the tools of his trade. The library consists of books, the readers and the librarian. The librarian is properly called the matchmaker of the beautiful bride-the book and the curious bridegroom- the reader, with the help of Laws of Library Science by Ranganathan. (Khan, 2006) Meanwhile, the Code of Ethics for Registered Librarians in the Philippines states in its Preamble:

"Librarians are imbued with lofty ideals of service to people through books and other records of knowledge, a service they believe is their best way to serve humanity, enrich people's lives and attain self-actualization. Through the years the profession of librarianship has developed and a codification of ideal practices and relationship has become necessary to guide the practitioner in maintaining standards of ethical behavior in his relation with state and society, with clients, with profession and colleagues, with agency and with oneself." (mahlap/services/ethics-code.php. January 31, 2012)

Presently there are several international hospital library standards. In the Philippines the government hospital libraries lead by the Department of Health Librarians has no specific library standard as to this date. Although PHILHEALTH conducted hospital accreditation no specific guidelines was given as for the use, maintenance, collections, and sustainability of the library. Navarro (2011) in her presentation last March 2, 2011 at Dumaguete City, Philippines she emphasized that MAHLAP (Medical and Health Librarians Association of the Philippines) is in the best position to assist in developing the standards for hospital, medical and health libraries. Most hospitals and medical and health institutions are now conscious of the importance of clarifying point in the development of standards the most important characteristics of which is that they consider the needs and interest of stakeholders and customers.

This study used a framework and perspectives from which to view these government hospital libraries function and would be within or below the standards. Throughout this study a number of factors regarding the assessment of hospital libraries were examined. Finally, it was anticipated that based on the findings of this study, government hospital libraries would be standardized with competent full time professional librarians, sufficient and well-balanced collections, adequate facilities and with excellent library services.

## METHODOLOGY

The intent of the proposed study was to evaluate the Government Hospital Libraries through series of unstructured in-depth interviews, observations and other relevant documents available as basis for the development of an ideal library set-up in terms of; administration, staffing, collection, services, and physical facilities/ information technology. The study followed a qualitative research approach, involving the use of the unstructured in-depth interview, observations and other related documents as the primary methods and tools in gathering the data. It involved a preliminary descriptive examination of the services, collections, facilities and management of government hospital libraries. It was limited to no more than 5 government hospital libraries because of the time constraints involved in interviewing and subsequent data analysis. The person interviewed was the head / chief librarian of each institution knowledgeable enough and with authority to manage the library and must be in the field of medical and health / government hospital library.

The study was conducted at five (5) prominent government hospital libraries namely; Department of Health Libraries (San Lazaro Manila), Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center Library (San Lazaro, Manila), RITM (Alabang), Heart Center Library (Quezon City) Lung Center of the Philippines (Quezon City). The goal of this study is to evaluate the Government Hospital Libraries and to develop library standard. A purposive sample of no more than 5 libraries will be obtained in which particular settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information that cannot be obtained as well from other choices. Purposive because there is set of criteria in selecting the library as well as the persons to be interviewed must be the head / chief librarian of the institution from medical / hospital libraries, knowledgeable enough and with pertinent qualifications set by RA 9246.

Prior to the interview process permission was sought from the Management of every participating institution. The participants were informed also in the facilitation of data gathering. Upon management's approval interview process using (unstructured questions) was conducted; follow-up clarifying interviews was also observed by the researcher. All interviews were tape-recorded and, were based on four pilot interviews already conducted, were expected to vary in length from 20 minutes to 45 minutes. The interviews were informal and open-ended, and were carried out in a conversational style. The researcher anticipated that ongoing data analysis took place throughout the study. All of the taped interviews, memoranda, and field notes was entered into computer files as basis for reporting and analysis. After analyzing and reporting, the researcher then proceeded at conceptualizing the development of library standard for government hospital libraries.

