

**Ethical Cataloguing: exploring a potential role for the academic librarian
in the promotion of social justice**

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Title

Ethical Cataloguing: exploring a potential role for the academic librarian in the promotion of social justice

Declaration

“I declare that this dissertation that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of M.Sc. in Information and Library Management is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.”

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to evaluate the manner in which information is organised by academic libraries in Dublin. The researcher undertook this qualitative research by conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews with academic librarians from private, third level colleges in Dublin. Invitations to participate in the research, interview questions, a Participant Information Sheet, and Interview questions were emailed to each of the librarians before the interview. Interviews with each librarian were conducted online and saved to the researcher's personal computer. The interviews were manually transcribed. The researcher adopted an inductive approach and the researcher's objectives were based on a review of the literature on the topic. The results indicated to the researcher the manner in which academic librarians in Dublin implement cataloguing ethics. The researcher concluded that there is an overall awareness amongst academic librarians of ethical principles and that academic libraries could benefit from developing an ethical framework.

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Glossary of Terms

ALA	American Library Association
Cataloguing Ethics	Principles and values that provide an intentional decision-making framework for those who work in cataloguing or metadata positions (Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee, 2021a, p. 1).
Controlled vocabularies	Thesauri used for information retrieval
DDC	Dewey Decimal Classification
Feminist theory of cataloguing	Theory of organising information that focuses on the interconnections between topics, not hierarchal relationships
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
IL	Information Literacy
Koha	A Library Management System
LCSHs	Library of Congress Subject Headings
LIS	Library and Information Science
LMS	Library Management System
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalogue
Temporal assumptions	attempting to locate related materials together
Vulnerable user groups	Groups interconnected by race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism, or ethnicity

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Context for the Research

The organisation of information and of materials in the library is an activity that is crucial to one of the main purposes of the library i.e. access to information. In the Preface of her book, *Cruising the Library*, Melissa Adler writes “One of the most essential tasks for you as a cataloguer is to determine a single location on a library shelf for each book the library acquires” (2017b, ix). Cataloguing information about materials that the library acquires and the classification of materials in the library are activities that help the library user to find the information that they seek. Depending upon the standards that are utilised, however, cataloguing and classification can also act as an impediment to the discovery of the resources that the library contains. “A large body of research and recorded experience has documented biases of gender, sexuality, race, age, ability, ethnicity, language, and religion as limits to the expression of diversity in naming information for retrieval” (Olson, 2001, p. 639). Are there alternative standards through which some of these impediments could be overcome?

The belief that the establishment of a universal language used to incorporate all known subjects has been scrutinized and other theories have been proposed with a view to enhancing them. In her 2007 article entitled "How we construct subjects: a feminist analysis", for instance, Hope Olson writes “The body of feminist thought that identifies women as viewing the world as an interconnected web offers a model radically different from the hierarchal structure of traditional logic” (p. 522). Specifically the attempt to create a universal system of classifying books in the library under hierarchal structures such as the Dewey Decimal System, Library of Congress Subject Headings, and under Library of Congress

Classification has created a model that attempts to organise information about a vast number of different topics. Hope Olson writes that:

Library classifications are linear in that they line books up in order on shelves or in a database so that library users can browse. As a result, it is not possible for a classification system to gather simultaneously all aspects or facets of a work, to represent equally the multiple play of differences (2001, p. 653).

Each of these systems has its own historical origins. Each of these systems, however, has served to conceal topics to the library users who would benefit from accessing resources and thereby from the discovery of knowledge.

The traditional organisation of materials, which is based on hierarchical classification systems, does not always seem to function to unify or connect topics. Melissa Adler writes that “. . . the categories that designate what library books are about actively produce, reproduce, and privilege certain subjects and disciplinary norms.” (2017b, p. 2). Also, literature shows that the traditional means of cataloguing information and classifying materials in the library has often led to the placement of materials into categories that reveal the historical biases under which the cataloguing and classification systems were originally established. In relation to sexual topics that were of a non-heterosexual nature, Adler explains that “Sanford Berman and the Task Force on Gay Liberation were extremely effective in eliciting changes in the Library of Congress subject headings and classifications for materials on homosexuality in the 1970s and 1980s” (2017b, p. 44). The classifications that Adler was referring to had consequently resulted in the inappropriate placement of some materials alongside unrelated resources in a manner that could prevent those library users seeking to benefit from information on a variety of topics, in this instance the topic being homosexuality, from being able to discover what they are looking for. “Not only were

pathologizing links to sexual perversion eliminated, but new terms were also added to the vocabulary to provide access to materials that had formerly been rendered invisible or perverted by inadequate cataloguing” (2017b, p. 44). Adler continues:

. . . . that activist work toward making gay and lesbian literature available and visible in American libraries is arguably one of the more significant and effective long-term projects in pulling LGBTQ materials out of the categories of perversion and deviation and into the hands of readers (2017b, pp. 44-45).

The role of cataloguing ethics in the delivery of information to library users cannot be underestimated. The Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee offers a definition of “Cataloguing Ethics” as the “Principles and values that provide an intentional decision-making framework for those who work in cataloguing or metadata positions” (2021a, p. 1). The organization of information on the basis of cataloguing systems and bibliographic categories constructed upon temporal assumptions i.e. attempting to locate related materials together, while useful in the organization of information and the placement of items on the shelves, is often inadequate in meeting the information needs of academic library users. The manner by which information is organised can obscure information from researchers seeking information of a variety of topics. This is especially crucial when one considers that the groups about which information is sought are often vulnerable groups that sometimes lack the power to speak for themselves. The results of oppression in that context can be harmful to members of vulnerable groups. Topics to which there may exist impediments to accessing information could include those pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism, ethnicity, language, and religion. With reference to various frameworks of ethics, it is the role of the librarian to make information available to all. With this in mind, the research sought to explore the implementation of ethical concepts

in use in the academic libraries of some private, third level institutions in Dublin. How important to academic libraries is ethical awareness amongst its staff members and are there ethical frameworks in place to assist library staff to act ethically and library users to be aware of what they can expect from their college libraries?

1.2 Research Aims

1.2.1 research question.

“How have librarians in Dublin’s private, third level colleges implemented ethical cataloguing practices?” The aim of this dissertation is to evaluate the manner in which information is organized by academic libraries in Dublin. It will endeavour to: (1) identify areas in private academic libraries where the implementation of an ethical, feminist theory of cataloguing could: (i) highlight existing connections among specific topics and (ii) assist cataloguers in organizing materials in a manner that would enable all library users to gain access to information without impediment, regardless of the topic; and (2) it will explore the way that information is organised in independent academic libraries in Dublin; and (3) it will investigate how information organisation is managed to address the needs of an academic community of library users: and (4) it will ascertain how academic libraries might make materials pertinent to a wider diversity of topics more accessible to that academic community.

The research will consider the relationship between information organization and bias regarding vulnerable groups and consider the accessibility of a variety of topics in academic libraries of some of the private, third level institutions in Dublin. To that end it will consider if information organisation in these academic libraries is managed according to

ethical frameworks that ensure materials are accessible to vulnerable user groups and to researchers seeking information about vulnerable user groups.

The research will also consider how some private, third level institutions in Dublin advocate for cataloguing ethics in the academic libraries and examine if there is a willingness amongst academic librarians to become more actively engaged in the implementation of a framework based on feminist ethics. It will be considered in the research how the change to a broader coverage of topics within the catalogue could be managed, if it is currently being managed, and it will outline some possibilities as to what might be done in order to manage that change (Senior and Scott, 2018, p. 899).

