Perceptions and Awareness of Special Collections in Irish Academic Libraries

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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at Dublin Business School

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Declaration

Declaration: I, Stephanie Chen, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed: Stephanie Chen

Date: 8/22/2016
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Abstract

Scant research has been conducted examining special collections from the perspective of library staff. This dissertation seeks to fill this gap in knowledge by examining levels of awareness and perceptions of special collections from the perspective of library staff in Ireland. The dissertation also examined the extent to which these perceptions aligned with how special collections staff perceive themselves and the extent of collaboration occurring between special collections staff and other library staff.

Primary data in this dissertation was gathered through a self-completed web questionnaire, which was distributed to library staff from seven university libraries in Ireland. Out of the population of 457, a total of 98 responses was obtained.

Results from the questionnaires suggest high levels of awareness and the existence of positive perceptions in library staff. A high level of alignment in perceptions was found between special collections staff and other library staff. In addition, collaborative efforts between special collections staff and other library staff span a range of departments and appear to be occurring on a regular basis. Finally, results suggest a possible association is present between high levels of awareness and collaboration.

The dissertation contributed to better understandings of how visible special collections are to library staff and how special collections are perceived by library staff. Results suggest there exists integration of special collections to the larger academic library environment in Ireland.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine special collections within libraries in the Irish Universities Association. The Association consists of seven universities: Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, Dublin City University, Maynooth University, University College Cork, University of Limerick, and NUI Galway (Irish Universities Association, no date).

As special collections make up a part of academic libraries, it is important to integrate activities within special collections to the overall strategic goals and missions of the environment in which they belong.

This dissertation will attempt to measure this integration by gauging the level of awareness library staff have regarding special collections and by examining the perceptions library staff have of special collections. These perceptions will be compared with how special collections staff perceive themselves and special collections. For the purposes of this dissertation, perception will be defined as what an individual thinks and feels while awareness will be defined as “knowing who is around, what activities are occurring, who is talking with whom” (Dourish and Bly, 1992). This means perceptions will explore how library staff feel about special collections and the opinions they may have while awareness will measure the amount of basic knowledge library staff have of special collections. Examining the levels of awareness of special collections and perceptions of special collections by library staff can assist in aligning special collections to the broader academic library environment. In addition, the dissertation will examine the extent of collaboration occurring between library staff and special collections staff.

Much of the research on special collections has been conducted in the United States. There is currently a gap in the literature in regards to special collections research in Ireland. When surveys are conducted in an Irish context, such as Dooley et al.’s (2013) survey, these tend to focus on providing generalized data about special collections. In addition, most of the research that has been conducted tends to focus on collection management, storage and facilities, use and users, and the digitization activities of special collections (Panitch, 2001). Little research has been conducted examining special collections from the perspective of library staff. This area is worth exploring as results will contribute to the existing literature and provide more specific knowledge on special collections in Ireland.

Research that has been conducted on perceptions of special collections tend to focus on how users or the external community perceive special collections. While it is important to consider user perceptions, library staff perceptions are also essential as they are key stakeholders in the library. However, few studies have taken place examining the perceptions of special collections by internal library staff. One such study was conducted by Priddle in 2015. However, this study was limited to special collections in the United States and involved a small sample size. This dissertation will
contribute to Priddle’s work by collecting data from a larger sample size and from a wider variety of staff.

Results from this dissertation will contribute to better understandings of how visible special collections are to library staff, how special collections within academic libraries are perceived, and if there are any associations present between levels of awareness and collaboration and perceptions and collaboration. These results can assist academic libraries in integrating special collections to the rest of the library.

1.2 Areas of Interest and Research Questions
Areas of interest in this dissertation have been defined as:

1. The extent to which positive perceptions exist in library staff for special collections in academic libraries
2. The extent to which perceptions of special collections align with how special collections staff perceive themselves
3. The extent to which library staff are aware of basic information about special collections and the activities and functions of special collections in academic libraries
4. The extent of collaboration occurring between special collections staff and other library staff
5. To ascertain if any association is present between levels of awareness and collaboration
6. To ascertain if any association is present between perceptions of special collections and collaboration

The dissertation will be undertaken with the following question in mind:

1. What perceptions and awareness do library staff in the larger, Irish academic library environment have of special collections?

The research question will be further defined by the following sub-questions:

a. How well do these perceptions align with how special collections staff perceive themselves?
b. Is there an association present between perceptions and collaboration?
c. Is there an association present between awareness and collaboration?

The research questions of the dissertation were answered through a survey of academic library staff. Two questionnaires were distributed to participants via email. The questionnaires were designed with the research questions and areas of interest in mind. Findings from the questionnaires were analyzed in the context of the research questions, areas of interest, and literature.
1.3 Dissertation Structure

Chapter 2 of this dissertation will contextualize the dissertation by reviewing relevant literature in the research area. This chapter will provide background to the research area and identify any gaps in existing knowledge.

Chapter 3 of this dissertation will discuss the research methodology and methods used. This chapter will present the research design of the dissertation, the data collection instruments used, the data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. It will also justify why certain methods were selected and will acknowledge the limitations inherent in those methods.

Chapter 4 of this dissertation will present the primary data collected by the questionnaires. This chapter will also describe the questionnaire distribution process and response rate.

Chapter 5 of this dissertation will involve a critical analysis of the findings in reference to the research questions and areas of interest. Findings will also be discussed in relation to existing literature.

Chapter 6 of this dissertation will provide a summary of findings and will present recommendations based on those findings.

Chapter 7 of this dissertation is a critical self-reflection on the learning process of doing this Masters and dissertation. It will provide an in-depth account of the experiences of the researcher.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A literature review was conducted to contextualize the research and reveal any current gaps in knowledge (Creswell, 2013, p. 28). This literature review involved an in-depth reading of existing literature in the research area.

The literature review also assisted in the selection of a suitable methodology for the dissertation by examining what types of data had already been collected by other researchers in the area.

In researching the area, certain themes emerged from the literature. These themes were as follows: Academic Libraries, Special Collections, Perceptions and Awareness of Special Collections, and Collaboration with Special Collections.

This chapter will discuss each of the themes and will conclude by discussing the relevance of the dissertation in context of the literature.

2.2 Academic Libraries

Academic libraries are libraries that can be found in colleges and universities. Oftentimes, they are considered the “heart of the university” (Virkus and Metsar, 2004). Users in academic libraries typically consist of students, staff, and faculty. Job duties for staff in academic libraries include assisting users in fulfilling their information needs, involvement in information literacy programs, facilitation of access to information, management of library systems, and collaboration and promotion (American Library Association, 2012).

Academic library organizational structures will vary depending on the institution. Generally, academic libraries are structured along functional or divisional lines. This means work will be differentiated and library staff are often organized into hierarchal departments.

For example, the academic library at University College Dublin (UCD) is divided into five different departments (Collection Services, Client Services, Cultural Heritage and Special Collections, Planning and Administration, and Research Services). Within these departments, work is further sub-divided. For example, within the Client Services department, work is grouped by the following functions: Academic Liaison and Support Services, Facilities Management, User Services and Desk Support, and Shelving Services (University College Dublin Library, no date).

Similarly, the library at Trinity College Dublin is divided into ten departments: Collection Management, Digital Resources and Imaging Services, Early Printed Books and Special Collections, Glucksman Map Library, Information Service, Manuscripts and Archives Research Library, Official Publications and the
While UCD and Trinity are larger libraries with more staff members, smaller academic libraries can still be characterized as having functional divisions. For example, the library at the University of Limerick (UL) consists of 28 staff members. The library is divided into the following five sections: Administration, Information Services, Reader Services, Special Collections, and Technical Services (University of Limerick Library, 2013).

Thus, the majority of academic libraries in Ireland are characterized as being organized into hierarchal departments. Although this organizational structure can provide stability and consistency for staff, it has been argued an adverse consequence is little movement between departments is allowed and work is often inflexible (Schmidt and Dulaney, 2014). In addition, as staff largely work only with those in the same department, a lack of awareness of other departmental functions may emerge (Michalak, 2012).

2.3 Special Collections

Special collections can be found in a variety of institutions. These include academic libraries, museums, public and national libraries, and independent research libraries (Allen, 2003). Within academic libraries, special collections are a part of the larger library environment and will often be its own, separate department.

Special collections can be differentiated from general collections in libraries as special collections contain rare and unique materials. These materials are characterized as requiring special handling, care, and storage (Blouin, 2010) and can consist of a variety of materials. Generally, materials in special collections will consist of rare books and manuscripts, although they can include any research materials determined to be outside the general collection (Prochaska, 2003). Often, materials from special collections are used as primary sources or as research materials (Carter, 2009). In contrast to materials found in general collections, special collections materials cannot be borrowed and have restricted access (Dooley et al, 2013). Oftentimes, special collections materials can only be accessed and consulted in a secure reading room (Whittaker, 2008). Staff in special collections are characterized as having generalized library skills of cataloguing, reference skills, and research support skills but in a specialized context and environment (Hansen, 2011).

A survey conducted by Dooley et al (2013) examined special collections and archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The survey collected data on the overall library, collections and collection care, user services, cataloguing, digitization, born-digital material, and staffing. Findings from the survey...
indicate the top challenges cited by respondents for special collections and archives in the United Kingdom and Ireland were in outreach, space and facilities, born-digital materials, collection care, and cataloguing and archival processing.

One key challenging issue that emerged from research conducted by Dooley et al (2013) was the lack of alignment of special collections with the institutional missions and priorities of the library. This is supported by anecdotal evidence which has found there exists a lack of integration of special collections, despite special collections forming a part of the library. This lack of integration can result in failures to address the needs of special collections in long term planning and budgeting, failures to include special collections in general collection development policies, and a lack of understanding and shared values between special collections staff and other library staff (Hewitt and Panitch, 2003). However, little quantitative data has been collected in the research area to support this anecdotal evidence. What research that has been done on special collections is often in a North American context and is focused on the collections, facilities, preservation and conservation, use and users, and digitization activities of special collections (Panitch, 2001).

2.4 Perceptions and Awareness of Special Collections

Most research conducted examining perceptions of special collections has been done examining user perceptions. This is because the majority of outreach activities in special collections in academic libraries is focused on outside stakeholders (Berenback et al, 2010). To these individuals, special collections have often been portrayed or perceived as being intimidating, mystical places reserved for researchers (Torre, 2008). Recent outreach efforts have been conducted in attempts to change this perception and have been met with some success (Traister, 2003; Harris and Weller, 2012; Stam, 2006).

There has been one recent study that has examined special collections from the perspective of library staff. Priddle (2015) found outreach within the library was largely inadequate as special collections were often perceived as being inaccessible “treasure rooms” guarded by “gatekeepers.” This has resulted in an internal gap, especially between special collections and library departments focused on providing services to users. Furthermore, a “fundamental knowledge gap” in awareness of special collection’s activities by other library staff was present.

As special collections staff will often work independently from others, misalignments in perceptions and a general lack of awareness could be present. This dissertation was undertaken to establish if any unspoken barriers existed between special collections and other library staff by examining the levels of awareness and perceptions of library staff. Higher levels of awareness and alignments in
perceptions would suggest integration of special collections with the library, despite departmental divisions.

2.5 Collaborations with Special Collections

While the nature of collaboration itself can vary, its importance is often highlighted in the literature. Within libraries, Wildridge et al. (2004) have found collaboration is a “key area for the library information professional...and is crucial for the profession for the future.” This is especially true as libraries now have to deal with the changes and challenges brought about by technology and the shifting roles of librarians. Collaboration is increasingly being used in libraries as a strategy to cope with these challenges (Zaid and Okiki, 2014).