## RESULTS

### ADMINISTRATION (OBJECTIVES OF THE LIBRARY/DEPARTMENT THAT ADMINISTERS THE LIBRARY)

As regard my interview conducted about administration (objectives of the library) these are the answers of the following participants; participant A enumerated the following objectives of her library; to serve the community in terms of their educational and research needs and assist medical practitioner in their research, on the other hand, participants B and C stated the objectives of their library as; to provide timely, accurate information and materials as well as support and facilitate research, learning, teaching and administrative activities of the institution. Participant D however, cheerfully stated the objectives of her library that is; to equip hospital staff with medical and health reading materials to support hospitals mission and vision and provide quality health care and lastly, participant E proudly stated to strengthen the research program, provide and maintain library collection with an updated infectious disease as the objectives of her library. As to the department that administers the libraries, participants A, B, C and D were under the Research Division / Office (DETR) while participant E directly reported to Department of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, in general majority of the libraries were managed by the Education Department, Training and Research.

### ADMINISTRATION (CONCEPT OF AN IDEAL ORGANIZATIONAL SET-UP OF THE LIBRARY)

Based on my interview conducted two (2) of the participants stated that a library should be clearly indicating a separate department align with other support departments and should be clearly drawn in the organizational set-up. On the other hand participant C had this idea that a library be structured, evaluated and analyzed to deliver services efficiently and effectively and should perform its mandate accordingly. Another two (2) participants laid down their idea that a library must be on direct supervision of the Presidents/Director and should be under the administrative division. Based on their ideas librarian simply wants recognition as independent entity with direct supervision from President / Director. The ideal library should have the library staff / personnel that are qualified for the job; hiring of employees shall be vested on the library administrator or director who shall be directly responsible to the appropriate hierarchy of the governing body of the institution they serve. The library administrator / director in collaboration with the management or appropriate committee whichever is applicable shall have the authority to select and recommend reference materials to be purchased. To safeguard the library collections same should ensure librarians by the responsible institutions to secure the collections. The library collections should also be insured against natural disaster, grave theft, losses, etc.

### ADMINISTRATION (WHY THERE IS A NEED FOR PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN)

In this category all of the participants had almost the same answers on why there is a need for professional librarian and here are their justifications; compliance with RA 9246 and PRC requirements aside from the variety of reasons like; can operate the library efficiently and effectively, right person that goes with changing phase, equipped and well-trained in running the library; to have fully functional services; equipped with knowledge on proper classification of library materials and they are expert on information retrieval and library evaluation as well as authoritative when it comes to library matters.

### STAFFING / PERSONNEL (IDEAL NUMBER, QUALIFICATIONS AND ADVANTAGES)

As to staffing / personnel according to participants they unanimously agreed that 2 to 3 staff would be ideal number of staff for every government hospital library including clerical staff so that there should be a smooth flow of library services if ever 1 staff would be absent or doing other task assigned by higher authorities or doing other intervening tasks. As for qualifications, needed when hiring a librarian all of them had synchronized idea in saying that licensed with master's degree or units is a must; educational attainment, training, work experience and personality, good communication skills both oral and written and a graduate of accredited LIS school with good standing records. In the criteria of advantages the participants had enumerated the following reasons; according to participant A "professional librarian can accurately evaluate library collections, be able to identify the strength and weaknesses of the library and can do recommendations to higher management". Participants B and C similarly agreed that "library materials be kept and maximized and made easily accessible to users aside from performing his/her task effectively. Participant D however, seemingly limit her answer to "functional services and recognized libraries". On the other hand participant E emphasized the importance of "there is division of labor and staff management, can meet regulatory requirements, cost reduction by



subscribing and purchasing appropriate books and journals." A professional librarian has earned a Master's degree from a program that is accredited or is recognized by CHED or PRC an appropriate national body.