The researcher is based in Dublin and has chosen cataloguing librarians in private, third level institutions in Dublin as the subject population. Private, third level institutions in Dublin typically cater to people from a wide variety of ethnic and social backgrounds. Librarians in those institutions must regularly extend themselves in order to meet the information needs of all students. The research investigates what ethical frameworks, if any, are referred to within the libraries of private, third level institutions in Dublin. The research ascertains how ethical guidelines in the libraries of private, third level institutions in Dublin are implemented. It also evaluates if the management of information organization in those institutions relates to the needs of a community of academic library users seeking information on topics that can often be obscured by classification systems.

1.2.2 research objectives.

- ❖ To determine what topics motivate academic librarians to offer additional advice alongside bibliographic advice to students

- ❖ To evaluate the advice and additional steps academic librarians offer to students who are seeking to access materials on topics pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism, ethnicity, language, and religion
- ❖ To establish if cataloguing librarians in private, third level college libraries in Dublin consider the use of key words, Dewey decimal classification, and Library of Congress subject headings to be effective in locating in the library materials pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity
- ❖ To investigate if there is a more inclusive system of information organization than the use of key words, Dewey decimal classification, and Library of Congress subject headings
- ❖ To establish how a more inclusive system of information organization is achieved in private, third level colleges in Dublin
- ❖ To ascertain what ethical frameworks, if any, academic librarians refer to in the context of cataloguing and bibliographic classification
- ❖ To ascertain if private, third level colleges in Dublin could benefit from in-house studies being conducted in the area of ethical awareness
- ❖ To investigate how academic libraries advocate for cataloguing ethics

1.3 Rationale

This paper will examine the manner in which information is organized in Irish academic libraries. It will endeavour to identify areas in Irish academic libraries where the manner in which information is organized acts as an impediment to its retrieval by one section of the academic community. Studies demonstrate that, in different areas of the world, the organization of information in a library setting can become an obstacle to the

retrieval of information among certain user groups within a community of library users. A review of literature has revealed specific instances where this has occurred in academic libraries (Maurer and Shakeri, 2016, p. 214). Some of these studies have directly highlighted the importance of key phrases and LCSHs (Library of Congress Subject Headings), in the ability to quickly access information in a variety of subject areas. In some instances a variety of subject areas were more amply represented than other subject areas. Similar findings have been made in relation to groups of varying cultural, ethnic, and other diverse backgrounds. While this has not gone completely unaddressed, the response has varied between geographical regions. Some library organizations employ a very proactive approach of activism. Other library organizations encourage cataloguers and librarians to advocate for ethical norms in the area of social inclusion. The research will evaluate if the management of information in five Irish academic libraries could be improved in order to make materials accessible to a larger number of user groups. It will conclude with an appraisal of how information organization in Irish academic libraries can be managed to support a community of expanding diversity.

The paper will consider if the way that information is organised in the libraries of private, third level institutions in Dublin could be changed to more effectively meet the needs of a diverse academic community of library users. This will be examined in the research as a part of the ethical practices within the academic library environment. Ethical practices within the library environment are viewed as behaviours, the guiding principles of which can be as codified frameworks. These concepts are not mutually exclusive. The move toward more ethical practices, however, will be examined through the lenses of advocacy and of activism. The research will also explore how any required change in information organization in Irish academic libraries could be managed and if this kind of management is

currently being employed at all in that environment. Finally, the research will explore recommendations regarding how this shift in information organization can be managed to optimal affect.

1.4 Literature Review

1.4.1 introduction.

The literature review comprised of a critical reading of journal articles and books. All of the journal articles and books referred to as part of the literature review are cited in the section below that is entitled “References”. A number of themes emerged out of the literature review and, from the themes, the researcher was able to formulate general interview questions. The interviews were thus loosely informed by the literature review and the interviews themselves were semi-structured.

The journal articles were selected from search results found using the terms “cataloguing ethics in libraries” and “racism or oppression and ‘cataloguing and classification’ “. Some of the books referred to in the themes explored below were cited in the journal articles, some were found following searches conducted using the college library’s catalogue, and one of the books was critically assessed after the recommendation of a fellow student.

The literature review enabled the researcher to gain an understanding of modern trends in cataloguing ethics and to find a research design appropriate to the research question. A majority of the materials originate from the United States of America but, as the various frameworks of cataloguing ethics are not exclusive to that jurisdiction, the themes derived from the literature review are well suited to the Irish context. The themes discussed

herein are (1) Information Organization; (2) Bias; (3) Ethical Frameworks, Advocacy and Activism; and (4) Implementation of Ethical Guidelines.

1.4.2 information organization.

In many areas of scientific interest the modern world appears to be divided according to gender. It has been argued that there are multiple areas in which meeting the needs of the modern man is a factor designed into societal structures (Perez, 2020, p. 1). In her book entitled “Invisible Women: exposing data bias in a world designed for men”, Caroline Criada Perez states in the very first sentence that “Seeing men as the human default is fundamental to the structure of human society” (2020, p. 1). Throughout her book, Perez displays that men have created societal structures that meet their own needs and gives examples of where women are excluded from benefiting equally from those same structures.

The exclusion of women from societal structures is a factor that, Perez argues, has resulted in unequal access for women in comparison to men to services (Perez, 2020, p. 29). As an example, Perez discusses in her book the matter of morning commutes to work. On average, women are more likely than men to combine dropping children to school with their commute to work and that, due to the fact that women are less likely than men to travel by car, snow clearing on the road but not on the footpath, is more suited to benefit men than it is to benefit women (2020, pp. 29-32). The disparity is, claims Perez, a result of women not being taken into consideration when data is being compiled at the start of transport projects, such as snow clearing (2020, pp. 32-33). There is also unequal consideration given to women in comparison to men in science and medicine (Perez, 2020, p. 195), and the

unequal treatment of women in comparison to men in both business and academia. (Perez, 2020, p. 92).

If true, this can be considered to be just one of the biases that prevents a large section of the modern world's population from accessing services on an equal basis; that is, in comparison to modern man. The access to information, specifically access to information in academic libraries, is another area where the unequal treatment of women has been shown to be a factor. In her book entitled "Algorithms of Oppression: how search engines reinforce racism", Safiya Umoja Noble thoroughly investigates how modern internet search engines affect the marginalization of black women. In addition to serving as an exposé of the deleterious effects of the internet on black women, Noble's study also gives significant consideration to the effect that classification systems have on people in general.

Opportunities abound for the interdisciplinarity of LIS to extend more deeply into cultural and feminist studies, because these social science fields provide powerful and important social context for information about people that can help frame how that information is organized and made available (Noble, 2018, pp. 137-138).

The import of the classification of information is far reaching. The focus of this study is the cataloguing and classification of information in the libraries of private, third level institutions in Dublin. Should inequities such as those discussed by Perez and by Noble exist in the modern world, the probability is that they also exist in Dublin, Ireland.

