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FEATURE

**Holding The Fort: The Service-Oriented
Leadership of Librarians**

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Abstract. *Librarians are important stakeholders of an academic community. For institutions of higher education that highly values knowledge and research output, the role of librarians is even more vital. However, not much is known about their service and leadership roles since their work is mostly carried out behind the scene. This ethnographic study highlights the values and shared culture of librarians of a Christian institution of higher education. The study focused on six librarians who are working in a private library in the Philippines, specifically in one province. The results of the study showed that the values and shared culture of the librarians, the unspoken service providing leaders of this institution are just immeasurable. The librarians did possess service, open communication, mutual respect, continuous improvement and knowledge sharing among them as well as to the patrons they come across. The study also pointed on the various challenges that they face due to budget constraints and the nature of the multicultural working environment. As a coping mechanism, the participants work with a heart for mission, benefiting all concerned.*

Keywords: ethnography, service, shared culture, librarians, servant leadership, transformational leadership, higher education, Philippines

Introduction

Librarians do have an important role in society. They are the backbone of all information that the world of academe needs. Specifically, when it comes to acquiring learning, librarians do guide patrons for learning. In higher educational institutions (HEI), librarians are the driving forces for knowledge and learning (Shahmoradi, Rezaee, Sheikhi, & Darabian, 2016; Suleiman, Hanafi, & Tanslikhan, 2018). It seems that librarians are people behind the scenes of many academicians' success (Suleiman et al., 2018).

In terms of leadership, librarians do demonstrate servant leadership traits such as self-less service, conceptualization, building community, and empowerment (Greenleaf, 2003; Spears, 2010). Spears (2010) identified 10 attributes of servant leaders: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people and building a community. These are fine qualities that all workplace personnel can emulate (Russell & Stone, 2002; VanMeter, Chonko, Grisaffe & Goad, 2016). As leaders, the librarians in an HEI does transform the learning environment of an institution. These librarians create an environment of learning that is transformational, serving as change agents (Hicks & Given, 2013, p. 9). Such transformational leadership requires "enthusiasm, creativity, and risk-taking from individual leaders" (Mavrinac, 2005, p. 394). This is a process whereby both leaders and followers mutually help one another to achieve in terms of high morale and intrinsic motivation (Burns, 1978). This kind of leadership is transformational in itself where the leader directs his or her followers to the ultimate journey of learning. However, there are challenges that librarians go through like managing technology (Melchionda, 2007) which adds value to student's instruction (Edwards, 2018), and dealing with cultural differences (Allard, Mehra, & Qayyum, 2007).

Review of the Literature

Knowledge was stored in a repository in all its forms. Eventually, the repository became the library. The library comes from the word "liber" which means meaning book and defined as an organized collection of published, unpublished books and instructional media materials with the aid of services of personnel providing and interpreting these materials as required, to meet educational needs of its users. Libraries are agencies where sources of information of knowledge and experiences are selected, organized, preserved and disseminated to the academe world. Onwubiko and Uzoigwe (2004) define the library as an information center within an organization to meet the educational needs of the students, staff, and faculty. Rajkoomar (2013) affirms that the library is a hut or a treasure-house of knowledge. Libraries preserve precious records of culture that can be passed down to various generations. Libraries provide students, staff, and students with access to the information they need to work, play, learn, and govern.

The primary and sole objective of a library, especially that which caters to higher education, is to bring together the intellectuals, teachers, professionals, and documents that would solve their information needs. So, librarians work on acquiring primary sources, store documents, organize and control them. Librarians perform a secondary function by compiling catalogs and reading lists, providing up-to-date comprehensive services that allow users to decipher essential information (Abdulsalami, Okezie & Agbo, 2013). Librarians are valued personnel of an institution on campus. They are in charge of choosing and keeping up the scholarly substance of the library. Research librarians, indexing librarians, and library directors are altogether concerned about obtaining, assessing, and introducing information resources. Librarians tailor the resources to the necessities of the clients, facilitating scholarly progress. A conference with a fresh student is not the same as one with a doctoral candidate, yet both are centered around the person's needs (Dold, 2013).