#### **COLLECTION**

With regard to their collection, the participants were one in saying they had books, journals ( printed and online ) magazines and online databases. As to their budget allocation, two (2 ) of the participants indicated in their budget allocation they were given annual budget though not fixed in terms of amount, two (2) also bluntly said that they had NO budget allocation instead they had to make an approval request from time to time whenever they need to purchase library materials; and one ( 1 ) participant had flexible budget allocation that is subject to availability of hospital funds. Based on the result only 2 out of 5 had definite library budget.

#### **SERVICES (KIND OF SERVICES AND OTHER EXTRA SERVICES/ NUMBER OF HOURS)**

Based on the data gathered majority of the participants 4 out of 5 answered circulation services ,internet ,reference services, photocopying, information retrieval, referral/ interlibrary loan and printing as their basic library services, 1 respondent aside from the basic does the MESH Training for their resident doctors this training orient and allow doctors to familiarize themselves proper way to search medical articles and publications. They also had something in common when it comes to extra services they rendered that is " searching articles not available to other libraries, requesting full text to other libraries or referral service, they even go beyond by giving minimal assistance in the technical writing aspect, reviews bibliographic data and responding to email inquiries and correspond to authors of their references if there are more data required. As for the number of hours they served in the library majority served at least 8 hours a day or beyond and there is one who served the library for 2 to 3 hours a day only because she was always given other task by the management.

#### **PHYSICAL FACILITIES (LOCATION AND MINIMUM SEATING CAPACITY)**

As to the result , in terms of Physical Facilities specifically on location and minimum seating capacity, all of the participants claimed that their library was not centrally located and it seemed hard to reach on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> floors respectively. As to their minimum seating capacity all of them also had an average of 30 simultaneously.

#### **(AREAS PROVIDED, EQUIPMENT AND FURNITURE AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MAINTAINED)**

In terms of areas provided all of them again had the relaxing pantry, viewing room, small working area, circulation and internet area. Participant C however, aside from those that were enumerated had an additional round-table discussion and individual study area. Computers, LCD, printer scanner, TV ,bookshelves, standard tables and chairs and magazine rack were equipment and furniture provided for the participants A , B and C, on the other hand participant D aside from standard tables and chairs and bookshelves had printer fax machine, desktop and camera. Participant E had compactor aside from standard tables and chairs and bookshelves. As for Information Technology 4 out of 5 have ATHENA ( Library Information software) while participant E had internet provision only.

#### **SPECIFIC PROBLEMS OF YOUR LIBRARY THAT NEED IMMEDIATE ACTION**

When I asked them of the specific problems of their library that needs immediate action, they had all this to say " hiring additional staff and to have fixed library budget; provision of yearly subscription to journals print and online; procurement of online databases; definite budget, additional staff and additional ventilation of the library for conducive learning atmosphere.

### **DISCUSSION/ CONCLUSIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **ADMINISTRATION**

Based on my series of interviews the government hospital libraries objective varies depending on their mission / vision and generally they had these as to their objectives; to serve the community in terms of their educational and research needs and assist medical practitioner in their research ; to provide timely, accurate information and materials as well as support and facilitate research, learning, teaching and administrative activities of the institution; to equip hospital staff with medical and health reading materials to support hospitals mission and vision and provide quality health care and to strengthen research program , provide and maintain library collection with an updated infectious disease. Government hospital is administered by a sub unit of an institution and not the administrator or the President of the said institution.

The library administrator / director in collaboration with the management or appropriate committee whichever is applicable shall have the authority to select and recommend reference materials to be purchased. To safeguard the library collections same should ensure librarians by the responsible institutions to secure the collections. The library collections should also be insured against natural disaster, grave theft, losses, etc. As an independent unit of the organization it serve, libraries shall be administered and managed by a librarian possessing the required expertise, subject specialization, education, experience and other qualifications provided for under R.A. 9246 other wise known as "Philippine Librarianship Act of 2003" to ensure effective, efficient and productive operation of library at all times.

Based on the results, generally the government hospital library in terms of administration had definite objectives based on their mission/vision, not directly administered by a president or director of the institution, and their concept of an ideal library should have the library staff /personnel that are qualified for the job; hiring of employees shall be vested on the library administrator or director who shall be directly responsible to the appropriate hierarchy of the governing body of the institution they serve and should be clearly defined in the organizational set-up of the institution.