Most collaboration in special collections has been done with faculty, students, researchers, and the outside community (Priddle, 2015). Within these collaborations, most of the focus is placed on instruction in using special collections and outreach to potential users and academic departments. For example, many collaborations have occurred between special collections staff and university faculty in using special collections materials as primary sources or for information literacy instruction (Hubbard and Lotts, 2013; Williams and Mulroney, 2015; Martin-Bowtell and Taylor, 2014; Bahde, 2011). In addition, collaboration with outside communities have occurred through exhibitions, classroom visits, seminars, and lectures (Traister, 2003) to promote greater visibility and use of special collections (Harris and Weller, 2012). These collaborations can include elementary and middle schools (Theunissen, 2007) and the public community (Visser, 2003).

However, despite numerous collaborations occurring in special collections with external colleagues and communities, an “organizational and operational isolation” in the library has been acknowledged as existing (Hewitt and Panitch, 2003). Priddle (2015) has found no formal programs have been developed to promote collaboration with internal, library colleagues. What little collaboration that does occur between special collections staff and other library staff are often with specialized individuals, such as subject librarians (Visser, 2003).

This lack of relationship between staff can have serious implications as improved intra-library collaboration can often lead to greater understandings and relationships between departments (Visser, 2003). Library service staff are often the first point of contact for students and faculty (Tomberlin and Turi, 2012). Having existing relationships between staff can increase special collections usage as library staff can correctly answer user queries or refer users to special collections. Furthermore, establishing these relationships can assist in aligning special collections to the missions and priorities of the library.
2.6 Relevance of the Dissertation

Based on the literature review, current gaps in the existing knowledge can be identified. Very scant research has been conducted examining library staff perceptions of special collections. Almost all of the research in this area has examined user perceptions. While Priddle (2015) addressed perceptions of special collections and internal gaps in libraries, the population interviewed only covered staff high in the administrative hierarchy. Furthermore, her research collected data from libraries in the United States. It is unknown if such an internal gap is present in Ireland. Finally, only qualitative data was gathered in her research. This research will aim to collect quantitative data from library staff at all levels in Ireland.

While the survey conducted by Dooley et al (2013) collected quantitative data from the United Kingdom and Ireland, a gap in knowledge still exists. The report listed numerous challenging issues present in special collections but did not provide any further details as to why these were considered challenging issues by respondents. Furthermore, the majority of the 82 respondents were English institutions. Only three Irish institutions were surveyed, of which two were universities (Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin). As there are five other universities with special collections in Ireland (Dublin City University, Maynooth University, University College Cork, University of Limerick, and NUI Galway), this research will fill a gap in knowledge and examine aspects of special collections within those universities as well as further examine special collections in Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter contextualized the dissertation by providing background to the research area and reviewing relevant literature found.

First, an overview of academic libraries and their organizational structure was presented. The chapter then presented an overview of special collections and the types of research being conducted in this area. The literature suggests internal gaps and lacks of relationships being present between special collections and other library departments.

Based on the literature review, gaps in the existing knowledge were identified. The dissertation sought to fill these gaps by collecting quantitative data from library staff at all levels and examining special collections from all university libraries in Ireland.

The next chapter will discuss the methodology and methods used in the dissertation.
3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter of the dissertation will examine the research methodology and methods used. It will begin by discussing the research design of the dissertation. Next, it will present the data collection instruments used and data analysis procedures. Finally, it will detail ethical considerations and highlight some limitations of the dissertation.

The “research onion” as visualized by Saunders et al (2015, p. 124) is used to represent the various aspects of research methodology. In this multi-layered visualization, each layer of the “onion” represents a different aspect of research, ranging from the broad concept of research philosophy on the outside to the more specific aspects of research techniques and procedures in the center.

The philosophies, approach, and strategy selected by this dissertation have been circled in the figure below. Each of these will be discussed in further detail.

![The Research Onion](image-url)
3.2 Research Design

The research design of a dissertation is the general plan of how the researcher will answer their research questions (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 163). The following section will discuss the philosophy, approach, strategy, and sampling undertaken by this dissertation.

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is an integral part of doing research. The philosophy selected is largely dependent on the aims and objectives of the research as well as the researcher’s own personal viewpoints (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 123).

Philosophy refers to the “system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge” (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 124). Undertaking research will involve a number of conscious and unconscious assumptions about the world. These assumptions will influence the methodology, strategy, techniques, and procedures chosen by the researcher (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 125). Thus, it is fundamental to have a strong philosophical base before any type of research can begin.

This dissertation drew from the research philosophies of pragmatism and positivism.

Pragmatism recognizes that reality is complex (Creswell, 2013, p. 11) and places focus on problems, practices, and relevance. By placing more importance on problems, undertaking research based on pragmatism involves placing emphasis on practical solutions and outcomes (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 137). With pragmatism, research begins with a problem that needs addressing (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 143). In the case of this dissertation, the problem is addressing a gap in knowledge regarding special collections in Irish academic university libraries.

This dissertation drew upon the following aspects of pragmatism:

- Research placed focus on the research problems and research questions
- Research was concerned with discovering practical solutions and outcomes to problems
- Research process involved selecting and using the best methods possible

As pragmatism does not include a stance on objectivism or subjectivism, this dissertation also followed the philosophical stance of positivism.

Positivism involves researching observable and measurable facts to produce generalizations. These generalizations can be used to explain and predict organizational behavior and events (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 136). An important aspect of positivism is the detachment and objectivity of the researcher. Researchers are viewed as being external to the data and play no role in shaping or altering data collected (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 137).
This dissertation drew upon the following aspects of positivism:

- Research strove to be value-free
- Researcher took an objective stance
- Research obtained measurable facts

3.2.2 Research Approach

Three different approaches to research exist: induction, deduction, and abduction.

This dissertation used a deductive approach to research. Data was collected and relationships between concepts and variables were explored (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 145-146).

This dissertation adopted the following elements of a deductive approach:

- Research involved closed-ended questions to collect data on clearly defined areas of interest
- Research took an objective stance
- Research collected quantitative data

3.2.3 Research Strategy

A research strategy conveys the researcher’s plan for achieving the goal of their research (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 177). The research strategy chosen should ensure coherence and consistency with the research philosophy, approach, purpose, and resources available (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 178).

Based on the purpose, research questions, philosophy, and approach of this dissertation, a survey research strategy to collect quantitative data was deemed the most appropriate strategy. This strategy aligned with the approach of the dissertation as a survey strategy is usually associated with a deductive approach (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 181). Furthermore, this strategy aligned with the purpose of the dissertation as it allowed for the collection of quantitative data which can be analyzed to produce descriptive and inferential statistics. Finally, a survey strategy allows for the exploration of relationships between variables (Saunders et al, 2015, p 182). This was an appropriate method for this dissertation as one of its aims was to examine if there was any association present between awareness and collaboration and perceptions and collaboration.

3.2.4 Sampling

The target population for this dissertation consists of library staff from seven university libraries in Ireland: Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin, Dublin City University, Maynooth University, University College Cork, University of Limerick, and National University of Ireland, Galway. The steps taken in identifying the target population are presented below.
First, a database was created using Microsoft Access to compile a list of all library staff listed in the online directories of the university libraries. These online directories included contact information for library staff members. A screenshot of one directory consulted to gather library staff information can be seen in the figure below.

![Screen Shot of Library Staff A-Z Directory](image)

This resulted in a total number of 593 individuals.

Next, the database was refined to be as precise as possible. This meant removing staff who were not directly involved in library activities, such as security staff. This resulted in a total number of 560 individuals.

Then, the database was checked to ensure no duplicates were present. Any duplicates found were removed. This narrowed the total target population to 550 individuals.

Of these, some staff members did not have any email addresses listed. Those who did not have an email were removed. This resulted in a total target population of 480 individuals.

After creating the target population, it was decided it would not be necessary to sample from the population. This was because it was possible to collect data from the entire target population (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 274). Furthermore, as an inherent disadvantage to questionnaires are low response rates (Kumar, 2011, p. 149), it was hoped a larger number of respondents would be obtained if the entire target population was included.
3.3 Data Collection Instruments

Data in this dissertation was collected through a self-completed web questionnaire. As the research followed the value-free stance of positivist philosophy, it would be appropriate to use a questionnaire as the researcher’s values did not influence respondents’ answers (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 138). Furthermore, the dissertation aimed to survey library staff at all levels in seven different academic libraries. The geographic distribution of the libraries and the amount of answers required to form a valid conclusion meant conducting interviews would not be plausible. Using a web questionnaire, however, allowed the collection of data from a larger range of individuals in different geographical locations. Questionnaires also allow for descriptive or explanatory research (Saunders et al., 2015, p. 439). Thus, it was decided a web questionnaire was the best instrument to use.

Two questionnaires were constructed. One was sent to library staff not working in special collections and the other was sent to special collections staff.

Both questionnaires were designed using Google Forms. Google Forms was selected as it was a free online tool that is user friendly for both the researcher and respondents. Plus, as the questionnaire was sent to the entire target population, it was decided Google Forms would be the best option in terms of cost as it was free to use and allowed for the creation of more than one questionnaire (Google, no date).

The questionnaire for library staff not working in special collections consisted of 25-30 questions. This variance in amount of questions was because a section on collaborations with special collections staff was only open to library staff who had collaborated with special collections before. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: Profile, Awareness of Special Collections, Perceptions of Special Collections, and Collaborations with Special Collections Staff.

The questionnaire for special collections staff consisted of 12 questions. It was divided into two sections: Profile and Perceptions of Special Collections. This questionnaire did not include sections examining awareness of special collections and collaboration with special collections staff.

Questions were made by referring to the literature in this research area and by focusing on the research questions of the dissertation. Both questionnaires can be found in the Appendices. The questionnaire was further refined to ensure validity and reliability through a pilot study before being distributed to the target population.

The questionnaires were distributed through email. Email addresses were obtained from information made freely available to the public online. An email invitation describing the purpose of the questionnaire and a brief introduction to the dissertation was provided. This email invitation can be
viewed in the Appendices. A reminder email, which can be viewed in the Appendices, was also sent to respondents. It was decided using email would be an appropriate method for distributing the questionnaire as emails for staff can be found through staff directories online. It was also felt email would be the preferred method of communication for respondents. Furthermore, having an online questionnaire would be convenient for respondents as they were able to complete the questionnaire on their own time (Brace, 2004, p. 31).

3.4 Data Analysis Procedures

Data obtained from questionnaires is required to be processed and analyzed in order to be useful. This dissertation used Microsoft Excel to process and analyze the quantitative data. Data was recorded using numerical codes to make analysis more straightforward. Each variable was given a descriptive name and label. A coding table was created listing variable names, variable labels, format, value range, values, value labels, and notation for missing values.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the data in a meaningful way. For example, a frequency statistic was generated to count the number of library staff who answered affirmatively to the question: “Have you visited the special collections department in your library before?”

Inferential statistics were obtained to determine if there were any associations between variables. For example, data was analyzed to see if any association exists between perceptions of special collections and collaboration with special collections staff.

Data was represented visually when appropriate through bar graphs and pie charts. The analysis and visualization of the data is presented in Chapter 4 of the dissertation.

3.5 Research Ethics

Ethical considerations were essential to keep in mind throughout the entire research process (Creswell, 2013, p. 92). This dissertation strove to maintain the integrity and objectivity of the researcher, ensure privacy and informed consent of respondents, allow respondents the right to withdraw at any moment, maintain confidentiality of data, and ensure responsibility and accuracy in the analysis of data and reporting of findings (Saunders et al, 2015, p. 243-245).