The City of Dublin has rapidly become the home to men and women of diverse cultural backgrounds over the past twenty years. Academic institutions in the City have risen to the challenge of providing an education to men and women of all backgrounds. Studies demonstrate that, in different areas of the world, the organisation of information in a library

setting can become an obstacle to the retrieval among user groups within a diverse community of library users (Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee, 2021, p. 2). A review of literature has revealed specific instances where this has occurred in academic libraries (Maurer and Shakeri, 2016, p. 214). Some of these studies have directly highlighted the importance of key phrases and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSHs) in the ability to quickly access information in a variety of subject areas (Maurer and Shakeri, 2016, p. 214). In some instances, a variety of subject areas were more amply represented than other subject areas (Maurer and Shakeri, 2016, p. 214). Similar findings have been made in relation to groups of varying diverse backgrounds (Shoemaker, 2015, p. 355). Given the inherent preference towards men that many quantitative studies have shown exists in many academic institutions, studies have also shown that a similar difference between men and women exists in academic libraries. Also, there is a presumption that the same inequalities could exist in the libraries of independent academic institutions in Dublin.

Studies have already evaluated the quality of library service in relation to different user groups. In their studies in developing a tool to evaluate some of the top-level research libraries in North America, Colleen Cook and Fred Heath interviewed research library users to discover what their expectations of the research library were (Cook and Heath, 2001, 548-584). One of the findings of Cook and Heath was the feedback from research library users communicating their desire for self-reliance, especially for undergraduate library users (Cook and Heath, 2001, pp. 554-557). While the reasons for the desire for self-reliance amongst library users varied, the fact that undergraduate researchers were often intimidated by the library environment featured clearly (Cook and Heath, 2001, pp. 557-558). This might be compared with a study of public libraries in Canada, where it was discovered that library users preferred maintaining self-reliance in the library when seeking

information regarding gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender (GLBT) literature (McClary and Howard, 2007, pp. 158). Notably, the research of Cook and Heath focussed largely on the quality of library service as a product of the interactions between library staff and users, not on the degree of success researchers experienced in having their information needs met (2001, 551-553).

As stated above, there may be a variety of reasons that library users may not wish to look for assistance in order to find the information that they require. The issue then becomes not one of library service but of the ease with which the library user can locate the information that they require. The use of controlled vocabularies, as discussed in two articles by Julia Marshall, is most relevant and they are based on a hierarchal structure (Marshall, 2005, pp. 120-124), (Marshall, 2006, pp. 53-59). In her articles, Marshall explains the construction of a controlled vocabulary and then, in the second article, describes the implementation and evaluation of same (Marshall, 2005, pp. 120-124), (Marshall, 2006, pp. 53-59). But in her 2007 article entitled "How we construct subjects: a feminist analysis", Hope Olsen argues against the biased hierarchical structure of classification and for a focus on the "connectedness" that already exists, to some extent, in those structures (p. 525). In doing so, Olsen offers one way forward toward constructing a system intended to be more inclusive. Olsen explains that ". . . feminist thought . . . identifies women as viewing the world as an interconnected web . . ." which differs ". . . from the hierarchical structure of traditional logic" (2007, p. 522). Moreover, this way of viewing the world is not solely feminine but already also exists in some indigenous cultures (Olsen, 2007, pp. 524-525).

Therefore, it is the case that certain user groups might find themselves in the position of not being able to locate the information that they require. In some instances it

may be that the information that would be of importance to them is not available (Perez, 2020, p. 29). In other instances, it has been demonstrated that the use of LCSHs can act as an obstacle to accessing information (Olsen, 2007, 522). Therefore, there exists a gap in certain occasions where there is a contravention of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics (Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee, 2021, p. 3). Hence the subject of my research is to evaluate the use of ethical cataloguing principles in the libraries of private, third level institutions in Dublin.

1.4.3 bias.

So to what effect do classification systems categorize people? It would appear that the effects of classifications systems can be insidious. Adler writes, "Classifications are never built in isolation. They are informed by social processes and are in dialogue with one another" (Adler, 2017a, p. 23). Therefore, the cataloguing and classification systems that were established a century ago were influenced by the biases that existed at the time. What is more, the classification systems may even have been designed to establish those biases as the cultural norm. In fact, the same biases that may have existed at the time that various classification systems were developed have been carried forward. "As they become entrenched in information infrastructures, it becomes more difficult to resist or change them. Perhaps more importantly, catalogers reiterate and reinforce the authorized classifications each time they apply them to a bibliographic text" (Adler, 2017a, p. 23).

It would appear that the biases of the traditional, hierarchal classifications systems lead to exclusion and an inability to access the information that would be valuable to the members of groups heretofore discriminated against within those same systems. The value of the information is in the ability of it to assist in the self-determination of individuals. But

often it is also in the reconciliation of historical injustices. In the American context, Adler refers to various attempts at reparation in relation to groups who have been victims of discrimination and violence, writing that “Understanding and coming to terms with painful histories is at the heart of all of these reparative projects . . .” (2016, p. 631). More than merely attempts at reliving a painful past, access to information is important from the perspective of healing the injuries caused by historical injustices. Adler continues by adding, “. . . most calls for reparation include detailed historical accounts of violence and disenfranchisement to support claims that the injustices that took place in the past have real effects on lives and society in the present” (2016, p. 631). The reparation of injustices caused by classification systems can be viewed, in part, as an ethical issue. The matter of ethical principles and their use is, therefore, of great interest to the researcher.

1.4.4 ethical frameworks, advocacy and activism.

Adler and Tennis write, “If we agree that there are particular precepts in the field of knowledge organization then we can decide as a community what is ethical and what can be interpreted as causing harm” (Adler and Tennis, 2013, 268). Prior to the codification of ethical principles, some scholars already acknowledged the competence practiced by librarians in employing ethical practices every day (Bair, 2005, p. 14). Bair writes that cataloguers acknowledge their responsibilities “. . . to provide fair and equitable access to relevant, appropriate, accurate, and uncensored information . . .” (2005, p. 22). In her 2005 article, Sheila Bair outlined her concept of a code of ethics pertaining to cataloguing (pp. 23-24). Others have considered what ethical considerations need to be given at every level of information organization (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 378).

The creation of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics by representatives of library organisations from Canada (the Canadian Federation of Library Associations-Fédération canadienne des associations bibliothèque), the United Kingdom (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) and the United States (the Cataloging and Metadata Management Section of the American Library Association) was, in itself, a display of activism in progressing ethics in the library world (Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee, 2021, p. 1). The creation of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics was a gradual process and was widely anticipated (Shoemaker, 2015, p. 353-354). According to Shoemaker, cataloguers exercise a “. . . great deal of power over who finds what, or if anyone finds anything at all, in our libraries” (2015, p. 355). When Shoemaker wrote her article, the Cataloguing Code of Ethics had not yet been drafted and Shoemaker stressed that the guidelines of the American Library Association (ALA), at that time were insufficient in addressing the ethical responsibilities of cataloguers. Statement 6 of Part 2 of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics states “We take responsibility for our cataloguing decisions and advocate for transparency in our institutional practices and policies” (Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee, 2021, p. 3). The reference to “Advocacy” in the Cataloguing Code of Ethics shows the commitment of the Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee for transparency in cataloguing practices on a corporate level. A similar accomplishment has been made by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), in its code, which was approved in 2012 (Jain and Shohne, 2020, p. 3). Jain and Shohne explain how the IFLA code was drafted to support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (2020, p. 5). Specifically, Jain and Shohne refer to the “Responsibilities to Individuals and Society” as outlined in the IFLA code, where “In order to promote inclusion and eliminate discrimination, librarians and other information workers ensure that the right of access to information is not denied to anyone. .