#### **STAFFING/PERSONNEL**

Recruitment and selection depends on the recruitment policy of the office or institution and the prevailing Philippine laws, the number of staff in a government hospital library shall depend on the population served and the size of the collection, mission /vision of the library and government plantilla as approved by Civil Service Commission/Department of Budget and Management. The government hospital library shall be manned by qualified and professionally trained librarians and shall be supported by support services staff. The head of the government hospital library should be a professional Librarian. The non-professional staff should conform to existing laws and government regulations. The number of the library staff is dependent on the following; mission vision of the library, type of library and government – plantilla as approved by Civil Service Commission/Department of Budget and Management. Generally speaking the government hospital library is being manned by a one –man professional librarian and when compared to other libraries government hospital library is under staff.

#### **COLLECTION**

The total library budget shall cover the personnel, operating and other necessary capital expenditures required to sustain an effective professional library service. The library shall prepare an annual budget. Collection development is dependent on the following: Scope is dependent on mission/vision, function and type of library service for each institution. Size is likewise dependent on the same criteria. Growth of the collection is dependent on the budget allotment or fund allocation of the institution. The library shall be provided with adequate and continuing budgetary support as a separate item from the budget of the office of which it is a unit. The library budget shall be dependent on its program/projects for the ensuing year. Based on the results majority of the government hospital libraries had no fixed budget allocation and thus collection development was also affected resulting to obsolete and insufficient library collection.

#### **SERVICES**

In general, the library should provide information services pertinent to the institution's information requirements. The specialized library must provide materials and services appropriate to the organization's goal, size, number of staff and institutional responsibilities taking into consideration availability of other information resources.

Accessibility to the library services shall be during regular office hours and may be rendered beyond regular hours as the need arises.

#### **PHYSICAL FACILITIES/ INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

Generally, the library shall be centrally and conveniently accessible to the institution it serves. Physical arrangement is dependent on the following: research needs of its primary users, space available for the library, classification scheme use, the space allocation should be ; reading Area ; technical services area, stock and other shelf areas and other areas as may be needed as required.

The library shall provide adequate standard furniture and equipment for the needs of the users, collections and library staff and must encourage resource sharing to enrich their collections subject to existing policies of institutions and government rules and regulations.

Typically government hospital libraries based on this study were not centrally located and not conveniently accessible, as to equipment and furniture they showed fair and within the minimum standard as compared to other kinds of libraries.

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results the following conclusions were formulated;

1. The administration of government hospital library's objectives was based on their mission/vision and the types of institution they serve; library's not directly administered by a president or director of the institution, and their concept of an ideal library should have the library staff or personnel that are qualified for the job ( professional librarian ) ; hiring of employees shall be vested on the library administrator or director who shall be directly responsible for the appropriate hierarchy of the governing body of the institution they serve and should be clearly defined in the organizational set-up of the institution.
2. Government hospital library is under staff since it is manned by a one –man professional librarian only.
3. Government hospital libraries lack budget thus affecting collection development policy also resulting to obsolete and insufficient library collection.
4. Librarians rendered basic library services with intervening factors due to limited library staff .
5. Government hospital library is not centrally located and not conveniently accessible; as to equipment and furniture they showed fair and within the minimum standard as compared to other kinds of libraries.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the proposed library standard for government hospital libraries may be used and implemented for them to have guidelines in the daily operations of the library in terms of administration, staffing, collection, services, physical facilities and networking. In addition to Department of Health hospital libraries must be prioritize in order to sustain their existence and their contribution in health information dissemination.