This dissertation was conducted with an objective stance to ensure integrity. The researcher did not manipulate data in any way.

Privacy was maintained through confidentiality on the part of the researcher and respondent anonymity. To ensure anonymity, no names were asked from respondents. This included names of the academic library to which they belong.
To ensure informed consent, the nature, objectives, and methods of the research were clearly conveyed to respondents in the email invitation.

Participation in the questionnaire was entirely voluntary. Respondents had the opportunity to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time and could abstain from answering any questions.

Finally, to ensure responsibility and accuracy in data analysis and reporting, no data was altered or falsified. All findings were reported fully and accurately.

3.6 Limitations of Methodology

All research will have its limitations. Limitations present in this research are discussed below.

This dissertation is geographically limited to Ireland. In addition, it is limited to special collections found in seven academic libraries. This means results may not be generalized to special collections in other libraries, such as museums or national libraries or in other countries.

There are also inherent limitations present in questionnaires, such as low response rates, self-selecting bias, and the inability to probe responses (Kumar, 2011, p. 149). This can result in the loss of deeper and richer understandings. The researcher tried to diminish the limitation of low response rates by choosing not to sample from the target population. To ensure a high completion rate, the researcher also limited the number of questions and time taken to complete the questionnaire.

Finally, a major disadvantage with self-completed questionnaires is not being able to clarify any questions or misunderstandings (Brace, 2004, p. 33). The researcher strove to mitigate these limitations by wording questions in the questionnaire clearly.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter of the dissertation discussed the research methodology and methods used.

The research philosophies used in this dissertation were pragmatism and positivism. The research approach selected was deduction and a survey research strategy was selected to collect quantitative data.

The total target population for this dissertation (library staff from seven university libraries in Ireland) was 480 individuals.

The data collection instrument used in this dissertation was a self-completed web questionnaire. Two questionnaires were constructed using Google Forms: one for special collections staff and one for library staff not working in special collections. These questionnaires were distributed to respondents
through email. Data collected from these questionnaires were processed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

Ethical considerations in this dissertation involved the integrity and objectivity of the researcher, respondent privacy and informed consent, confidentiality of data, and responsibility and accuracy in the analysis and presentation of data.

Finally, limitations of the dissertation were presented. The dissertation is geographically limited to special collections found in seven university libraries in Ireland. The survey research strategy selected means the questionnaire is affected by low response rates, self-selecting bias, and an inability to probe responses or clarify questions.

The next chapter will present the primary data gathered from the questionnaires.
4. Data Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the primary data collected during the data collection process. The chapter begins by first describing the distribution process of the questionnaire and the response rate. Next, results from the questionnaires are presented.

4.2 Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

The questionnaire was distributed online via email on Tuesday, June 28th. An invitation to the questionnaire was included in the body of the email. This invitation briefly described the purpose of the questionnaire and asked participants to self-select the appropriate questionnaire. Two links were included in the email. One link was a questionnaire for special collections staff and the other was a questionnaire for library staff not working in special collections. A reminder email was sent on Wednesday, July 13th. The questionnaire was closed on Friday, July 15th.

Out of the 480 emails sent, 21 resulted in delivery failures. In addition, two of the potential participants emailed were no longer working at their library. This resulted in an adjusted total population of 457.

Although two separate questionnaires were sent, both targeting a different population, the total population could not be further divided. This was because not all staff listed in online directories included the department for which they worked. Thus, the total population of special collections staff members and the total population for library staff not working in special collections could not be determined.

Out of the population of 457, a total of 98 responses was obtained. This means a response rate of 21 percent was obtained.

Out of the 98 responses obtained, 23 (23 percent) were from special collections staff while 75 (77 percent) were from library staff not working in special collections.

4.3 Primary Data

4.3.1 Special Collections Staff Questionnaire Results

4.3.1.1 Profile of Special Collections Respondents

The first section of the questionnaire for special collections staff dealt with establishing a profile of the respondent.
The first question in this section asked respondents to self-identify the department they primarily worked in. Different departments were established by consulting the organizational structure of the seven libraries surveyed. While these structures differed from library to library, it was determined there were six main categories under which staff could fall under. These are as follows: Collection Development and Management, Special Collections, Planning and Administration, Research Services, Reader Services, and Technical Services. In order to account for other departments unique to the library, an “Other” option was given for respondents to write in their department.

The majority of respondents (70 percent) in the special collections questionnaire stated they worked in Special Collections. Four respondents (14 percent) selected “Other” as their department. The other departments given were Digital Collections, Conservation, and Learning, Research and Information Services.

Two respondents (9 percent) selected Collection Development and Management while one respondent selected Reader Services (4 percent).

It was felt respondents who did not select Special Collections as their department could be included as the email questionnaire invitation and description of the questionnaire clearly asked respondents to self-select the appropriate questionnaire and clearly described the different questionnaires.

The second question asked respondents to write in their current job title.

A variety of job titles were given, such as library assistant, special collections librarian, and digital archivist. Respondents in the questionnaire also came from various staff grades, from entry level positions to management. A table with all answers given can be found in the Appendices.
The next question asked respondents to select if they were a full time or part time employee. The majority of respondents (74 percent) were full time staff while part time staff made 22 percent of respondents. One respondent (4 percent) did not select an answer.

The last question in this section asked respondents to select the number of years worked at their current library. Respondents were given five options: less than 2 years, 2-4 years, 5-8 years, 9-12 years, and more than 12 years.

The majority of respondents (52 percent) had worked in their current library for more than 12 years. 22 percent of respondents have worked in their current library for 2-4 years, 17 percent selected 9-12
years, and 9 percent selected 5-8 years. No respondents have worked in their current library for less than 2 years.

4.3.1.2 Perceptions of Special Collections

The next section in the special collections staff questionnaire asked respondents about their perceptions of special collections. Respondents were asked to select from a 5-point Likert scale going from strongly agree to strongly disagree. There were eight statements in total.

![Bar Chart]

Figure 6: Special Collections Staff Respondents - Perception of Importance

The first statement was as follows: “Special collections is an important part of the library.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (96 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. One respondent (4 percent) selected “Agree.” No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.
The second statement was as follows: “Special collections are ‘treasure rooms.’”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (61 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Six respondents (26 percent) agreed while 3 respondents (15 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

The third statement was as follows: “Special collections staff are approachable.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (70 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Four respondents (17 percent) agreed and 3 respondents (13 percent) neither agreed
nor disagreed with the statement. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

![Special collections staff are welcoming](image)

*Figure 9: Special Collections Staff Respondents - Perception of Staff as Welcoming*

The fourth statement was as follows: “Special collections staff are welcoming.”

One respondent (4 percent) did not answer. The majority of respondents (70 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Three respondents (13 percent) agreed and 3 respondents (13 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

![I believe library staff in other departments would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections](image)

*Figure 10: Special Collections Staff Respondents - Library Staff Comfort in Answering User Queries*

The fifth statement was as follows: “I believe library staff in other departments would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections.”
All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (57 percent) disagreed with that statement. One respondent (4 percent) strongly agreed, 5 respondents (22 percent) agreed, 2 respondents (9 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2 respondents (9 percent) strongly disagreed with the statement.

The sixth statement was as follows: “I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (48 percent) disagreed with the statement. Five respondents (22 percent) agreed, 5 respondents (22 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 2 respondents (9 percent) strongly disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement.
The seventh statement was as follows: “I believe library staff in other departments would be open to future collaborations with special collections.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (70 percent) agreed with the statement. Three respondents (13 percent) agreed and 4 respondents (17 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

The last statement was as follows: “Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library.”
All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (91 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Two respondents (9 percent) agreed with the statement. None of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement.

A descriptive summary of special collections perceptions from special collections staff can be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special collections is an important part of the library</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special collections are treasure rooms</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special collections staff are approachable</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special collections staff are welcoming</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe library staff in other departments would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe library staff in other departments would be open to future collaborations with special collections</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-point Scale:
1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = disagree 5 = strongly disagree

Table 1: Special Collections Staff Respondents - Descriptive Summary of Perceptions

The most frequent strongly agree responses were with the following statements:

- Special collections is an important part of the library
- Special collections are treasure rooms
- Special collections staff are approachable
- Special collections staff are welcoming
- Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library

The most frequent agree responses were with the following statement:

- I believe library staff in other departments would be open to future collaborations with special collections

The most frequent disagree responses were with the following statements:
- I believe library staff in other departments would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections
- I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library

4.3.2 Other Library Staff Questionnaire Results

4.3.2.1 Profile of Other Library Staff Respondents

The first section of the questionnaire for library staff dealt with establishing a profile of the respondent.

![Department Pie Chart]

*Figure 14: Other Library Staff Respondents by Department*

Question one asked respondents which department in the library they primarily worked in.

The majority of respondents (32 percent) classified themselves as working in Reader Services. Twenty-two respondents (29 percent) stated they worked in Collection Development and Management, 12 respondents (16 percent) selected Other, 6 respondents (8 percent) selected Technical Services, 5 respondents (7 percent) selected Research Services, 4 respondents (5 percent) selected Planning and Administration, and 2 respondents (3 percent) did not answer.

Other departments written in by respondents were as follows: Information Services, Acquisitions and Periodicals, General Collections, Liaison and Information Services, Subject Support, Learning, Research and Teaching, Digital and Electronic collections, Client Services, Senior Management, and Business and Law.

The second question asked respondents to write in their current job title.
A variety of job titles were given, such as library assistant, liaison librarian, and head of operations. Respondents in the questionnaire also came from various staff grades, from entry level positions to management. A table with all answers given can be found in the Appendices.

**Figure 15: Other Library Staff Respondents by Employee Status**

The third question asked respondents to select if they were a full time or part time employee. The majority of respondents (81 percent) were full time staff. Thirteen respondents (17 percent) were part time staff and 1 respondent (1 percent) did not answer.

**Figure 16: Other Library Staff Respondents by Years Worked**
The fourth question in this section asked respondents to select the number of years worked at their current library. Respondents were given five options: less than 2 years, 2-4 years, 5-8 years, 9-12 years, and more than 12 years.

The majority of respondents (49 percent) had worked in their current library for more than 12 years. Sixteen respondents (21 percent) selected 9-12 years, 8 respondents (11 percent) selected 2-4 years, 7 respondents (9 percent) selected 5-8 years, and 7 respondents (9 percent) selected less than 2 years.

![Worked in special collections before](image)

*Figure 17: Other Library Staff Respondents - Prior Experience Working in Special Collections*

The fifth question asked respondents if they had ever worked in special collections before.

The majority of respondents (75 percent) had not worked in special collections before. Seventeen respondents (23 percent) had worked in special collections before and 2 respondents (2 percent) did not answer.
The final question in this section asked respondents if they had ever visited the special collections department in their library before.

The majority of respondents (91 percent) had visited special collections before. Seven respondents (8 percent) had not visited special collections before and 1 respondent (1 percent) did not answer.

4.3.2.2 Awareness of Special Collections

The next section in the library staff questionnaire asked respondents about their personal awareness of special collections by asking respondents to select if they agreed or disagreed with statements about the special collections department in their library. There were ten statements in total.

The first statement was as follows: “I know where special collections is located.”
All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (96 percent) were aware of the location of special collections. Three respondents (4 percent) were unaware of the location of special collections.

![Bar chart: I know the opening days of special collections]

**Figure 20: Other Library Staff Respondents - Awareness of Opening Days**

The second statement was as follows: “I know the opening days of special collections.” All of the respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (91 percent) were aware of the opening days of special collections. Seven respondents (9 percent) were unaware of the opening days of special collections.