..” (2020, p. 5). A distinct shift from the notion that librarians and classification should remain neutral (Mai, 2016, 327). In a review of the contributions made by Ms. Hope Olsen to the development of “. . . knowledge organization scholars. . .”, Mai explains that such scholars have, “. . . accepted that knowledge organization ought to aim for plurality and diversity” (2016, p. 329). The approach of advocacy might be seen by some as a significant contribution. It would appear, however, that the activist view is now in the ascendant.

1.4.5 implementation of ethical guidelines.

A consideration of how the practice of ethics can be managed in the library environment is of particular significance in the area of library performance (Senior and Scott, 2018, pp. 896-898). In their 2018 article, Senior and Scott described a self-study performed at the Clark Library at the University of Portland (p. 892). The study culminated in feedback whereby both faculty and staff reportedly “. . . appreciated the opportunity to understand the ALA and IFLA codes of ethics as they related to daily work” (Senior and Scott, 2018, p. 900). This code of ethics was not, of course, specific to cataloguing. With the advent of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics, however, a more inclusive, feminist theory of cataloguing could now be introduced. “As a community we recognize our situatedness in a context of social and cultural differences. The notion of connectedness offers us one path for better serving the great diversity of knowing communities of users” (Olson, 2007, p. 538). Through the implementation of a feminist theory of cataloguing that “. . . library classification might serve as agents to affect society and culture . . .” (Mai, 2016, p. 328). Henceforth, academic libraries could conduct self-studies whereby the awareness of library staff of feminist ethical cataloguing would be encouraged.

Also pertinent to the matter of ethical awareness is the assistance that librarians offer to students and other library users. What topics motivate academic librarians to offer additional advice along bibliographic advice to library users? More specifically, what advice and additional steps do academic librarians offer to students who are seeking to access materials on topics pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism, ethnicity, language and religion?

1.4.6 conclusion.

The community within which we live has become more diverse. It is possible that there are areas in Irish academic libraries where the manner in which information is organized acts as an impediment to its retrieval by sections of the academic community. The hierarchical manner by which information has been organised in libraries often conceals inherent biases, rather than highlighting existing connections among specific topics. Guidelines have been established to assist cataloguers to ethically label materials in a manner that might assist all library users to gain access to it without impediment, regardless of the topic. Falling short of that ideal could indirectly result in the censorship of selected items. The organisation of information in libraries could, however, be managed to actively affect societal change. The sections that follow are comprised of a research project in which academic librarians from five private, third level colleges in Dublin have been interviewed in order to answer the Research Question, and to meet the Research Aims and Research Objectives that have been explained in this Introduction.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

This section includes a description of how the academic librarians who agreed to participate in this research were selected. It also includes an overview of the research design, including the philosophical basis for the research; the approach and strategy employed in the collection of data; and the method employed in analysing the data collected. The materials and apparatus used in conducting the research are listed, as well as a description of the procedure followed during the study. There is attention given in this section to the ethical considerations that were taken during the study. Finally, there is an explanation of the use of qualitative thematic data analysis employed in carrying out this study.

The researcher conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with academic librarians from private, third level institutions in Dublin. All of the librarians interviewed participated in the research as volunteers i.e. none of the librarians interviewed received any remuneration for participating in the research. Details regarding librarians' ages weren't collected but all of the librarians were adults and none were minors. Two of the librarians were women and three of the librarians were men. All of the librarians are educated to Master's level. The research being conducted has resulted in giving the researcher an ample understanding of cataloguing ethics, an important trend in modern library science.

2.2 Participants

The researcher selected participants for the research out of the population of academic librarians in private, third level colleges in Dublin. Participants were purposively selected for their ability to assist the researcher in answering the research question and meet the researcher's objectives (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 321"). As each of the private, third level colleges at which the participant librarians work differ, the sampling was based on both a purposive and a heterogeneous approach. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, heterogeneous sampling allows the researcher to "... collect data to describe and explain the key themes that can be observed" (2019, p 321). The researcher sought to gain an understanding of how ethical principles are implemented in private, third level colleges in Dublin. Each of the selected participants spoke independently of the other librarians that were interviewed and communicated to the researcher their own, individual perspectives during each interview. Also, heterogeneous sampling "... uses your judgement to choose participants with sufficiently diverse characteristics for maximum variation possible in the data collected" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 321). Each librarian interviewed had unique experiences in relation to the topics that were discussed during each, separate interview. The researcher determined that, in order to answer the research question, it was neither desirable nor necessary to interview the entire population of academic librarians at private, third level institutions in Dublin. As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill define it, purposive, non-probability sampling can be used "... to undertake an in-depth study that focuses on a small number of cases, perhaps one, selected for a particular purpose" in order for the researcher to answer the research question and to meet the objectives (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019, p. 315"). As the number of private, third

level institutions in Dublin is quite large, the researcher would not have been able to interview librarians from each institution in the twelve weeks given for the completion of the research. Also, the number of librarians available to participate in the research was limited over the course of the research period i.e. the interviews were conducted during the months of July and August and many of the librarians were on annual leave during that period. Invitations were sent out to ten librarians by e-mail. Five of the librarians who were contacted by email responded and agreed to participate in the research. Five librarians were selected by the researcher to participate and to be interviewed for the research. The researcher deemed five librarians as an appropriate number of participants to interview in the time allotted in order to gain an understanding of cataloguing ethics as it applied in the setting of a private, third level institution in Dublin. Therefore, the researcher collected data on a sample and, in order to answer the research question using a bottom-up approach, the researcher conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews on a one-to-one basis with each of five subjects. The variable components of the research i.e. individual academic librarians, were independent of each other. Each of the librarians interviewed work as academic librarians. Two of the librarians have experience working in more than just one academic library over the course of their careers.

2.3 Design

The research question that the present study seeks to answer led to a review of literature, much of which challenges the manner in which information in libraries is currently organised. The researcher has sought to explore how librarians in Dublin's private, third level colleges implement ethical cataloguing practices, with a view to understanding the efficacy of the hierarchical systems of classification as they are traditionally used in

libraries. The researcher has taken an inductive approach and the researcher's objectives were based upon the literature review. The research question and the objectives allowed the researcher to formulate interview questions to prompt a discussion with each librarian. A copy of the seventeen interview questions used during the interviews can be found at Appendix 4.

2.3.1 design overview.

The Research Onion is the model used by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill to describe research design (2019, p. 130). The Research Onion has six separate layers and illustrates research design as a process, which moves from the outer layer of the onion, philosophy, towards data collection and analysis at the centre layer (see Figure 1, below).