## PROPOSED LIBRARY STANDARD FOR GOVERNMENT HOSPITAL LIBRARIES (PHILIPPINES)

### INTRODUCTION

Hospital libraries are considered to be the basic unit of the medical information system. Efficient and timely access to evidence-based health literature is an important element in the provision of safe patient care. A hospital libraries in order to survive, their existence must be validated and their contributions must be shown to be consistent with the overall goals of the hospitals they serve. In the Philippines the government hospital libraries lead by the Department of Health Librarians have no specific library standards as to this date. Although PHILHEALTH conducted hospital accreditation no specific guidelines were given as for the use, maintenance , collections, and sustainability of the library. Objectives: Based on the results of the study, the researcher aimed to provide guidelines /standards for government hospital libraries in terms of; Administration, Staffing,Collection ,Services, Physical Facilities and Networking.

### ADMINISTRATION

1. The Government hospital library shall be a line department of the institution responsible to the administration, and its relationships with other hospital units shall be reflected in the overall hospital organizational plan.
2. As an independent unit of the organization it serve, government libraries shall be administered and managed by a librarian possessing the required expertise, subject specialization, education, experience and other qualifications provided for under R.A. 9246 otherwise known as Philippine Librarianship Act."
3. To ensure that library staff /personnel are qualified for the job, hiring of employees shall be vested on the library administrator or director who shall be directly responsible to the appropriate hierarchy of the governing body of the institution they serve.
4. The library administrator / director in collaboration with the management or appropriate committee whichever is applicable shall have the authority to select and recommend reference materials to be purchased.

### STAFFING/PERSONNEL

A. Recruitment and Selection - depends on the recruitment policy of the office or institution and the prevailing Philippine laws.

#### 1. QUALIFICATIONS

Professional staff – The minimum requirement is one (1) professional staff equipped with the subject specialization of said library (medical)

Para-professional staff –Should be college degree holder with knowledge of Information technology; or in government agencies or institutions, civil service eligibility is required.

2. NUMBER OF THE LIBRARY STAFF – the number of the library staff is dependent on the following: mission vision of the library, type of medical library and plantilla as approved by Civil Service Commission /Department of Budget and Management.

### COLLECTION

A. Collection Development is dependent on the following:

1. Scope is dependent on the mission/vision, function and type of library service for each institution
2. Size is likewise dependent on the same criteria
3. Growth of the collection is dependent on the budget allotment or fund allocation of the institution.

#### B. Organization

1. Collection must be systematically organized according to generally accepted standard classification, e.g. Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC), Library of Congress (LC), and other recognized classification scheme.
2. Indexing should be observed.

#### C. Budget

The library shall prepare an annual budget. The government medical library shall be provided with adequate and continuing budgetary support as a separate item from the budget of the office of which it is a unit. The library budget shall be dependent on its program/projects for the ensuing year. The total library budget shall cover the personnel, operating and other necessary capital expenditures required.

### SERVICES

A. General – the library should provide information services pertinent to the institution's information requirements.

B. Special – the specialized library must provide materials and services appropriate to the organization's goal, size, number of staff and institutional responsibilities taking into consideration availability of other information resources

C. Library hours/Guidelines – accessibility to the library services shall be during regular office hours and may be rendered beyond regular hours as the need arises.

D. Technical Services – Acquisitions, Cataloging and classification; Indexing

E. Reader Services – Circulation, Reference, Periodicals, Audiovisual, Interlibrary loan/Resource sharing and Photocopying

### PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The government hospital library shall be in one location convenient to the hospital staff including physicians, nurses, students, and other health professionals, and provide access for the handicapped. Library space shall be adequate for the needs of users, collections, services, and library staff, and shall be reserved for library use.

Furniture and Equipment. The library shall provide adequate standard furniture and equipment for the needs of the users, collections and library staff.

**NETWORKING/COMPUTER FACILITIES**

The government hospital library shall develop relationships with other libraries cooperating in the development of specialized collections and sharing resources for mutual benefit, consistent with any legal restrictions. The government library shall have facilities for information technology and communication services. Government medical libraries must encourage resource sharing to enrich their collections subject to existing policies of institutions and government rules and regulations.

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