![Bar chart: I know the opening hours of special collections]

**Figure 21: Other Library Staff Respondents - Awareness of Opening Hours**

The third statement was as follows: “I know the opening hours of special collections.”
All of the respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (79 percent) were aware of the opening hours of special collections. Sixteen respondents (21 percent) were unaware of the opening hours of special collections.

Figure 22: Other Library Staff Respondents - Awareness of General Activities of Special Collections Staff

The fourth statement was as follows: “I know, in general, what special collections staff do.”

All of the respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (95 percent) were aware of what special collections staff generally do. Four respondents (5 percent) were unaware of what special collections staff generally do.

Figure 23: Other Library Staff Respondents - Awareness of One Name

The fifth statement was as follows: “I know the name of at least one special collections staff member.”
One respondent (1 percent) did not answer the question. The majority of respondents (95 percent) were aware of the name of one special collections staff member. Three respondents (4 percent) were unaware of the name of one special collections staff member.

The sixth statement was as follows: “I know the names of 2 or more special collections staff members.” All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (93 percent) were aware of the names of two or more special collections staff members. Five respondents (7 percent) were unaware of the names of two or more special collections staff members.
The seventh statement was as follows: “I know the email and/or telephone number for at least one special collections staff member.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (89 percent) were aware of the email and/or telephone number for at least one special collections staff member. Eight respondents (11 percent) were unaware of the email and/or telephone number for at least one special collections staff member.

The eighth statement was as follows: “I know the email and/or telephone number for 2 or more special collections staff members.”

One respondent (1 percent) did not answer the question. The majority of respondents (81 percent) were aware of the email and/or telephone number for two or more special collections staff members. Thirteen respondents (17 percent) were unaware of the email and/or telephone number for two or more special collections staff members.
The ninth statement was as follows: “I know what materials are kept in special collections.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (92 percent) were aware of what materials are kept in special collections. Six respondents (8 percent) were unaware of what materials are kept in special collections.

The final statement was as follows: “I know how patrons can access special collections materials.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (91 percent) were aware of how patrons are able to access special collections materials. Seven respondents (9 percent) were unaware of how patrons are able to access special collections materials.
4.3.2.3 Perceptions of Special Collections

The next section in the library staff questionnaire asked respondents about their perceptions of special collections. Respondents were asked to select from a 5-point Likert scale going from strongly agree to strongly disagree. There were eight statements in total.

The first statement was as follows: “Special collections is an important part of the library.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (83 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Ten respondents (13 percent) agreed and 3 respondents (4 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.
The second statement was as follows: “Special collections are ‘treasure rooms’.”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (59 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Twenty-one respondents (28 percent) agreed, 9 respondents (12 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 1 respondent (1 percent) disagreed with the statement. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

The third statement was as follows: “Special collections staff are approachable.”

All of the respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (72 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Thirteen respondents (17 percent) agreed, five respondents (7 percent)
neither agreed nor disagreed, 2 respondents (3 percent) disagreed, and 1 respondent (1 percent) strongly disagreed.

The fourth statement was as follows: “I feel welcome in special collections.”

All of the respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (63 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Eighteen respondents (24 percent) agreed, 7 respondents (9 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, 2 respondents (3 percent) strongly disagreed, and 1 respondent (1 percent) disagreed.

Figure 32: Other Library Staff Respondents - Perception of Staff as Welcoming

Figure 33: Other Library Staff Respondents - Comfort in Answering User Queries
The fifth statement was as follows: “I would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections.”

One respondent (1 percent) did not answer the question. The majority of respondents (36 percent) agreed with the statement. Twenty respondents (27 percent) disagreed, 16 respondents (21 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, 8 respondents (11 percent) strongly agreed, and 3 respondents (4 percent) strongly disagreed.

![Bar chart showing responses to the fifth statement](chart.png)

*Figure 34: Other Library Staff Respondents - Perception of Special Collections as Separate*

The sixth statement was as follows: “I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library.”

All of the respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (49 percent) disagreed with the statement. Eighteen respondents (24 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, 11 respondents (15 percent) strongly disagreed, 8 respondents (11 percent) agreed, and 1 respondent (1 percent) strongly agreed.
Figure 35: Other Library Staff Respondents - Openness to Collaboration

The seventh statement was as follows: “I would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff.”

One respondent (1 percent) did not answer the question. The majority of respondents (61 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Twenty-five respondents (33 percent) agreed and 3 respondents (4 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 36: Other Library Staff Respondents - Perception of Meaningful Contributions

The final statement was as follows: “Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library.”
One respondent (1 percent) did not answer. The majority of respondents (73 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. Fourteen respondents (19 percent) agreed, 4 respondents (5 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and 1 respondent (1 percent) disagreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement.

A descriptive summary of special collections perceptions from other library staff can be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special collections is an important part of the library</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special collections are treasure rooms</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special collections staff are approachable</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel welcome in special collections</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-point Scale:
1 = strongly agree 2 = agree 3 = neither agree nor disagree 4 = disagree 5 = strongly disagree

Table 2: Other Library Staff Respondents - Descriptive Summary of Perceptions

The most frequent strongly agree responses were with the following statements:

- Special collections is an important part of the library
- Special collections are treasure rooms
- Special collections staff are approachable
- I feel welcome in special collections
- I would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff
- Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library

The most frequent agree responses were with the following statement:

- I would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections

The most frequent disagree response were with the following statement:

- I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library
4.3.2.4 Collaborations with Special Collections

The final section of the library staff questionnaire asked respondents if they had ever collaborated with special collections staff before. Respondents were given an option to select yes or no. If respondents selected no, they were redirected to submit their answers for the questionnaire. If respondents selected yes, they were redirected to answer five additional questions regarding their collaboration with special collections staff.

![Pie chart showing collaboration status](image)

**Figure 37: Other Library Staff Respondents - Prior Collaboration with Special Collections**

The majority of respondents (63 percent) stated they had collaborated with special collections staff before. Twenty-eight respondents (37 percent) stated they had not collaborated with special collections staff before.

![Bar chart showing collaboration frequency](image)

**Figure 38: Other Library Staff Respondents - Amount of Collaboration with Special Collections**
If respondents selected yes, the first question asked was as follows: “How many times have you collaborated with special collections staff?”

Of those respondents who had collaborated with special collections staff before, the majority (62 percent) had done so more than five times. Fifteen respondents (32 percent) had done so 2-3 times, 2 respondents (4 percent) had collaborated once, and 1 respondent (2 percent) had collaborated 4-5 times.

The second question asked respondents to describe the nature of their most recent collaboration with special collections staff. A variety of answers were given, ranging from library tours to digitization of materials. The majority of collaborations that occurred could be classified as dealing with collection management processes, such as the assessment and movement of materials. A table with all answers given can be found in the Appendices.

The third question was as follows: “How would you rate your most recent experience collaborating with special collections staff?”

All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (55 percent) who had collaborated with special collections staff before rated their most recent experience as being excellent. Seventeen respondents (36 percent) rated their experience as being very good, 2 respondents (4 percent) rated their experience as being good, and 2 respondents (4 percent) rated their experience as being poor. None of the respondents rated their experience as being neutral, very poor, or extremely poor.
The fourth question was as follows: “Would you be willing to collaborate with special collections staff again?”

One respondent (2 percent) did not answer. The majority of respondents (96 percent) who had collaborated with special collections staff before would be willing to collaborate with special collections staff again. One respondent (2 percent) was not willing to collaborate again.

The final question was as follows: “Would you recommend collaborating with special collections staff?”
All respondents answered the question. The majority of respondents (96 percent) who had collaborated with special collections staff before would recommend collaborating with special collections staff. Two respondents (4 percent) would not recommend collaborating with special collections staff.

![Collaborations by Department](image)

*Figure 42: Other Library Staff Respondents - Collaborations by Department*

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections, the majority (34 percent) were from Collection Management and Development. Eleven respondents (23 percent) were from Other, nine (19 percent) were from Reader Services, five (11 percent) were from Technical Services, three (6 percent) were from Planning and Administration, and two (4 percent) were from Research Services. One respondent (2 percent) did not answer.

![Collaborations by Employee Status](image)

*Figure 43: Other Library Staff Respondents - Collaborations by Employee Status*
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections, the majority (87 percent) were full time employees. Six respondents (13 percent) were part time employees.

![Collaborations by Years Worked](image1)

**Figure 44: Other Library Staff Respondents - Collaborations by Years Worked**

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections, the majority (53 percent) had worked at their current library from more than twelve years. Twelve respondents (26 percent) had worked at their current library for 9-12 years, four respondents (9 percent) had worked at their current library from 5-8 years, three respondents (6 percent) had worked at their current library from 2-4 years, and three respondents (6 percent) had worked at their current library for less than two years.

![Collaborations by Prior Work Experience in Special Collections](image2)

**Figure 45: Other Library Staff Respondents - Collaborations by Prior Experience Working in Special Collections**
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections, the majority (72 percent) had worked in special collections before. Twelve respondents (26 percent) had not worked in special collections before and one respondent (2 percent) did not answer.

![Collaborations by Prior Experience Visiting Special Collections](image)

Figure 46: Other Library Staff Respondents - Collaborations by Prior Experience Visiting Special Collections

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections, the majority (96 percent) had visited the special collections department in their library before. One respondent (2 percent) had not visited the special collections department in their library before and one respondent (2 percent) did not answer the question.

4.3.3 Comparison of Perceptions

![Special Collections is an important part of the library](image)

Figure 47: Comparison of Perceptions - Importance
The majority of special collections staff strongly agreed with the statement that special collections is an important part of the library. This aligned with the perceptions of other library staff.

![Comparison of Perceptions - Special Collections as Treasure Rooms](image)

*Figure 48: Comparison of Perceptions - Special Collections as Treasure Rooms*

The majority of special collections staff strongly agreed with the statement that special collections are treasure rooms. This aligned with the perceptions of other library staff.

![Comparison of Perceptions - Staff Approachability](image)

*Figure 49: Comparison of Perceptions - Staff Approachability*

The majority of special collections staff strongly agreed with the statement that special collections staff would be perceived as approachable. This aligned with the perceptions of other library staff.
The majority of special collections staff strongly agreed with the statement that special collections would be perceived as being welcoming. This aligned with the perceptions of other library staff.

The majority of special collections staff disagreed with the statement that other library staff would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections. This did not align with the perceptions of other library staff. While a considerable amount did disagree with the statement, a majority of respondents felt they would be comfortable answering user queries.
Figure 52: Comparison of Perceptions - Special Collections as Separate

The majority of special collections staff disagreed with the statement that special collections activities are separate from the rest of the library. This aligned with the perceptions of other library staff.

Figure 53: Comparison of Perceptions - Openness to Collaboration

The majority of special collections staff agreed with the statement that other library staff would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff. This aligned with the perceptions of other library staff as the majority of respondents strongly agreed with the statement.
The majority of special collections staff agreed with the statement that special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library. This aligned with the perceptions of other library staff.

A discussion of the alignments in perceptions between library staff and special collections staff can be found in the next chapter.

4.3.4 Awareness and Prior Collaborations with Special Collections

The following charts display cross-tabulations between levels of awareness of special collections and prior collaboration with special collections.
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, all respondents were aware of the location of special collections.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (89 percent) were aware of the location of special collections and three respondents (11 percent) were unaware.

**Figure 56: Awareness of Opening Days and Prior Collaboration**

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (94 percent) were aware of the opening days of special collections while three respondents (6 percent) were unaware.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (86 percent) were aware of the opening days of special collections while four respondents (14 percent) were unaware.
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (83 percent) were aware of the opening hours of special collections while eight respondents (17 percent) were unaware.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (71 percent) were aware of the opening hours of special collections while eight respondents (29 percent) were unaware.