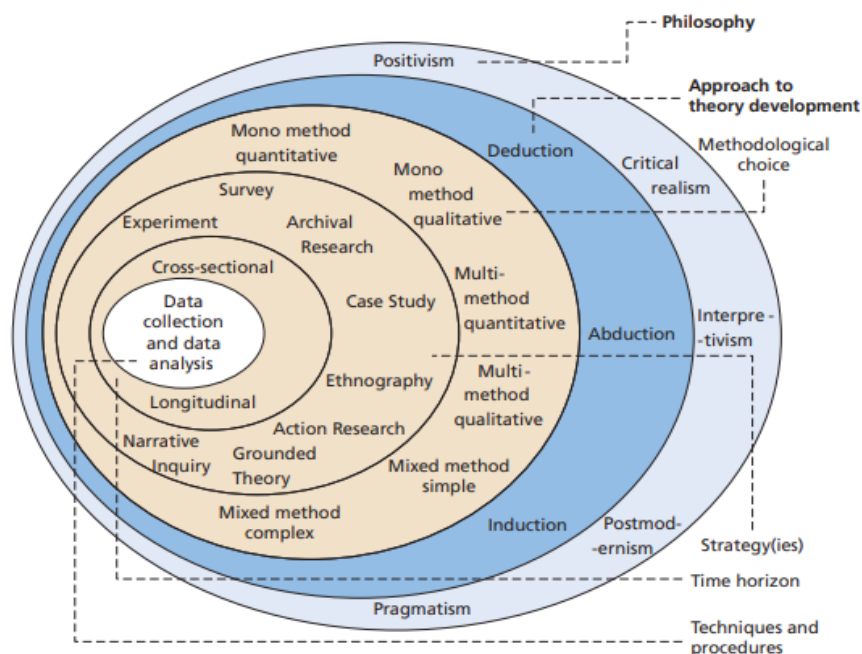


Figure 1. Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 130).

2.3.2 philosophy.

The philosophical approach to research is based on the assumptions the researcher has made regarding reality, knowledge, and values even before undertaking this study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p 130). In their book, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill explain the philosophical concepts that underpin the various types of research design (2019, pp 128-170). Objectivism maintains that social entities exist “. . . independently of how we think of them. . .” and it seeks “. . . to discover the ‘truth’ about the social world” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p 135). Objectivism also considers that, to avoid bias, research must be free of values (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p). Subjectivism, however, considers social reality to be made from the perceptions and consequent actions of people as social actors (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p 137). Unlike objectivism, in the subjectivist view there is no underlying reality to the social world other than what social actors attribute to it and reality is constructed through social interaction (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p 137). Ontologically, the researcher perceives reality from the subjectivist perspective. In this study, the researcher has sought to gain an understanding of how the library world, particularly with regard to the organisation of information, is created through the actions of people as social actors.

In a manner that also differs from the objectivist philosophy and in pursuing this study from a subjectivist perspective, the researcher will be “. . . interested in different opinions and narratives that can help to account for different social realities of different social actors” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p 137). This was done in this study by conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews. The researcher realises that, from the subjectivist point-of-view, one’s own values have an integral role in the research and that

the presumption is that those values will be reconsidered during the research process. Furthermore, the philosophical position from which the researcher has pursued this research is as an interpretivist. The purpose of interpretivist research is, in the words of Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, “. . . to create new, richer understandings and interpretations of social worlds and contexts” (2019, p. 149).

2.3.3 approach to theory development (including methodological choice).

Studies similar to this research have not, to the researcher’s knowledge, been conducted before in relation to the libraries of private, third level colleges in Dublin. As the research seeks to find out how ethical cataloguing practices are implemented in such libraries, the researcher has established an inductive approach to gathering information to answer the research question. The data collected in semi-structured interviews was then thematically analysed. This was a mono method qualitative study (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 179).

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill suggest that Grounded Theory is an appropriate way to analyse qualitative data collected in interviews (2019, p. 205). In analysing data using Grounded Theory, the researcher should analyse the data after each interview before commencing subsequent interviews (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 205). In the current research the researcher did, indeed, analyse the data from each interview before conducting any additional interviews. The researcher also did, however, complete all of the interviews before actually coding any of the interview transcripts and analysing the data. In this way, Thematic Analysis Theory was used in coding and organizing the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp. 77-101). Little has been written about this topic in the Irish context so the methodology followed in the Thematic Analysis of the data was performed with the

intention that the Thematic Analysis carried out can be taken into further research on any on the themes that have arisen from the original research.

2.3.4 strategy, techniques and procedures.

To answer the research question the researcher conducted In-depth, semi-structured interviews. As the researcher was able to delve deeply into the data from each interview, the researcher has conducted the research using Grounded Theory. Interestingly, the researcher thought that perhaps action research would be conducted. Action research would have involved the researcher in the day-to-day running of the organisation from which data would have been collected. As Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill explain about Action Research, it “. . . requires participation in the form of collaboration through its iterative cycles” . . . “to facilitate the improvement of organisational practices” (2019, p. 204). This was not the case. Grounded Theory, however, “. . . refers to a theory that is grounded in or developed inductively from a set of data” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 205). Grounded Theory, then, was the strategy that the researcher used to conduct the research. The data was then analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp. 77-101).

As the time to conduct the research was limited to twelve weeks, the time horizon was what Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill refer to as Cross-Sectional, which they describe as, “. . . involving the study of a particular phenomenon (or phenomena) at a particular time” (2019, p. 212).

2.4 Materials / Apparatus

To generate interest amongst librarians in the private, third level colleges in Dublin, the researcher emailed invitations to a total of 10 individual librarians. Each email invitation began with an introduction of the researcher to each potential librarian; explained the reason that the research was being conducted; and gave a brief description of the topic being researched. Each email invitation also explained why the researcher was interested in interviewing the specific potential librarian, gave a brief explanation of the procedure that would be followed in each interview, and explained that the research would be conducted in compliance with the ethical guidelines at Dublin Business School. A copy of the email invitation used can be found in Appendix 1.

Interview questions were drafted with a view toward allowing each of the librarians to speak about their experiences and suggesting areas in which the interviewer was interested. The interview questions, of which there were seventeen in total, were each drafted to enable the interviewer to answer the Research Question and to meet the Research Objectives. The interview questions can be found at Appendix 4.

The Research Objectives emerged from the Research Question and the Literature Review. The interviews conducted resulted in several themes, from which the objectives were met. The research objectives can be sub-divided into three categories; bibliographic advice, cataloguing and classification, and ethical frameworks. More than one interview question was often required to address a research objective. Examples of how the Research Questions link into each of these categories are given on the next pages i.e.

Bibliographic advice:

Research Objective: To evaluate the advice and additional steps academic librarians offer to students who are seeking to access materials on topics pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism, ethnicity, [language and religion].

Interview Question: What would the experience of students in your college be like in accessing materials on topics pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism, and ethnicity?

Cataloguing and Classification:

Research Objective: To investigate if there is a more inclusive system of information organization than the use of key words, Dewey decimal classification, and Library of Congress subject headings.

Interview Questions: Does your college library normally use key words and Library of Congress subject headings (LCSHs) when classifying materials?

Would it be possible to use a more inclusive system of information organisation?

How is this achieved in your college library?

Ethical Frameworks

Research Objective: To ascertain what ethical frameworks, if any, academic librarians refer to in the context of cataloguing and bibliographic classification.

Interview Question: Do library staff refer to any ethical frameworks in the context of cataloguing and bibliographic classification?

The Apparatus used to conduct the online interviews was mainly the Researcher's Personal Computer and a separate headset (comprised of headphones and a microphone). A separate headset and microphone were required to ensure that the audio was clear. A video accompanies each recorded interview (with the exception of one librarian, who chose not to appear on camera). The interviews were conducted and recorded online via Zoom and the recordings of each interview were downloaded and saved to a separate hard drive.