Several studies have been conducted on toxic or destructive leadership of the academic librarians (Appelbaum & Roy-Girard, 2007; Craig & Kaiser, 2013; Higgs, 2009; Krasikova, Green, & LeBreton, 2013; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007; Schmidt, 2008). Some studies have focused on adjusting the place of work by new librarians (Oud, 2008). A study conducted in west Nigeria focused on the working environments and job performance of librarians (Amusa, Iyoro, & Olabisi, 2013). However, not much is known of librarians' leadership, shared values, culture and the way they think and interact in the process of providing the needed resources and artifacts for their communities and surrounding academic society.

The purpose of this study is to explore the leadership, values, and shared culture of librarians, specifically in a Christian HEI. The librarians have shared their joys as personnel in a working environment and how they have shared their cultural experiences as well as leadership skills that they can help each other grow. The focus of this study is to answer the general question: What type of culture and leadership styles do librarians use in a library? The following are the research questions for the study.

1. What is the leadership style of librarians in selected HEI?
2. How do these librarians interact with each other?
3. How do these librarians interact with their patrons?
4. What challenges do librarians in this HEI face in providing useful resources to the academic community?

Methodology

This study is based on the qualitative research paradigm. The research design used, ethnography, aimed to explore the nature of a specific social phenomenon among a certain group or community (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Flick, 2014). In this section, we present in detail the research methodology used in the study, which includes the research design, research settings and participants, data collection and data analysis.

Research Design

An ethnographic design was used in this study. Ethnography was seen as the most appropriate design since it examines the “shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language” of an entire culture-sharing group—small or large (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 90). Another aspect of ethnography is the focus on describing the shared values of a group (Harris, 1968). In this study, the culture-sharing group was the library workers.

Ethnography has origins in anthropology as seen in the works of Dewey and Mead in the early 1900s. More pluralistic approaches are developed by proponents of ethnography, such as Van Maanen (1988), Wolcott (2008), and Fetterman (2010). Two of the popular forms of ethnography are critical and realist. In the critical approach, the study is conducted with an advocacy purpose, while in the realist approach, the study provides an objective description of the situation. The present study adopted the realistic ethnography of Van Maanen (1988).

In this realistic ethnography, we immersed ourselves in the lives of the library workers as participant observers in the site—the library. The library is the place where the participants remained for extended periods, is their workplace. We found ethnography a straightforward design just as Wolcott (2008) mentions it to be. He refers to ethnographic study as involving firsthand experiences of observations by the researchers and interviewing to supplement what can be learned from the participants.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in an Asian HEI. This institution has several academic programs in areas such as Education, Business, Public Health, and Theology. The library activities and the librarians’ culture of this HEI were the focus of the study.

In qualitative research, the purpose of selecting the participants is to gain more insights into the topic under exploration. Thus, this study used a purposive sampling method, specifically criteria sampling, (a) to have more than three years working experience in this library, (b) to represent different categories of librarians, and (c) to be willing to participate. The participants were six employees

of the library of the selected HEI: (a) three library office personnel, (b) two patron assistants, and (c) one library administrator. They represent the groups entrusted with the academic support for the students.

Data Collection

For ethnographic studies, the main data collection method is observation. Two researchers of our group took observation notes in two venues of the library, one at the entrance desk and the second in the Instructional and Media Resources Center, where the interactions between different groups are more present and more visible. We observed during two periods of the day: (a) in the morning, from 8:00 am to 10:00 am when the library was opened, and (b) before lunchtime, from 11:00 am to 12:00 noon. We focused on observing the interaction between librarians-librarians, librarian-patrons (students, faculty, etc.), and librarians-administrators. Additionally, we took note of the spoken language used, the availability of the employees in responding to the patrons' needs, and the non-verbal language used among these groups.