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (98 percent) were aware of the general duties of special collections staff while one respondent (2 percent) was unaware.
Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (89 percent) were aware of the general duties of special collections staff while three respondents (11 percent) were unaware.

![Figure 59: Awareness of One Name and Prior Collaboration](image)

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, all respondents were aware of the name of at least one special collections staff member.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (86 percent) were aware of the name of at least one special collections staff member, while three respondents (11 percent) were unaware and one respondent (4 percent) did not answer.

![Figure 60: Awareness of Two or More Names and Prior Collaboration](image)
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (98 percent) were aware of the names of two or more special collections staff members, while one respondent (2 percent) was unaware.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (86 percent) were aware of the names of 2 or more special collections staff members, while four respondents (14 percent) were unaware.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know the email and/or telephone number for at least one special collections staff member</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 61: Awareness of One Contact Information for One Staff Member and Prior Collaboration*

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (96 percent) were aware of the email and/or telephone number for at least one special collections staff member, while two respondents (4 percent) were unaware.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (79 percent) were aware of the email and/or telephone number for at least one special collections staff member, while six respondents (21 percent) were unaware.
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (94 percent) were aware of the email and/or telephone number for 2 or more special collections staff members, while two respondents (4 percent) were unaware and one respondent (2 percent) did not answer.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (61 percent) were aware of the email and/or telephone number for 2 or more special collections staff members, while eleven respondents (39 percent) were unaware.

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (96 percent) were aware of the materials kept in special collections while two respondents (4 percent) were unaware.
Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (86 percent) were aware of the materials kept in special collections while four respondents (14 percent) were unaware.

![Graph showing awareness and prior collaboration](image)

*Figure 64: Awareness of Patron Access and Prior Collaboration*

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (94 percent) were aware of how patrons can access special collections materials, while three respondents (6 percent) were unaware.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (86 percent) were aware of how patrons can access special collections materials, while four respondents (14 percent) were unaware.

Data from awareness responses were analyzed using either a Chi-square test or Fisher’s Exact test in cases where the expected cell count was five or greater was less than 80% of cells to determine if any associations were present. Results from the tests can be found in the Appendices.

Results from the tests indicate there were associations present between the following (using the benchmark for the p-value of 0.05):

- Awareness of location and prior collaboration
- Awareness of one name of a special collections staff member and prior collaboration
- Awareness of the contact information for two or more special collections staff members and prior collaboration

Results from the tests indicated there were no associations present between the following (using the benchmark for the p-value of 0.05):
- Awareness of the opening days of special collections and prior collaboration
- Awareness of the opening hours of special collections and prior collaboration
- Awareness of general special collections staff duties and prior collaboration
- Awareness of two or more names of special collections staff members and prior collaboration
- Awareness of the contact information for one special collections staff member and prior collaboration
- Awareness of special collections materials and prior collaboration
- Awareness of patron access to special collections and prior collaboration

These results are further discussed in the next chapter.

4.3.5 Perceptions and Prior Collaborations with Special Collections

The following charts display cross-tabulations between perceptions of special collections and prior collaboration with special collections.

![Chart showing perception of importance and prior collaboration.]

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (83 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections is an important part of the library. Six respondents (13 percent) agree and two respondents (4 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (82 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections is an important part of the library. Four respondents (14 percent) agreed and one respondent (4 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed.
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (57 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections are treasure rooms. Sixteen respondents (34 percent) agreed and four respondents (9 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (61 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections are treasure rooms. Five respondents (18 percent) agreed, five respondents (18 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and one respondent (4 percent) disagreed.

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (83 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections staff are approachable. Five respondents
(11 percent) agreed, one respondent (2 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, one respondent (2 percent) disagreed, and one respondent (2 percent) strongly disagreed.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (54 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections staff are approachable. Eight respondents (29 percent) agreed, four respondents (14 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and one respondent (4 percent) disagreed.

![Chart](chart.png)

*Figure 68: Perception of Staff as Welcoming and Prior Collaboration*

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (74 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that they feel welcome in special collections. Nine respondents (19 percent) agreed, one respondent (2 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and two respondents (4 percent) strongly disagreed.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (43 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that they feel welcome in special collections. Nine respondents (32 percent) agreed, six respondents (21 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and one respondent (4 percent) disagreed.
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (38 percent) agreed with the statement that they would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections. Five respondents (11 percent) strongly agreed, nine respondents (19 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, fourteen respondents (30 percent) disagreed, and one respondent (2 percent) did not answer.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (32 percent) agreed with the statement that they would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections. Three respondents (11 percent) strongly agreed, seven respondents (25 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, six respondents (21 percent) disagreed, and three respondents (11 percent) strongly disagreed.
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (49 percent) disagreed with the statement that special collections activities are separate from the rest of the library. One respondent (2 percent) strongly agreed, five respondents (11 percent) agreed, ten respondents (21 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and eight respondents (17 percent) strongly disagreed.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (50 percent) disagreed with the statement that special collections activities are separate from the rest of the library. Four respondents (14 percent) agreed, seven respondents (25 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and three respondents (11 percent) strongly disagreed.

Figure 70: Perception of Special Collections as Separate and Prior Collaboration

Figure 71: Openness to Collaboration and Prior Collaboration
Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (68 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that they would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff. Thirteen respondents (28 percent) agreed, one respondent (2 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and one respondent (2 percent) did not answer.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (50 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that they would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff. Twelve respondents (43 percent) agreed and 2 respondents (7 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Figure 72: Perception of Meaningful Contributions and Prior Collaboration

Of those respondents who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (72 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library. Ten respondents (21 percent) agreed, two respondents (4 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and one respondent (2 percent) disagreed.

Of those respondents who have not collaborated with special collections staff, the majority (75 percent) strongly agreed with the statement that special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library. Four respondents (14 percent) agreed, two respondents (7 percent) neither agreed nor disagreed, and one respondent (4 percent) did not answer.

Data from perception responses were classified into nominal categories (Agree, Disagree, Neither). Data was then analyzed using either a Chi-square test or Fisher’s Exact test in cases where the expected cell count was five or greater was less than 80% of cells. Results from the tests can be found in the Appendices.
Results from the tests indicated there was an association present between the following (using the benchmark for the p-value of 0.05):

- Perception of special collections as welcoming and prior collaboration

Results from the tests indicated there were no associations present between the following (using the benchmark for the p-value of 0.05):

- Perception of special collections as being important and prior collaboration
- Perception of special collections as treasure rooms and prior collaboration
- Perception of special collections staff as being approachable and prior collaboration
- Perception of feeling comfortable in answering user queries and prior collaboration
- Perception of special collections as separate and prior collaboration
- Perception of being open to collaboration and prior collaboration
- Perception of special collections providing meaningful contributions to the library and prior collaboration

These results are discussed further in the following chapter.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the primary data collected from two questionnaires. Data was represented visually through graphs and tables.

The chapter first established a profile of special collections staff respondents and presented their perceptions of special collections. Next, a profile of other library staff respondents was established and their awareness and perceptions of special collections and prior collaboration with special collections was presented. A comparison of perceptions between special collections staff and library staff was presented with alignments and misalignments identified. Lastly, associations were made between awareness and prior collaboration and perceptions and prior collaboration.

A discussion of the significance of these findings in the context of the research questions and literature will be found in the next chapter.
5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will involve a discussion and analysis of the primary data collected in context with the literature review and research questions.

To re-iterate, the dissertation was undertaken with the following research question in mind:

1. What perceptions and awareness do library staff in the larger, Irish academic library environment have of special collections?

The research question was further defined by the following sub-questions:

a. How well do these perceptions align with how special collections staff perceive themselves?

b. Is there an association present between perceptions and collaboration?

c. Is there an association present between awareness and collaboration?

5.2 Awareness of Special Collections

Research conducted by Priddle (2015) suggests library staff not working in special collections have a lack of awareness regarding the functions and activities of special collections. As a result, a “fundamental knowledge gap” can emerge in which library staff members may lack awareness of basic information about special collections. For example, staff may be unaware of what materials are kept in special collections or how users can access these materials.

A section of the questionnaire was designed to gauge library staff awareness of special collections by measuring the amount of basic knowledge they have of special collections. Questions were asked to discern the extent to which library staff are aware of basic information about special collections and the activities and functions of special collections in academic libraries. Respondents were asked if they knew the following details of special collections in their library: location, opening days and hours, general activities, names and contact details of special collections staff members, materials, and user access.

Contrary to the experiences of those interviewed in Priddle’s research, results from the questionnaire suggest library staff not working in special collections have a high level of awareness regarding basic information about special collections. Over 90 percent of respondents were aware of the location, opening days, general activities of special collections staff, two or more names of special collections staff, materials kept in special collections, and patron access to materials. Eighty-nine percent of respondents knew the contact details for at least one special collections staff member and 81 percent of respondents knew contact details for two or more staff members. Finally, seventy-nine percent of
respondents were aware of the opening hours of special collections. As Priddle’s research only examined special collections in the United States, this suggests the situation in Ireland may be different.

5.3 Perceptions of Special Collections

Much of the research conducted examining perceptions of special collections has been done to examine external, user experiences. Research by Torre (2008) suggests special collections has traditionally been perceived as being intimidating, mystical places. Priddle (2015) supports this by suggesting special collections are often perceived as being inaccessible to library staff. These perceptions of inherent differences or inequity can hinder interactions between departments and prevent collaboration between staff (Michalak, 2012).

A section of the questionnaire was designed to gauge library staff perceptions of special collections. Respondents were asked, using a 5-point Likert scale, whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements.

Overall, the findings suggest library staff not working in special collections have positive perceptions of special collections. Over 90 percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that special collections are an important part of the library, that special collections provide meaningful contributions to the library, and that they would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff. This suggests a high level of integration of special collections in academic libraries. By recognizing the importance and contributions of special collections, library staff acknowledge the value special collections contribute to the library.

Eighty-nine percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that special collections staff are approachable and eighty-seven percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they feel welcome in special collections. Eighty-seven percent of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that special collections are treasure rooms. This suggests that while special collections may be perceived by library staff as possibly being “mystical” places, this perception does not make special collections inaccessible or special collections staff intimidating.

It was also suggested by Priddle (2015) that although special collections are a part of the larger library system, they are often perceived as being separate by other library staff. However, results from the questionnaire suggest that while some respondents (12 percent) agree with this sentiment, the majority of respondents (64 percent) disagreed. Again, results from the questionnaire suggest the situation in Ireland is different than that of the United States.
One possible explanation for this difference can be the organizational structure of Irish academic libraries. As found in the literature, in most libraries, staff are relegated into hierarchal departments grouped by function. While this form of structure can provide stability and consistency, work is often rigid and allows little movement between departments (Schmidt and Dulaney, 2014). In addition, these boundaries may also have adverse effects on awareness of other departmental functions as individuals work mostly with staff in the same unit (Michalak, 2012).

Shifts in library organizational structures have been brought about due to a variety of factors, such as the onset of electronic resources or budgetary and staff constraints. This has resulted in the reorganization of libraries. These libraries are characterized as having permeable boundaries and result in the creation of new roles (Michalak, 2012). Furthermore, boundaries between departments can become blurred and interactions between departments are often encouraged (Fu and Fitzgerald, 2013). These reorganization processes can often have a direct, beneficial effect on special collections through the reduction of workloads and the development of new skillsets and expertise (Michalak, 2012). Research by Dooley et al (2013) has found this trend of integration also extends to the United Kingdom and Ireland. More than half of respondents in her survey stated once-separate special collections departments have now been integrated into the library.