2.5 Procedure

Given the limited amount of time available to organize and conduct the interviews, the researcher was aiming to interview six librarians. Unfortunately, one of the librarians who had initially replied to my invitation ultimately opted not to participate. Of the librarians that had replied to the invitation, however, five did agree to participate in the research. In addition to copies of the interview questions, there were also attached to the invitations that had been emailed to each of the librarians a Participant Information Sheet and an Informed Consent Form. Templates of each of these documents were provided for use by the researcher by Dublin Business School on Moodle. A copy of the Participant Information Sheet can be found at Appendix 2 and a copy of the Informed Consent Form can be found at Appendix 3. Copies of the signed Informed Consent Forms were collected by the researcher before each individual interview and are maintained on a file in the researcher's home office.

After an invitation had been sent to a librarian, the candidate to be interviewed responded and proposed an interview date. The researcher generally went with the date proposed by the interview candidate in an effort to accommodate them and to initiate an atmosphere of openness in anticipation of the semi-structured interviews. The researcher

would contact the interview candidate by email to confirm the date and time of the interview and would set up a Zoom meeting, inviting the interview candidate.

On the day of each interview the researcher set up the Personal Computer and Zoom call ten minutes before the scheduled time and waited for the librarian to join the meeting. The researcher then opened the Zoom meeting with an introduction. Of the five interviewees the researcher had previously met only two. The researcher met three of the librarians for the first time on the day of the interview. When conversation between the librarian and the researcher seemed comfortable, the researcher alerted the librarian that the recording of the meeting would be started. It was at that point that the interview began.

The researcher would already have indicated to the librarian in the original invitation email that the research concerned the relationship between information organization and inequality from the perspective of some Irish academic libraries (see Appendix 1). In the original invitation, it would also have been indicated to the Librarian that the Researcher hoped for the research to facilitate the dialogue within the academic community around the topics of diversity and social inclusion (see Appendix 1). Those sections of the invitation and the research questions that had been sent to each librarian as an attachment to the original invitation, enabled each librarian to consider what they would say during the interview.

The larger themes were relevant to answering the research question but were not necessarily germane to the interview question being discussed. In this manner, the researcher appreciated the value of the semi-structured interview format. The format of semi-structured interview offered some indication to each librarian of the direction in which the researcher wished the conversation to move. Semi-structured interviews, however, also allowed each interviewee the freedom to openly discuss their experiences working as

academic librarians. The librarians interviewed, therefore, were not confined to the parameters of the interview questions. Additionally, the researcher took the opportunity to ask questions outside of the remit of the interview questions. This occurred on occasions where it was possible to delve more deeply into a subject that the researcher deemed to be of interest in answering the Research Question (see Section 1.2.1 of the Introduction). This style of interviewing allowed the researcher to speak with the academic librarians on a variety of levels, thereby opening up the possibility of developing themes during a thematic analysis of the data collected during each interview.

2.6 Ethics

In the case of this research, the main ethical concern of the researcher is to protect the anonymity of the librarians. To do this the researcher has anonymized the raw data and the manner by which the results of the thematic analysis has been reported in this, the dissertation. The names of people and of institutions have been left out of this dissertation and only the common themes arising out of the interviews were disclosed herein.

An invitation was sent to each potential participant explaining the purpose of the research, that it would be conducted online and that each online interview would be recorded. The candidates were each also assured that the recordings and data collected from the interviews would be destroyed when the research was completed. A sample copy of said emails is attached hereto at Appendix 1.

Each of the interviews from which the raw data in this research was derived were recorded. To protect the anonymity of the librarians, therefore, the recording of the interviews will not be submitted as part of this research. Only the transcripts of the interviews, which have also been anonymized, will be submitted as the raw data.

Informed Consent has been obtained in relation to each librarian and a sample of the Informed Consent Forms can be found at Appendix 3. The researcher has maintained a separate file, in which the signed forms are kept. Each librarian was informed of their right to withdrawal from the research at any time.

After discussing the matter with the supervisor, the researcher considers it ethically appropriate to send a copy of the completed dissertation to each of the participant, academic librarians by email.

2.7 Data Analysis

Each of the in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the five academic librarians from private, third level colleges in Dublin that the researcher selected as the sample were recorded. By way of interview “. . . the researcher is able to use the medium of collecting qualitative data to give participants a ‘voice’ through which to talk about and record their experiences and perceptions” (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019, p. 639). The researcher’s “*Data corpus*”, as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p 79), was comprised of the recorded interviews with the librarians selected to participate in the research. All of the recordings were manually transcribed. The transcriptions of the interviews became the researcher’s “*data set*”, as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006, p 79). Manual transcription, although very time consuming, enabled the researcher to begin becoming more familiar with the data collected during each of the interviews. The librarians each gave well thought out responses during the interviews. Recordings of each of the interviews was played back during transcription. Then, nuances from the interviews became apparent that the researcher would not necessarily have noticed on the day of the interview. The transcript of each individual interview was a “*Data item*” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The researcher

was therefore able to look beyond the mere text of the transcribed interviews and, even at that early stage, the process of identifying possible themes from each data item began.

The researcher has considered a number of questions set out by Braun and Clarke that require consideration before a Thematic Analysis of each data item commences i.e.

- What counts as a theme?
- A rich description of the data set, or a detailed account of one particular aspect
- Inductive versus theoretical thematic analysis
- Semantic or latent themes
- Epistemology: essentialist/realist versus constructionist thematic analysis

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp. 82-85).

It was apparent to the researcher that the themes identified in each data item were largely the parts of the data collected that would allow the researcher to answer the research question and which linked to the research objectives. The themes identified were thus not necessarily restricted by the theme's size nor the prevalence of the theme within each data item (Braun and Clarke, 2006, pp. 82-83). For example, themes identified in the data items that may have been mentioned only briefly were, nonetheless, occasionally relevant to answering the research question. Conversely, some of the themes that may have been prevalent in a data item were not necessarily more significant to answering the research question than themes that were conveyed more succinctly in that data item.

The type of thematic analysis that the researcher was undertaking involved identifying the themes within each data item. The themes identified would lead to answering the research question and offer depth to the researcher's understanding of ethical cataloguing in private, third level colleges in Dublin. In employing thematic analysis

the researcher sought “. . . a more detailed and nuanced account of one particular theme, or group of themes, within the data” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83). As the actual role as a librarian of each, individual interviewee differed, there would have been little overall merit in attempting to analyse common themes throughout the entire data set. The objective of the research was not to determine if a consensus exists in the data set. The researcher was interested in identifying themes in each data item in order to gain an understanding of the role of each librarian interviewed as a social actor.

The themes in each data item were identified by interpreting the data in a bottom-up, inductive fashion, which is “. . . a process of coding the data *without* trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83). The research question is exploratory and is asking the question “how?” The research is not “. . . driven by the researcher’s theoretical or analytic interest in the area” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). The research question itself sets no preconceived boundaries and requires the researcher to interpret the data in order to come up with an answer. In this manner, the researcher was able to identify themes within each data item that gave a depth of understanding to the research topic.

The themes identified within each data item were based on discussions prompted during the semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to speak freely. The semi-structured interviews resulted in levels of data from which additional themes could be interpreted by the researcher. In relation to “latent” themes, Braun and Clarke explain “. . . the development of the themes themselves involves interpretive work . . .”(Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). Answering each of the seventeen

questions required each of the participant librarians to provide an individual account of the social context of their role as a librarian.