Nevertheless, to assure the credibility of the study, besides observation, we conducted one Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with five participants and it lasted for 51 minutes. Additionally, we conducted one in-depth semi-structured individual interview with the selected library administrator. The in-depth interview lasted for 45 minutes. As researchers, we have discussed our own experiences and presuppositions related to the topic under exploration. Our pre-data collection discussions helped us to identify that we, as professors and students, benefiting from the librarians' services, can be influenced or biased in our study. Thus, we decided to support each other in remaining unbiased as much as possible by following the proper protocol of the methodology, by taking field notes, and by recording analytic memos of our own thoughts and reactions regarding the data collected and the data analysis process. Furthermore, we tried our best to put aside our previous experiences related to this topic. The researchers' group debriefing sessions, the review of field notes and analytic memos after conducting the FGD, the in-depth interview, and the observations have helped us also in evaluating the process of data collection and in identifying patterns in this study. Some of the major themes were identified at this stage of the research. The matrix below shows the link between the research questions and the different sources of data collection.

Table 1

Triangulation Matrix for Data Collection

Research Questions	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3	Data Source 4	Data Source 5
1. What is the leadership style of librarians in the selected HEI?	Observation and field notes	FGD (employees)	In-depth interview (administrator)	Researchers' memos	Literature review
2. How do these librarians interact with each other?	Observation and field notes	FGD (employees)	In-depth interview (administrator)	Researchers' memos	Literature review
3. How do these librarians interact with their patrons?	Observation and field notes	FGD (employees)	In-depth interview (administrator)	Researchers' memos	Literature review
4. What challenges do librarians in this HEI face in providing useful resources to the academic community?		FGD (employees)	In-depth interview (administrator)	Researchers' memos	Literature review

Data Analysis

The data analysis process leads researchers to answer the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, data analysis took place simultaneously with data collection. Data were coded, grouped into categories, which eventually were developed into the themes. The Taba inductive method (Taba, 1962) was used in the analysis process to generate the themes. The field notes of observations, the individual interview, as well as the FGD transcriptions, and memo notes were prepared for data analysis. In reporting the results, we considered data collected *December 2019, Vol. 22, No. 2*

from all these sources. Eight emerging themes have been developed. They are presented later in this study.

Ethical Considerations

We took actions to ensure that this study followed ethical considerations. The ethical review board of our university endorsed the study. Several other procedures helped in conducting the study in an ethical way such as (a) the participants responding to an informed consent form at the beginning of the study to indicate their willingness to be part of the study and giving permission to audio record the interviews; (b) explaining to the participants that the data will be treated confidentially and be used only in relation to the research context and in no other form; (c) the use of pseudonyms to ensure anonymity of the participants; (d) the assurance that the participants will not experience any physical or mental discomfort or harm arising from the study; and (e) giving back the results of the study in written form to them. All these ethical issues were addressed in this study.

Researchers' Reflexivity

The researchers of this study are Christian educators. We believe that education has an important role in preparing students for society, for their professional work, and service. It has also a role in developing them holistically: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual. We believe that students' growth is a team-work process. It involves not only students and professors but also administrators, mentors, and others. In the administrators' group, librarians play an important role. We recognize the importance of the library and the librarians as continuous support for students' academic growth and success. We believe that positive relationships should be developed in an academic, multicultural environment, with reciprocal respect, proper language, supportive attitudes, and selfless service among the participant groups. As educators, we have used the library resources profusely for class preparations, presentations, and research purposes.

Results

The information presented herein is written to answer the four research questions and are thematically discussed concisely. Also, findings from other literature are cited to enrich the discussion. Field notes from observations and participants' responses from a focus-group interview with the employee and an in-depth interview with the leader are included in a table format as evidence and support for each theme. A clip art model derived from the eight themes is displayed towards the end to portray the culture of the librarians studied in this research.

Leadership Style of Librarians

To address Research Question 2, two themes are being discussed: empowering leadership and service-oriented leadership. The findings show that the participants believe the leader plays a big role in empowering employees to learn their tasks, even though some of them do not have the academic backgrounds of librarians. Through various trainings and webinars, leaders empower the employees by providing various opportunities to enhance personal development and growth. With the advent of technology, information and knowledge can be easily accessed and shared through digital platforms. When organizational members engage in a “participatory culture,” they have control over how to improve their knowledge and intellectual ability by utilizing disperse media content (Jenkins, 2006). In our world today, members of society can simultaneously become producers, contributors, as well as consumers of information and knowledge. Professional development for librarians is not only beneficial for the individuals but also the institution (Subrata, 2016).