It is possible the organizational structures of the libraries may have played a role in the presence of higher levels of awareness and positive perceptions. While some Irish academic libraries still appear to be structured along more traditional divisions, other libraries experienced the introduction of new library staff structures and the consolidation of departments. Another possibility could be the integration of special collections into workflows despite the existence of departmental divisions. Results from the questionnaire indicated that staff from a variety of departments were involved in collaborating with special collections. This may mean having divisional borders in place does not necessarily mean automatic separation of workflows. Further research could be conducted to determine if these organizational structures play a role in how library staff perceive and interact with each other.

5.4 Alignment in Perceptions

The majority of respondents from both questionnaires strongly agreed with the statement that special collections is an important part of the library and that special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library. In addition, the majority of respondents from both questionnaires disagreed with the statement that special collections activities are separate from the rest of the library.
In addition, there were also alignments in how special collections staff are perceived. The majority of all respondents strongly agreed with the statement that special collections staff are approachable and welcoming. Furthermore, the majority of special collections staff agreed with the statement that other library staff would be open to collaboration with special collections. This aligned with the perception of other library staff. However, the majority of other library staff strongly agreed with this statement, suggesting other library staff may be more keen on collaborating than special collections staff believe.

The only misalignment in perceptions occurred regarding answering user queries. The majority of other library staff respondents agreed with the statement that they would feel comfortable answering user queries. In contrast, the majority of special collections staff disagreed with the statement that other library staff would feel comfortable answering user queries. This suggests other library staff may be more knowledgeable about special collections than special collections staff are aware of. However, it should be acknowledged that the question did not specify the type of user query, as in if it were a general question (such as inquiring about the location of special collections or opening hours) or more specific questions (such as an inquiry regarding specific materials in special collections). This could lead to over confidence in respondent’s answers. Regardless, data collected seems to suggest other library staff have a higher level of comfort in answering user queries regarding special collections than special collections staff perceive them as having. This can be supported by the high levels of awareness of special collections from a majority of respondents.

5.5 Collaborations with Special Collections

According to the literature, most collaborations done in special collections have been done with individuals or communities external to the library, such as researchers or university faculty. Visser (2003) found that what little collaboration was occurring between special collections staff and other library staff was often with specialized individuals, such as subject librarians.

The majority of library staff respondents (63 percent) stated they had collaborated with special collections staff before. Furthermore, results suggest a variety of staff collaborating with special collections staff, not just specialized individuals.

Of those who have collaborated with special collections staff, the majority of respondents were those who worked in Collections Development and Management. In addition, while there were subject librarians who were collaborating with special collections, respondents also came from various other staff levels, ranging from library assistant to head of services. The majority of respondents also stated they had collaborated with special collections more than once, with a large percentage of those collaborating more than five times. This suggests collaboration between special collections staff and other library staff is occurring on a regular basis in Ireland.
The nature of collaboration occurring also varied. The majority of collaborations occurred for collection management purposes, such as the removal of materials from open shelves into special collections or in assessing material. A large amount of collaborations also dealt with exhibitions. The use of exhibitions in special collections has often been described in the literature as being an excellent tool for proactive outreach (Smith, 2006; Stam, 2006; Harris and Weller, 2012). By collaborating together on exhibitions, library staff and special collections staff are given an opportunity to raise awareness of the library and demonstrate the value they contribute to the university (Oakleaf, 2011). Results from the questionnaires indicate staff in academic libraries are aware of this and seem to be taking advantage of the unique materials present in special collections.

In addition, two respondents collaborated with special collections for library tours. This contrasts research by Priddle (2015) who found most libraries often exclude special collections in their library tours due to lack of access, size or time constraints, and/or lack of knowledge.

Finally, one recommendation put forward by Dooley et al (2013) was collaboration between special collections and cataloguing and metadata staff. Results from the questionnaire indicated at least four respondents have collaborated with special collections before for cataloguing purposes.

5.6 Perceptions and Collaboration

It could not be determined if there were any associations present between perceptions of special collections and collaboration. Similar distributions could be found in responses between those who had collaborated and those who had not (see table below). A higher percentage of respondents who had not collaborated with special collections tended to be more neutral in their responses. This may suggest respondents who had not collaborated with special collections before may tend to have no opinions or thoughts regarding special collections.
Two respondents who had collaborated before with special collections had less than favorable perceptions of special collections. Both respondents stated they had collaborated with special collections more than five times. They both rated their most recent collaboration with special collections staff as being poor. In addition, both respondents stated they would not recommend collaborating with special collections. One respondent stated they would not be willing to collaborate again with special collections.

The two respondents also had less than favorable perceptions of special collections staff. Both respondents felt special collections staff were not approachable or welcoming. One of the respondents felt special collections did not provide meaningful contributions to the library. Despite perceiving special collections staff as being unapproachable, both respondents did not have negative perceptions regarding the importance of special collections. This may mean negative perceptions of special collections staff may not necessarily translate to negative perceptions of special collections itself. The full responses of both respondents to perceptions of special collections can be found in the Appendices.

It is unsure if these unfavorable perceptions arose as a result of their collaborative efforts with special collections or whether these negative perceptions affected the collaboration. It has been noted

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1 One respondent (2 percent) did not answer
2 One respondent (2 percent) did not answer
3 One respondent (4 percent) did not answer
misunderstandings or stereotyping can have a negative effect on collaborative efforts (Gibson, et al, 2008). If the two respondents already viewed special collections staff as being unapproachable and not welcoming, this mindset may have affected their experience. There is also a chance the experience itself may have altered their perceptions of special collections as both respondents rated their most recent collaboration with special collections as being poor. Since successful collaboration depends on a variety of key factors, this presents an opportunity for further research to determine the effects collaboration may have on perceptions.

5.7 Awareness and Collaboration

Respondents who had collaborated with special collections staff before had a higher level of awareness than those who had not collaborated.

All respondents who had experience collaborating previously with special collections staff were aware of the following:

- The location of special collections
- The name of at least one special collections staff member

The majority of respondents who had experience collaborating previously with special collections staff were aware of the following:

- The opening days of special collections
- The opening hours of special collections
- The general duties of special collections staff
- The names of two or more special collections staff members
- The contact information of at least one special collections staff member
- The contact information for two or more special collections staff members
- The materials of special collections
- Patron access to special collections

Furthermore, when compared to respondents who had no prior collaboration with special collections, a higher percentage of respondents who had collaborated before were more aware of basic information about special collections. This can be seen in the table below.
As evidenced from respondents' answers in the questionnaire, collaborations with special collections staff can lead to higher levels of awareness of special collections. A larger percentage of those who had previously collaborated with special collections staff had higher levels of awareness. Results from the Chi-Square tests support this as it was found an association exists between awareness of the location of special collections, the name of one special collections staff member, and contact information for two or more special collections staff members and collaboration.

Thus, there is a possible association present between higher levels of awareness and collaboration. It has been shown one benefit of collaboration is increased visibility and awareness of services (Buchanan, et al., 2012). Awareness can also lead to collaboration through informal or spontaneous interactions and which allow individuals opportunities to coordinate work (Dourish and Bellotti, 1992).

Thus, having this implicit awareness, such as knowledge of the location of special collections and contact details of special collections staff members, can possibly lead to collaboration. However, as the questionnaire did not ask respondents about the effects of collaboration on their levels of awareness, it cannot be determined what this association is. This means collaborating with special

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4 One respondent (4%) did not answer
5 One respondent (2%) did not answer
collections may lead to higher awareness of special collections or library staff with higher levels of awareness may be more likely to collaborate with special collections.

Regardless of what the association is, the existence of one suggests it may be worthwhile for academic libraries to encourage staff interactions to increase visibility and understandings between different departments. This is especially true as effective collaboration is now imperative for successful organizational activities (Denning, 2007). Having awareness can contribute to increases in informal or serendipitous interactions and the development of a shared culture (Dourish and Bly, 1992). Library staff cannot collaborate with one another if they lack general awareness of each other. By establishing this awareness, a strong foundation for fostering collaboration between staff can be laid.

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzed and discussed the findings of the dissertation in relation to the research questions and existing literature.

Results from the questionnaires suggest the situation in Ireland differs from that found in the literature. Contrary to what was suggested in the literature, respondents in Ireland indicated they had high levels of awareness and positive perceptions of special collections. A high level of alignment in perceptions was found between special collections staff and other library staff. Finally, results indicate there is a possible association present between higher levels of awareness and collaboration.

The next chapter of this dissertation will outline general conclusions drawn and present recommendations based on these conclusions.
6. Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the general conclusions drawn from the research conducted. A summary of findings found will be presented and recommendations will be provided.

To re-iterate, areas of interest covered in the dissertation were as follows:

1. The extent to which positive perceptions exist in library staff for special collections in academic libraries
2. The extent to which perceptions of special collections align with how special collections staff perceive themselves
3. The extent to which library staff are aware of basic information about special collections and the activities and functions of special collections in academic libraries
4. The extent of collaboration occurring between special collections staff and other library staff
5. To ascertain if any association is present between levels of awareness and collaboration
6. To ascertain if any association is present between perceptions of special collections and collaboration

The dissertation was undertaken with the following research question in mind:

1. What perceptions and awareness do library staff in the larger, Irish academic library environment have of special collections?

The research question was further defined by the following sub-questions:

a. How well do these perceptions align with how special collections staff perceive themselves?

b. Is there an association present between perceptions and collaboration?

c. Is there an association present between awareness and collaboration?

6.2 Summary of Findings

The dissertation achieved its goal of answering the research questions and contributing to the literature. The dissertation has contributed to better understandings regarding the visibility and perceptions of special collections from the perspective of library staff.

Results from the questionnaires found there exists in library staff high levels of awareness of special collections in Irish academic libraries. The majority of all respondents were aware of basic information about special collections, including its location, opening days and hours, staff members, materials, and access.
In addition, the vast majority of respondents had positive perceptions towards special collections. Respondents perceived special collections as being an important and meaningful part of the library. While some respondents viewed special collections as being treasure rooms, this did not create a barrier as the majority of respondents felt special collections was welcoming with approachable staff. In addition, most respondents indicated they were comfortable answering user queries about special collections. Finally, most respondents did not consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library. This suggests a high level of integration of special collections in academic libraries.

Collaborations between library staff and special collections staff were also examined. Sixty-three percent of respondents stated they had collaborated with special collections before. Of those, the vast majority had collaborated with special collections more than once, suggesting regular collaboration is occurring in Irish academic libraries. Finally, results suggest there may be some association present between levels of awareness and collaboration.

This dissertation has examined special collections in academic libraries from the perspective of library staff. Much of the research conducted in this field has been in a North American context and has mostly involved library staff working in senior positions. This dissertation contributes to the research area by involving library staff at all levels and by providing an Irish perspective.

6.3 Recommendations

6.3.1 Recommendations for Academic Libraries in Ireland

Connecting users to information is at the heart of library activities and is a shared challenge between all library staff members. As special collections often contain materials in niche or localized interests, access to and knowledge of these materials can be limited. By collaborating with other library staff, special collections staff can promote their unique collections to a wider user base, enhance teaching and learning through the use of primary sources, create more efficient and productive access and discovery, and take advantage of new opportunities. Furthermore, collaboration allows staff opportunities to develop new skillsets and expertise. Ninety-four percent of library staff respondents stated they were open to collaboration with special collections. Of those open to collaboration, sixty percent had collaborated with special collections before meaning there was still a number of respondents who had yet received an opportunity to work together with special collections. It is recommended libraries continue to encourage staff interactions and collaboration. As results indicated a high level of interest in collaborating with special collections, special collections staff should also be open to the possibilities of working with a wider variety of library staff, especially those they had not considered before.
Finally, the success of collaboration is often dependent on a variety of key factors, such as attitude, communication, and roles. Two respondents from the questionnaire indicated they had a negative experience collaborating with special collections and rated their most recent collaboration as being poor. To ensure the success and continuance of collaboration, it is recommended library staff be aware of the collaborative experience for all parties.