In answering the question “how” inherent in the exploratory research question, the researcher has endeavoured to identify data revealing the role of the academic librarians participating in the research as social actors. The researcher has approached thematic analysis from a constructionist perspective. Conducting thematic analysis within the constructionist framework, explain Braun and Clarke, “. . . seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 85). Academic librarians are social actors and, as such, a potential role emerges for academic librarians to advocate for social justice.

3.0 Results

3.1 Overview

This section reports on the qualitative analysis of the data collected from each of the interviews conducted with librarians from private, third level colleges in Dublin. During the analysis of the data, the researcher referred extensively to the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke in their article entitled “Using thematic analysis in psychology” (2006, pp. 77-101). In analysing the data, the researcher was aware that the process was data-driven. At the initial stages of coding and analysing the data, reference was made to neither the literature review nor the research objectives. A link between the data and the literature review and the research objectives will become apparent in the discussion section.

Furthermore, the researcher was interested in “. . . coding to identify particular (and possibly limited) features of the data set” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 89). The researcher found this approach conducive to identifying “latent” themes because it enabled the researcher to “. . . provide a more detailed and nuanced account”, of the themes identified in the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 83).

3.2 Thematic Analysis

3.2.1 Becoming Familiar with the Data

Each recorded interview was played back separately, as the researcher transcribed the interviews manually. Although the process of manually transcribing each recorded interview was time consuming, it offered the researcher the opportunity to become closely familiar with each interview as an individual data item. Manually transcribing each interview enabled the researcher to read deeply into each transcript and to think about the additional

potential themes introduced by the librarian being interviewed. This corresponds to the first phase of the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke, where manual transcription “. . . informs the early stages of analysis” (2006, p. 88). Braun and Clarke emphasize in the guidelines that transcribing enables the researcher to “. . . develop a far more thorough understanding of your data” (2006, p. 88). In order to transcribe the contents of each interview accurately, the researcher was careful to play back individual excerpts of each recording multiple times.

The researcher read over the transcript of each interview, writing possible, initial thoughts in the margin. The researcher also underlined passages of text in each transcript that could be linked to some of the additional ideas that the librarians spoke about during each interview. As the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke suggest “. . . writing should begin in phase one, with the jotting down of ideas and potential coding schemes, and continue right through the entire coding/analysis process” (2006, P. 86). The researcher found that writing throughout the process was essential to accurately identifying the themes in each data item. Entries were made in the researcher’s journal of the possible initial themes identified within each interview transcript, with notes of the location in the interview transcript of every excerpt.

The researcher used colour pens on each transcript to distinguish the initial, individual ideas and to highlight some of the additional ideas introduced by the librarians being interviewed. Using colour pens allowed the researcher to categorize possible themes in the text of the transcript and assisted the researcher in detecting nuances from the interviews that linked to the variously coloured possible themes. Organized in that manner,

the various colours allocated to each possible theme complemented the transition to the next phase, which is to begin coding.

3.2.2 Initial Codes and Collated Extracts

Having both transcribed each interview and then reviewed each interview, the researcher assigned codes to each data excerpt from every, individual data item. This corresponds to the second phase of the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke. “Codes identify a feature of the data (semantic content or latent) that appears interesting to the analyst” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 88). In this instance the researcher was interested in coding features of the data that were latent and from which a theorized analysis could be developed (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 84). The result was a list of fifty-seven codes that could be applied to the various excerpts in each data item. The researcher then copied coded excerpts from each transcript into a table. The table is entitled the “Table of Initial Codes” and is 57 pages long. The Table of Initial Codes was a selection of extracts from each interview transcript, was organised according to Participant, and into which excerpts cut from each transcript were pasted alongside assigned codes. The Table of Initial Codes represents the codified data extracted from each, individual transcript as a unique data item. The Table of Initial Codes is too long to include as an appendix to this dissertation but an entry taken from the Table of Initial Codes is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1, Excerpt from the Table of Initial Codes

<p>There are a number of library ethical frame works out there most of which I fundamentally agree with. To me the librarian as the custodian of information is always first and foremost somebody who respects the library user so to my mind that means putting as few impediments in their path to finding information as possible. [C6-9, p 8]</p>	<p>25. Library advocacy 23. Ethical frameworks</p>
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A second table entitled the “Table of Collated Extracts”, in which interview excerpts from the Table of Initial Codes were collated according to each initial code, was then created. Braun and Clarke write that “You may initially identify the codes, and then match them with data extracts that demonstrate that code . . .” (2006, p. 89). The initial codes taken from the margins of the interview transcripts were refined at the same time that they were being entered into the Table of Initial Codes. Braun and Clarke add that “. . . it is important in this phase to ensure that all the actual data extracts are coded” (2006, p. 89). This was done and resulted in a Table of Collated Extracts spanning seventy-two pages. The number of pages in the Table of Collated Extracts increased, as many of the excerpts were allocated under various codes and, therefore, appear more than once in the table. The replication of excerpts under different codes facilitated the development of themes. The codes were further refined at the same time as they were entered into the Table of Collated Extracts. The Table of Collated Extracts was comprised of a list of the initial fifty-seven codes, nine of which link to the Research Objectives (see Section 1.2.2 of the Introduction), and corresponding extracts from the interview transcripts. Several portions of The Table of Collated Extracts also linked to the themes that had arisen out of the Literature Review (see Section 1.4 of the Introduction). These linkages, which were identified in the data, are discussed below in the Discussion Section. The Table of Collated Extracts is too long to include as an appendix to this dissertation but an entry taken from the Table of Collated Extracts is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2, Excerpt from the Table of Collated Extracts

Ethical awareness	Maybe it is definitely an area that is becoming more visible and there is definitely much more emphasis on it from a lot of areas including even the institution they have had all of our staff in our organisation would have done online diversity equity and inclusion, online training this year and I think that it is something that they will continue to add to as time goes on, which all helps to increase awareness in areas where there
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	may be unconscious bias in everyday working but also on the cataloguing side of things as well. [A12-17, p 12]
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3.2.3 Identifying Themes

The researcher had already collated the data extracted from the data items by code, a step which facilitated identifying initial themes and collating the data excerpts according to those themes. This corresponds to the third phase of Braun and Clarke's guidelines to thematic analysis (2006, pp. 89-91). "Essentially, you are starting to analyse your codes and consider how different codes may combine to form an overarching theme" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 89). The researcher wrote the name of each code onto sticky notes and began to arrange them on a wall. This step was taken to facilitate the creation of a visual map of themes developed from the codes, which had been identified in the interview transcripts. At this stage the researcher arranged all of the fifty-seven codes on the wall map of possible themes. Although some of the codes seemed superfluous when placed in the vicinity of what appeared to be genuine codes, everything at this stage was kept. ". . . without looking at all the extracts in detail (the next phase) it is uncertain whether the themes hold as they are . . ." (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 90). Therefore, the researcher began the process of considering which of the codes would either become part of a larger theme or discarded. Tables 3 and 4 illustrate the selection of themes and the refinement of themes.

The researcher then created another list, which consisted of five main themes and fifty-six possible sub-themes. The additional list facilitated searching the Table of Collated Extracts and to begin refining the themes.