By allowing each librarian to enhance their personal growth, leaders provide a chance for service to be improved—and delivering service to others is what these librarians do best. Librarians can become more involved in service towards their environment and community by improving people’s intellectual capability and provide necessary aid (Petr & Aparac-Jelusic, 2002). The two themes explaining the leadership style of librarians are presented below.

Table 2
Leadership Style of Librarians

Themes	Focus-Group Discussion	In-depth Individual Interview	Field Notes
Empowering Leadership	<i>“The first time, I have no idea how the work goes in the library. But through the help of our supervisor, I was able to know, and to learn, and to love my work.” (FGD, P4)</i> <i>“Since I work outside the church organization before. From the leader to the supervisors and to the colleagues. If your leader is good, you</i>	<i>“We are training our workers to be thinkers also. If they are trained, they can decide in their own field, their own responsibility” (I, LD)</i> <i>“You need to look at the potential of every worker. How they can contribute... and empower them.” (I, LD)</i>	

	<i>will try to love your work.” (FGD, P4)</i>		
	<i>“Working in the library helps me develop different skills, such as accounting and acquisition, also in technology especially in media instruction” (FGD, P2)</i>	<i>“The certification program allows them to have skills, and in gaining skills they will be equipped as a library worker... and in that case, they will also be equipped to make decisions.” (I, LD)</i>	
	<i>“We have our in-service training, like webinars that we should finish every month, then review it, we have follow-up discussions.” (FGD, P3)</i>		
Service-oriented Leadership	<i>“We are trained to be service-oriented in this institution, so I like doing it. For me it’s not work, it’s actually service” (FGD, P2)</i>	<i>“I always tell them. This is a library...this is a service part of the institution. You should be really service-oriented.” (I, LD)</i>	8:20 AM – the workers are greeting students when they enter before students do this. Started to whisper. (FN1, p. 1)
	<i>We help other schools to fix their libraries...we also started a library in jail, in a nearby area. (FGD, P2 & P3)</i>	<i>“God put you here. So, what is your contribution?” (I, LD)</i>	

Internal Interactions (Workplace Atmosphere)

The findings of Research Question 2 reveal three themes regarding how the librarians interact internally with one another: collaborative environment, knowledge sharing, and open communication. Inspired by the local Asian culture in which society interacts more collectively, the participants of this study share a common response that values of love, mutual respect, and kindness that exist in the

workplace environment. Librarians assist and help each other, share concerns and responsibilities, and form deep relationships with one another. Collaboration is recognized as one of the key factors to enhance academic performance and boost research capacity (Pham & Tanner, 2015). Basically, there are three types of collaboration: team collaboration, community collaboration, and network collaboration. One of the main characteristics of community collaboration is people having a shared interest and goal geared towards learning (Callahan, Schenk, & White, 2008). A community collaboration allows people to solve problems by asking questions and seeking advice from other members of the community—a place where knowledge is shared and built.

Participant's response also revealed that aside from work interaction, most of the librarians interact to discuss what they have learned from their monthly webinars and to share knowledge regarding what they have accomplished as they meet every first Wednesday of the month. This is also done in order for the librarians to mentor the library staff who lack the academic background of librarians. Knowledge sharing has become very important, especially due to the rise of digital knowledge and communication. A study conducted in Kerala, India, found that library professionals acquire skills from digital libraries, engage in workplace learning and knowledge sharing to keep themselves updated (Irfan, Haneefa, & Shyni, 2015).