6.3.2 Recommendations for Further Study

During the dissertation, a number of themes and topics were uncovered which could warrant further study. As the dissertation focused only on special collections in academic libraries in the university system in Ireland, further research can be done examining special collections in other types of libraries, such as those found in institutes of technologies.

Additionally, as the questionnaire required respondents to self-select answers, there is the possibility that some respondents over estimated their awareness of special collections. A further study can be conducted to test the actual awareness of respondents.

Finally, as quantitative data was gathered from this dissertation, qualitative studies could be conducted to gather richer details and a more comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and awareness of special collections. Because the questionnaire did not allow opportunities to probe responses, a qualitative study could allow for interesting themes to emerge. In particular, it would be of interest to examine the role collaboration plays in altering perceptions and/or raising awareness.

6.4 Chapter Summary

The aim of this chapter was to discuss conclusions formed based on the findings of the dissertation. Results from the questionnaires suggest high levels of awareness and positive perceptions of special collections in library staff working in Irish academic libraries, which suggest integration of special collections to the larger library environment. Results further suggest there may be some association present between levels of awareness and collaboration and perceptions and collaboration.

Based on these findings, it was recommended academic libraries continue to encourage staff interactions. It was also recommended special collections staff consider collaborating with a wider variety of library staff.

Recommendations for further study were also presented. Further research can be done to examine special collections in other institutions. As this dissertation collected quantitative data through questionnaires, qualitative studies are required to gather a more comprehensive understanding.
The final chapter of this dissertation will be a self-reflection on the learning process of completing this Masters and dissertation.
7. Reflection

7.1 Introduction
This chapter will discuss the researcher’s overall experience of doing the dissertation. It will present a critical evaluation of the research process and will highlight any problems experienced and how these problems were solved. Finally, it will reflect on the personal growth experienced by the researcher and how the researcher plans to apply this learning.

7.2 Research Process

7.2.1 Dissertation Formulation
I experienced some difficulties in selecting and narrowing the research topic of the dissertation. At the beginning stages of doing my dissertation, completing assignments from my modules gave me a chance to explore different research areas. Originally, as I had been working as an English teacher in China and South Korea prior to starting the masters, I had considered doing my dissertation on some aspect of information literacy. I had also briefly considered doing research on ethnography in libraries based on my undergraduate degree in anthropology. While doing the Masters, I became aware of special collections. I’ve always had an interest working with “unique” materials. While doing my undergraduate degree, I had an internship dealing with the archaeological collections of the anthropology department. Special collections seemed to deal with similar activities and functions, albeit with different materials. I decided to do my dissertation on special collections as I felt I would be able to maintain interest in this area and because it would give me an opportunity to explore an area I was interested in learning more about.

Initially, I was interested in exploring the digitization activities of special collections as it is a very relevant topic in special collections at the moment. Other ideas that emerged during the formative stages of the dissertation were exploring subject librarian’s awareness of special collections and collaborations with special collections. While conducting preliminary research into special collections, I came across Priddle’s article on perceptions of special collections by library staff. This peaked my interest as I’ve always been interested in how people interact with each other and the human element of organizations. Furthermore, it gave me the idea of being able to examine awareness and collaboration with all library staff, not just subject librarians. I decided it would be interesting to examine what the situation was like in Ireland and see if special collections really are as separate from the rest of the library as the literature seemed to be suggesting.

Reflecting on my experiences, I think I should have began with topics that interested me as opposed to topics I had a “background” in. For example, I spent some time considering information literacy based on my background as a teacher. While I find information literacy an interesting and relevant
topic, upon reflection, I do not think I would have had enough interest in information literacy to justify doing a dissertation on it.

7.2.2 Use of Sources
Conducting the literature review forced me to work on my time management and organizational skills. I found myself reading a lot of articles on special collections but many of those articles were not relevant to my dissertation topic. Furthermore, while there was plenty of literature examining special collections in general and in examining external user perspectives of special collections, there was scant material available examining special collections from the perspective of library staff themselves. I also had difficulty finding research on collaborations between library staff. Most of the articles I came across described collaborations between library staff and communities or individuals external to the library, such as university faculty or students. On the one hand, this meant there was a gap in knowledge I could address. On the other hand, it meant I experienced difficulties in developing a theoretical framework for my dissertation.

Doing the Masters and the dissertation also forced me to be more exacting about which sources I used. Prior to the dissertation, I was already aware of the importance of citing sources and using peer reviewed articles. I have added to this by now being more critically evaluative of sources by taking into consideration such things like the author, relevancy, and date published.

7.2.3 Methodology Selection
From the literature review, I knew there was a lack of quantitative data present. However, I was somewhat hesitant in doing quantitative research as the idea of having to deal with statistical analysis seemed a bit daunting. I spent some time going back and forth between doing quantitative or qualitative research. In the end, the research questions and objectives helped in making a decision. Since I wanted to include all library staff and examine special collections in all of the university libraries in Ireland, it was decided quantitative research would be the best option.

7.2.4 Data Collection, Analysis, and Discussion
I found constructing and sending the questionnaires an easy enough experience. I had never worked with Google Forms before but I found the tool intuitive and easy to understand and use. One thing I would have changed was using a separate email address to send out the questionnaires. Since the invitations were being sent to a large population, my email inbox did become clogged with numerous automatic out of office replies.

As mentioned earlier, I found the idea of doing quantitative research daunting because it was something I had never done before and was something I was not too familiar with. To address this, I spent time learning about statistical analysis. After having done this dissertation, I am now more
familiar and comfortable with doing quantitative research, which is a tremendous benefit. On a more practical level, I am also now more comfortable using Microsoft Excel.

One problem that arose when doing the analysis was having to get rid of the hypotheses. This was because I realized I was unable to answer the hypotheses due to lack of data. Originally, I had hypothesized that higher awareness would lead to more collaborations occurring and positive perceptions would lead to more collaborations occurring. Unfortunately, when constructing the questionnaire, I failed to take into consideration the effects collaboration could have on perceptions and awareness. For example, there were no questions asked to determine if collaborating with special collections staff changed a respondent’s perception of special collections negatively or positively or at all. Unfortunately, because the questionnaires had already been sent, it was not possible to include a question to tease out the answer. After some consideration, it was decided it would be best to leave the hypotheses out and reframe the research questions. Since it was not possible to determine what the relationship was between perceptions and collaboration and awareness and collaboration, it was decided that it would be best to analyze the data to determine if there were any associations present and then discuss what those associations might be.

7.3 Own Learning
7.3.1 Self-Appraisal
Prior to doing this Masters, I had minimal knowledge of doing independent research. The modules in the Masters were helpful in that they not only gave me an opportunity to learn more about the information and library profession, but also gave me a chance to hone my research and communication skills. In particular, I found the “Research Methods I” and “Research Methods II” modules helpful in presenting an overview of what was to be expected. This was especially helpful as it gave me access to the necessary resources and information I needed to complete the dissertation.

Through doing this dissertation and Masters, I was able to improve my critical thinking skills. My own personal learning style means I often try to have as complete a picture as possible on a topic before fully delving into it. This means I spend a lot of time reading into the area and analyzing a topic, even if it is not fully relevant to the task at hand. Because of the time constrictions, I had to learn how to better identify theories and key themes and concepts. I was forced to differentiate between these and I had to force myself to only focus on those relevant to the research. This was especially true when doing the literature review for the dissertation as I had to learn how to prioritize articles and ensure they were related to the research questions.
Because of this experience, my research skills have greatly improved. I was able to obtain a theoretical and practical understanding of the methodologies and strategies involved in doing original research. One key benefit is that I am now able to gather, analyze, present, and discuss quantitative data.

I also made improvements in my time management skills. As a result of doing a work placement in June, my time plan for the dissertation had to be adjusted. I had originally planned on distributing my questionnaires in the middle of June. Unfortunately, I was unable to do so and had to push back my time plan. Although I was able to enter the data into Excel as it came in, I was unable to analyze or discuss any of the findings before the questionnaire was officially closed. This left me less time to conduct the data analysis phase and discussion, which meant I had to force myself to keep to a strict time plan.

Finally, the dissertation, and the Masters, gave me opportunities to become more familiar with the library and information sector through reading the literature and connecting with library professionals, for which I was grateful for.

Overall, I found the experience very rewarding. I was glad to have been given an opportunity to do something new and I proved to myself I was capable of doing it. I am also appreciative of the process as it allowed me a chance to become more aware of my own strengths and weaknesses. In doing this dissertation, I was able to develop my secondary and primary research skills, improve my critical thinking and time management skills, and acquire self-confidence in knowing I am able to complete independent, large scale research on a deadline.

7.3.2 Plans to Apply Learning
Doing the Masters and dissertation has been an engaging and enriching experience. I have gained deeper understandings of the library and information sector and am excited for the opportunities this Masters has given me. My future goals are to obtain a career in the field and to gain work experience. The knowledge and skills acquired through doing this Masters will no doubt play an important role in my working career as I have been able to develop my professional knowledge and skills base. I am now more confident in my abilities to work collaboratively in a group, determine the relevancy of information and critically analyze and use information. I have also further developed my oral and written communication skills.
References


Carter, L. (2009) ‘It’s the Collections that are Special’, In the Library with the Lead Pipe, pp. 1–12.


Appendices

Appendix A: Special Collections Staff Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Special Collections Staff

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a research thesis being carried out by Stephanie Chen, an MSc Information and Library Management student at Dublin Business School.

The aim of the questionnaire is to assess perceptions and awareness of special collections.

Your anonymity will be maintained at all times. No answers will be linked back to you.

This questionnaire is completely voluntary. You are allowed to abstain from answering any questions and you are free to exit the questionnaire at any time.

This questionnaire is divided into 2 sections and is for library staff working in special collections. The questionnaire will take approximately 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your participation. Your contribution is much appreciated.

NEXT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
The following questions will ask about your position in the library.

**Which department do you primarily work in?**

- [ ] Collection Development and Management
- [ ] Special Collections
- [ ] Planning and Administration
- [ ] Research Services
- [ ] Reader Services
- [ ] Technical Services
- [ ] Other: 

**What is your current job title?**

Your answer
Are you a full time employee or part time employee?

- Full time
- Part time

Please select the number of years you have worked at your current library.

- Less than 2 years
- 2-4 years
- 5-8 years
- 9-12 years
- More than 12 years
Perceptions of Special Collections

The following questions will ask you for your opinions on special collections in your university.

Special collections is an important part of the library.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

Special collections are "treasure rooms."

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree
Special collections staff are approachable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Special collections staff are welcoming.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
I believe library staff in other departments would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections.

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library.

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
I believe library staff in other departments would be open to future collaborations with special collections.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any queries or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at chen.stephh@gmail.com

To conclude this questionnaire, please press the submit button below.

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Appendix B: Other Library Staff Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Library Staff

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of a research thesis being carried out by Stephanie Chen, an MSc Information and Library Management student at Dublin Business School.

The aim of the questionnaire is to assess perceptions and awareness of special collections. Your anonymity will be maintained at all times. No answers will be linked back to you.

This questionnaire is completely voluntary. You are allowed to abstain from answering any questions and you are free to exit the questionnaire at any time.