The participants also expressed that the basis of their collaboration and sharing is due to open communication. Establishing the foundation for open communication can be challenging, as this requires trust. Before engaging themselves in open communication, employees and patrons need to feel comfortable and safe that their personal and sensitive information is kept confidential. According to the *IFLA Code of Ethics for Librarians and other Information Workers* (2012), "The relationship between the library and the users is one of confidentiality and librarians and other information workers will take appropriate measures to ensure that user data is not shared beyond the original transaction" (p. 3). Although they come from different homes, the library workers have developed a family-oriented mindset and share mutual trust and respect among themselves. This is in line with other studies that believe efficient communication and open relationships among the group of librarians are keys for successful work in a library (Karim, 2017; Yildiz, 2012). Burd (2003) also indicated that librarians in organizations that support open communication and establish relationships built on honesty and trust are more satisfied and committed to their jobs. Table 3 presents the quotations from focus-group discussions and in-depth interview excerpts as evidence of the three themes presented in this section.

Table 3

Librarians' Internal Interactions

Themes	Focus-Group Discussion	In-depth Interview	Field Notes
Collaborative Workplace	You know your colleagues the way we interact with each other, helping our work, especially in my work since I do not have a background as a librarian, they ask how can I help you?" (FGD, P1)	"We have a shared concern and shared responsibility in dealing with problems in the library. Not only one person." (I, LD)	P3 talks a lot about department worship, in-service training, webinar, planning. (FN2, p. 2)
	Internally we always talk together, how can we improve, how can we solve an issue. . . we also have a team building program, we have the worship and the team building activity and of course will not miss the eating part" (FGD, P3)	We work together with professors and students. (I, LD)	
Knowledge Sharing	Monthly Webinars "We study some materials every month so that we can cope with some of the challenges." (FGD, P5). "Every first Wednesday we review, we discuss what we have learned from the webinars".	"The webinars are to equip the library staffs. Because we have many staff who don't have library background, so we mingle with librarians so they can help other library staff who don't understand... there is a mentoring also, and at least when we meet every	

	(FGD, P3)	Wednesday end of month, they can share with each other what learning they had, what we can apply.” (I, LD)	
	<p>“We also offer our service, our help with other’s work. Asking them what to do, and them teaching us. . . and it develops, we are also learning. Because you see, each department has different areas, but we did little by little and we are learning each day.” (FGD, P1)</p>		
Open Communication	<p>"Since we are like a family, we can go and directly talk to them. . . . What happens in the library stays in the library" (FGD, P3).</p> <p>"We are assertive to express, assertive to tell." (FGD, P2)</p> <p>“We have the freedom to express ourselves.” (FGD, P1)</p>	<p>We address problems among ourselves directly without intermediaries. We just go directly to them". (I, LD)</p>	<p>P2 mentions a direct about openness to mention things that were not properly done. (FN2, p.1)</p>

External Interactions (Wider Academic Society)

When addressing Research Question 3, two themes are being discussed. The response from library participants exposes that they believe their basis of trust, respect, and openness with each other becomes the guiding light into how they communicate and interact with the wider society. With that being mentioned, the first theme discussed in this section is a spill-over from the theme open communication. When there are problems with aggressive library patrons, they communicate their expectations directly but in a Christian manner.

The findings also revealed that the librarians in this particular HEI are very much people-oriented. Participants believe that their best and worst part of their job is dealing with the various needs of people, and it is part of their training to ensure
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they smile and treat others warmly. Studies have found that treating people with respect and recognizing their roles, bring positive results in the librarians' work (Karim, 2008; Omeluzor, 2018). These librarians also try their best to meet the needs of the students and faculty they serve by creating a clean and friendly environment for learning, such as providing coloring boards. Panasuk (2019), in his *TedXSedona* presentation, argued that the number one skill needed in the 21st century is creativity. In line with this thinking, Johnson (2016) believes that the library should have creative spaces explicitly designed to promote student learning and content creation. Such spaces would include drawings and photographs, audiovisual materials, electronic devices, media centers and the likes—which would allow content creation. The results from focus group discussion and individual interviews also matched with the result of observations, which shows that the librarians behaved in a respectful and friendly manner to the many patrons coming to the library. Table 4 presents the evidence that led to the two themes discussed in this section.

Table 4

Librarians' External Interaction

Themes	Focus-Group Discussion	In-depth Interview	Field Notes
Open Communication	"We discuss how to solve issues with the students because our goal is to meet the need of the students." (FGD, P2)	"When issues with students arise, I have to call them to the office and talk to them to make them understand. I tell them we are aiming to go to heaven, so we need to understand each other." (I, LD)	
People-Oriented	"You know, our students are so busy. We try to smile and greet them when they are coming or leaving." (FGD, P1)	"We try to keep our libraries clean and organized. We also encourage the students to help us, to maintain, to keep the library clean." (I, LD)	10:25 AM—the person from the desk is interacting with students in a positive way. She went to one student, who was working on

"Even just a simple thank you, or seeing them very happy that you serve them, not just providing service but going the extra mile. . . and all though it is challenging, it helps us grow." (FGD, P3)

". . . we try to put coloring boards, we try to create an environment that will make our students and also us happy." (FGD, P1)

"During the orientation If you have a problem with any of our co-workers, please let me know or tell the person right away." (I, LD)

her computer, to give the change for printing some materials. She addresses the student respectfully; smiling and greeting every person that passes by. (FN1, p. 2)

Challenges Faced

This section provides the result for the last research question in this study, which addresses the challenges librarians face. Two themes were identified from the responses of the participants: budget constraints and cultural diversity. The first theme arose because like many institutions, the librarians are subject to functioning within financial limitations. These constraints drive librarians to work hard and find alternative ways to make sure that they can provide relevant resources at a reasonable cost to their valuable patrons. This finding is in line with other studies that show librarians are preoccupied with overcoming the library's financial limitations to provide needed resources to students (Lin, 2015; Mollah, Anwaruzzaman, & Kundu, 2012).

The next theme deals with the fact that due to daily interactions with various people, librarians are faced with issues of age and cultural diversity. As observed, every library patron has a unique personality loaded with differences in values and assumptions. The library plays an active role in the development of society, as it serves a social meeting place for various groups of different ethnic backgrounds and age gaps (Euler & Wilke, 2009). Hence it is becoming more and more important for librarians to be trained and to be aware of the importance of cultural differences. As suggested by Mestre (2010), the opportunity for librarians to be diversity trained has become increasingly important, as society is becoming increasingly diverse. Table 5 displays the excerpts from data analysis to support the resulting themes.

Table 5
Challenges Librarians Face

Themes	Focus-Group Discussion	In-depth Interview	Field Notes
Budget Constraints	“When the resources are not within our budget, we find similar alternate resources for the patrons.” (FGD, P2)	“Sometimes, there are resources that are too expensive for the library to purchase and so sometimes it is hard to fulfill the needs of the students.” (I, LD)	P2 detailed in her answers regarding issues of expensive resources. (FN2, p. 1)
Cultural Diversity	"Sometimes, their culture you know we cannot try to change. Because some cultures are so reserved, so serious . . . and even when we greet them they just keep silence, but we continue to try smiling." (FGD, P1)	“Cultural diversity is one aspect that is dealing with people and yes some of them are aggressive and arrogant.” (I, LD) “Staff workers are from different cultures and each one is unique. . . what kind of work should I give them? It is hard indeed.” (I, LD)	P2 always smile when speaking about different cultures and the way of students. (FN2, p. 1) P4 reassures that librarians are here for all students. “Calm down, we are here for you!” (FN2, p. 2)

From the findings of the four research questions addressed in this study, the condensed data from field notes, focused-group discussion, and individual interviews were categorized into eight main themes, which describe the culture of librarians in a selected HEI. The eight themes are empowerment leadership, service-oriented leadership, collaborative workplace, knowledge sharing, open communication, people-oriented, budget constraints, and cultural diversity. These themes are presented in the form of graphic art in order to illustrate how the culture of librarians—their values, beliefs, customs, and limitations—are built and maintained. It also portrays that librarians continually pile up knowledge (as represented by the stack of books) to enable them to serve patrons. By continuously holding the fort of knowledge, librarians provide open opportunities for the academic society to enter and learn from the various resources available within the library’s bookshelves. The eight emerging themes, represented in the

graphic below (Figure 1), are not hierarchically organized. Therefore, they should be considered as having equal importance in the successful work of the librarians.