This questionnaire is divided into 4 sections and is for library staff members not working in special collections. The questionnaire will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your participation. Your contribution is much appreciated.

NEXT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Profile

The following questions will ask about your position in the library.

Which department do you primarily work in?

☐ Collection Development and Management
☐ Special Collections
☐ Planning and Administration
☐ Research Services
☐ Reader Services
☐ Technical Services
☐ Other:

What is your current job title?

Your answer
Are you a full time or part time employee?

○ Full time
○ Part time

Please select the number of years you have worked at your current library.

○ Less than 2 years
○ 2-4 years
○ 5-8 years
○ 9-12 years
○ More than 12 years

Have you worked in special collections before?

○ Yes
○ No

Have you visited the special collections department in your library before?

○ Yes
○ No

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Awareness of Special Collections

The following questions will ask your personal awareness of basic information about the special collections department in your library.

Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

I know where special collections is located.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

I know the opening days of special collections.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

I know the opening hours of special collections.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree
I know, in general, what special collections staff do.

- Agree
- Disagree

I know the name of at least one special collections staff member.

- Agree
- Disagree

I know the names of 2 or more special collections staff members.

- Agree
- Disagree
I know the email and/or telephone number for at least one special collections staff member.

- Agree
- Disagree

I know the email and/or telephone number for 2 or more special collections staff members.

- Agree
- Disagree

I know what materials are kept in special collections.

- Agree
- Disagree

I know how patrons can access special collections materials.

- Agree
- Disagree
Perceptions of Special Collections

The following questions will ask you for your opinions on special collections in your library.

Special collections is an important part of the library.

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

Special collections are "treasure rooms."

○ Strongly agree
○ Agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree
Special collections staff are approachable.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I feel welcome in special collections.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
I would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

I consider special collections activities separate from the rest of the library.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
I would be open to future collaborations with special collections staff.

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree

**Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library.**

- [ ] Strongly agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Neither agree nor disagree
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly disagree
Collaborations with Special Collections Staff

The following question will ask you if you have ever collaborated with special collections staff.

If you have never collaborated with special collections staff, you will be redirected to another section to submit your answers for the questionnaire.
If you have collaborated with special collections staff, you will be directed to the next section.

Have you ever collaborated with special collections staff?

○ Yes
○ No

The following selection was for respondents who selected “Yes” to the previous question.

Collaborations with Special Collections Staff

How many times have you collaborated with special collections staff?

○ Once
○ 2-3 times
○ 4-5 times
○ More than 5 times

What was the nature of your most recent collaboration?

Your answer
How would you rate your most recent experience collaborating with special collections staff?

- Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor
- Extremely poor

Would you be willing to collaborate with special collections staff again?

- Yes
- No

Would you recommend collaborating with special collections staff?

- Yes
- No
Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. If you have any queries or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at chen.stephi@gmail.com.

To conclude this questionnaire, please press the submit button below.

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
Appendix C: Email Invitation to Participants

Dear Participant,

My name is Stephanie Chen. I am currently an MSc Information and Library Management student at Dublin Business School. For my dissertation, I have chosen to carry out research on special collections in academic libraries.

This email is an invitation to participate in an online questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire is to assess perceptions and awareness of special collections in academic libraries.

The questionnaire can be accessed at the following link. Please select the appropriate questionnaire.

Questionnaire for special collections staff: http://goo.gl/forms/WnW79LESizQY94QD3
Questionnaire for library staff not working in special collections: http://goo.gl/forms/QCZ5A2BjJlwG7LzS23

This questionnaire is completely voluntary. You are allowed to abstain from answering any questions and are free to exit the questionnaire at any time. Your anonymity will be maintained at all times. No answers will be linked back to you.

By clicking on the survey link and commencing the questionnaire, you are consenting to participate in the questionnaire and affirming you are at least 18 years of age.

I sincerely hope you will be able to assist me with my research. Any queries you may have concerning the nature of the research or the extent of your involvement can be directed to my email: chen.stephh@gmail.com.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Chen
MSc Information and Library Management
Dublin Business School
Appendix D: Reminder Email to Participants

Dear Participant,

My name is Stephanie Chen. I am currently an MSc Information and Library Management student at Dublin Business School.

Two weeks ago, you received an email asking for assistance in research on special collections. If you have already filled out the questionnaire, thank you! Your contribution is much appreciated and you may disregard this email.

If you have not had a chance to complete the questionnaire, please take the time to consider helping. Your valuable participation in the questionnaire will contribute towards assessing perceptions and awareness of special collections in academic libraries. The questionnaire will close this Friday (July 15th).

The questionnaire can be accessed at the following link. Please select the appropriate questionnaire.

Questionnaire for special collections staff (approx. 5 minutes to complete): [http://goo.gl/forms/WnW79LEsizOY94QD3](http://goo.gl/forms/WnW79LEsizOY94QD3)

Questionnaire for library staff not working in special collections (approx. 10-15 minutes to complete): [http://goo.gl/forms/QCZ5A2BJlwG7LzS23](http://goo.gl/forms/QCZ5A2BJlwG7LzS23)

This questionnaire is completely voluntary. You are allowed to abstain from answering any questions and are free to exit the questionnaire at any time. Your anonymity will be maintained at all times. No answers will be linked back to you.

By clicking on the survey link and commencing the questionnaire, you are consenting to participate in the questionnaire and affirming you are at least 18 years of age.

I sincerely hope you will be able to assist me with my research. Any queries you may have concerning the nature of the research or the extent of your involvement can be directed to my email: chen.stephh@gmail.com.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my request.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Chen
MSc Information and Library Management
Dublin Business School
## Appendix E: Special Collections Questionnaire – Job Titles of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian (Manuscripts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY ASSISTANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Collections Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Executive Grade II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Librarian for Music &amp; Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Collections Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Archivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Technical Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Library Assistant Executive 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix F: Library Staff Questionnaire – Job Titles of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant Collection Development &amp; Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Librarian for First Year Student Engagement &amp; Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library IT Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Repository Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library assistant executive 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIBRARY ASSISTANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Of Collection Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian General Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dept op</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Description and Development Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arts humanities, socialsciences librarian with responsibility for music dance and official publications and law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian with responsibility for General Collections &amp; Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection development &amp; description librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Services Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head, Technical and Digital Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant, Digital &amp; Electronic Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Campus Bookstacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library assistant executive</td>
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<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snr Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant Cataloguing and Metadata.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant Library Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cataloguing and metadata Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian Head of Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Liaison Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Management Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Support Business and Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college liaison librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodicals Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duty Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison Librarian: Arts &amp; Celtic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Services &amp; Bibliometrics Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Support Specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Librarian for Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collection Development &amp; Management Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liaison Librarian Project support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>library assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Librarian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix G: Library Staff Questionnaire – Nature of Collaboration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature of Collaboration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arranging tours of Special Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was curating an exhibition and since Exhibitions come under Special Collections in our library I had to collaborate with them and call on their expertise in curating and hosting exhibitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining pre 1930s material and facilitating the removal and transfer to SC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exhibition equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitally archiving a donation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage of special collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digitisation of theses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO RECENT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of a new exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing material published before 1930 from open shelves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916 Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I request to lend an item held in Special Collections on inter-library loan for library use only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stock moves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving material from open shelves to Special Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>joint teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display of Special Collections material in conjunction with 1916 Exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Query regarding Journals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessing a donation that may include special collections material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book ordering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We work together on an ongoing basis around collection management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital exhibition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imaging photographs from a specific collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying material types; locations; and upgrading our records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display of materials to support Science Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(No answer)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Have assisted with non specialist work during exhibitions etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>We collaborate regularly as reader services are involved with retrieval of certain kinds of special collections material</td>
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<tr>
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TwoNames

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Fisher Exact Probability Test:

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\quad \text{Two-tailed} \quad 0.061450897163803184
\]

OneContact

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Appendix I: Chi-Square/Fisher’s Exact Test - Perceptions

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Fisher Exact Probability Test:

\[
P_A = 0.9999999999999895 \\
P_B = 0.9999999999999895
\]

The Fisher test is performed only if N≤300. Note that \( P_A \) and \( P_B \) are both non-directional (two-tailed).

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Fisher Exact Probability Test:

\[
P_A = 0.1896409434304349 \\
P_B = 0.1896409434304349
\]

The Fisher test is performed only if N≤300. Note that \( P_A \) and \( P_B \) are both non-directional (two-tailed).
### Approachable

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**Fisher Exact Probability Test:**

\[
P_A = 0.12635932297109806 \\
P_B = 0.12635932297109806
\]

The Fisher test is performed only if $N \leq 300$. Note that $P_A$ and $P_B$ are both non-directional (two-tailed).

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**Fisher Exact Probability Test:**

\[
P_A = 0.013480383752078337 \\
P_B = 0.01348038375207834
\]

The Fisher test is performed only if $N \leq 300$. Note that $P_A$ and $P_B$ are both non-directional (two-tailed).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AnsweringQ</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected Cell Frequencies per Null Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AnsweringQ</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21.76</td>
<td>9.95</td>
<td>14.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>13.24</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>8.70</td>
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Chi-Square Test (df=2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.802519</td>
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</table>

Fisher Exact Probability Test:

\[ P_A = 0.820801311353944 \]
\[ P_B = 0.8208013113539439 \]

The Fisher test is performed only if N≤300. Note that \( P_A \) and \( P_B \) are both non-directional (two-tailed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Separate</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
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Expected Cell Frequencies per Null Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>10.65</td>
<td>30.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>17.92</td>
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Chi-Square Test (df=2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-square</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>0.900325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fisher Exact Probability Test:

\[ P_A = 0.9396184944766507 \]
\[ P_B = 0.9396184944766507 \]

The Fisher test is performed only if \( N \leq 300 \). Note that \( P_A \) and \( P_B \) are both non-directional (two-tailed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CollabBefore</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected Cell Frequencies per Null Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CollabBefore</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44.14</td>
<td>1.86</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>26.86</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fisher Exact Probability Test:

\[ P_A = 0.5529433543132214 \]
\[ P_B = 0.5529433543132214 \]

The Fisher test is performed only if \( N \leq 300 \). Note that \( P_A \) and \( P_B \) are both non-directional (two-tailed).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CollabBefore</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected Cell Frequencies per Null Hypothesis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CollabBefore</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>43.82</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25.18</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fisher Exact Probability Test:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$P_A$</th>
<th>0.7608330471537508</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$P_B$</td>
<td>0.7608330471537507</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Fisher test is performed only if $N \leq 300$. Note that $P_A$ and $P_B$ are both non-directional (two-tailed).
Appendix J: Respondent A Perceptions

Respondent A strongly agreed with the following statement:
- I would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections

Respondent A neither agreed nor disagreed with the following statements:
- Special collections is important
- Special collections are treasure rooms
- I would be open to collaborating with special collections

Respondent A disagreed with the following statement:
- Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library

Respondent A strongly disagreed with the following statements:
- Special collections staff are approachable
- Special collections is welcoming
- I consider special collections activities separate from those of the library
Appendix K: Respondent B Perceptions

Respondent B strongly agreed with the following statement:
- I would be open to collaborating with special collections

Respondent B agreed with the following statements:
- Special collections is important
- Special collections are treasure rooms
- I would feel comfortable answering user queries about special collections

Respondent B neither agreed nor disagreed to the following statements:
- I consider special collections activities separate from those of the library
- Special collections provides meaningful contributions to the library

Respondent B disagreed with the following statement:
- Special collections staff are approachable

Respondent B strongly disagreed with the following statement:
- Special collections is welcoming