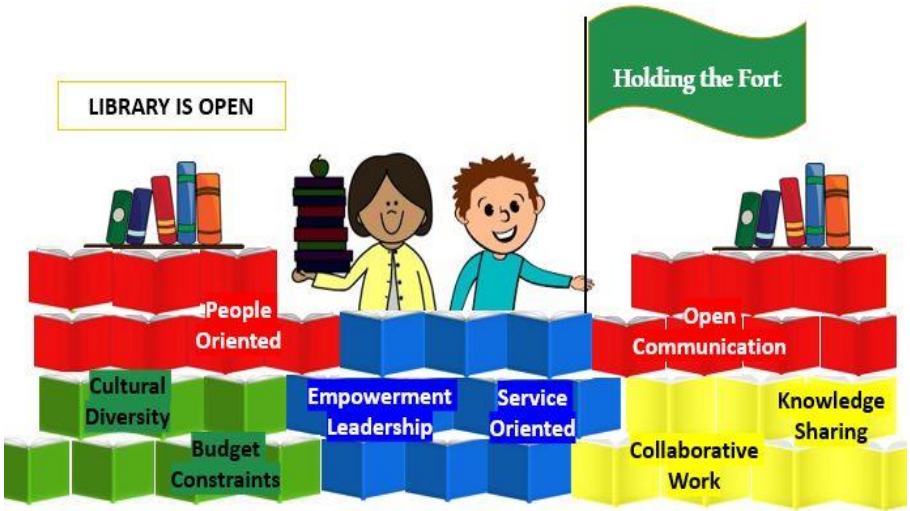


Figure 1. Librarians holding the fort of knowledge.

Conclusion

Librarians can work effectively under supportive leadership. They can build a shared culture based upon values. The leadership style of librarians in the selected HEI is an empowerment leadership, shaping the culture of the librarians, leading to continuous in-service learning and to open communication. They are service-oriented, manifesting passion for their work.

In their internal interactions with each other, the librarians in this HEI developed a culture of knowledge sharing and lifelong learning. They manifest love, mutual respect, and kindness in their collaborative workplace, being also influenced by the local culture. In their external interactions with students, faculty, and academicians, the librarians showed open communication. Their interactions are based on mutual trust and respect. Their work is people-centered, an aspect the librarians have identified as the most challenging part of their work in a multicultural environment. In providing useful resources to the academic community, the librarians of this HEI have faced financial challenges due to a limited budget. Still, they are working hard to provide all the requested resources. They can be considered the gatekeepers that hold the fort of knowledge, always working with a heart for the institutional mission.

Limitations of the Study

This research study was initially conducted in relation to the Applied Qualitative Research class requirement. Therefore, the study only included a limited number of participants and the data collection period was about two weeks. Nevertheless, several recommendations have been extracted from the findings of the study.

Recommendations

This ethnographic study has resulted in some specific recommendations. These recommendations are addressed to librarians, administrators, patrons of the library, and for further studies. The following are the recommendations:

1. The first recommendation is for the librarians. They should continue to practice their good values and beliefs, continue to serve with a heart for institutional mission and to stay updated on current technological issues.
2. The second recommendation is for the leaders and the administrators. They may provide librarians with more financial support, provide more self-development opportunities, give opportunities for librarians to co-teach with professors, involve them in instructional activities, and emphasize the importance of library orientation program.
3. The third set of recommendations is for library patrons—faculty, students, and academicians. They should collaborate with the librarians by sharing ideas, inputs, and suggestions. They should also communicate the difficulties and the challenges they have, as librarians are willing to help them. Additionally, they should be considerate and patient when requesting assistance, showing more respect to librarians.
4. For further studies, the use of other qualitative research designs such as narrative inquiry or phenomenology is recommended. It is also suggested to increase the number of participants and to perform quantitative studies to find factors affecting the performance of librarians in HEI.

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