Table 3, Themes and Sub-themes (version 1)

Additional advice	Vulnerable groups	Cataloguing and classification	Inclusivity	Ethical frameworks	Ethical awareness	Advocacy
Library anxiety	Indigenous groups	Key words	Process	Bias	Academic integrity	
Key word searches	Specific groups	Dewey	Library reports			
Library classes		LOCSHs				
Shelf-browsing						
Extra guidance in searching						

		Key Words				
			Author-generated key words			
			User-generated key words			

		Terminology				
			Old terminology			
				Use of old terminology		
				Retention of old terminology		
			Changing terminology			
				User-generated changes		
			Updating terminology			
			Fully-searchable catalogue			

		Books				
			Facets			

				Books with multiple facets		
			Interdisciplinary books			
			Books with multiple aspects			

		Resources				
		Workload				

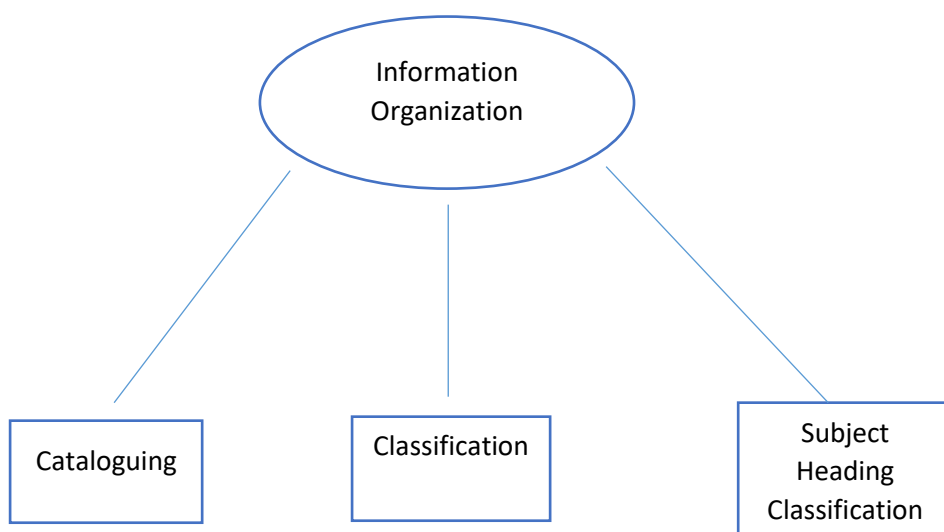
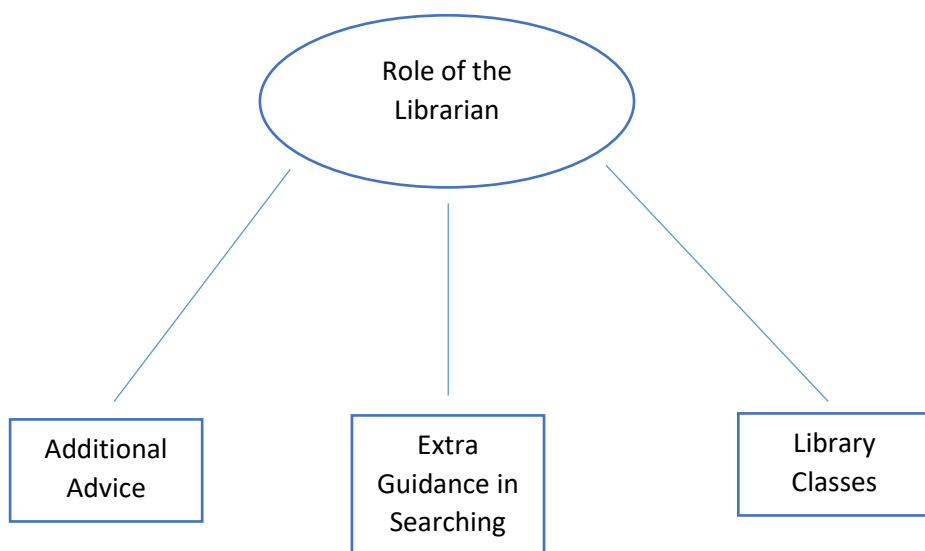
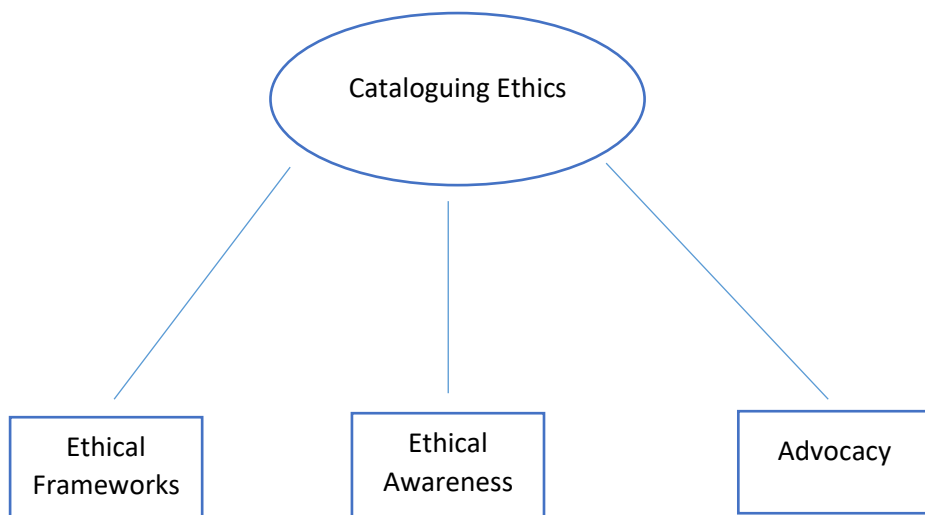
Table 4, Refined Themes (and Sub-themes version 2)

Inclusivity	Information Organisation	Role of the Librarian	Advocacy	Miscellaneous
Diversity	Cataloguing	The student experience	Ethical frameworks	Facets
Bias	Classification	Academic libraries	Ethical awareness	Multiple facets
Gender	LCSHs	Additional advice	Process	Interdisciplinary books
Transgender	DDC	Subjectivity	Academic integrity	Books with multiple aspects
Race	Author-generated words	Extra guidance in searching	Library reports	Links in catalogue
Language differences	Key words	Library anxiety	Open access	Resources
Vulnerable groups	Subject heading classification	Key word searches	Feminist theory	Workload
Specific groups	User-generated key words	Self-expression in academic writing	Ethical monitoring	Library Management Systems
Indigenous groups	Old terminology	Creating inviting setting	Information literacy	
Gay	User-generated changes	Library classes	Power of language	
LGBTQ	Use of old terminology	Shelf-browsing		
	Retention of old terminology			
	Fully searchable catalogue			
	Changing terminology			
	Updating terminology			
	Displaying old and new terminology			
	Terminology based on module title			

3.2.4 Refining Themes

The fourth phase of the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke consists of two levels (2006, pp. 91-92). “Level one involves reviewing at the level of the coded data extracts” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 91). At this stage, the researcher read through each of the data extracts to ensure that they adequately met the standard of a reliable theme. That is, to “. . . consider whether they appear to form a coherent pattern” (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 91). Four of the five themes, in the opinion of the researcher, proved to be viable. One of the themes and all of the sub-headings listed underneath it, were allocated to one or more of the other themes.

The second level of phase four of Braun and Clarke’s guidelines is to review the remaining themes in relation to the entire data set and to code any additional extracts that may have previously been missed (2006, pp.91-92). The second level of phase four did, indeed, result in the addition of four more codes. Each of the four new codes were allocated to one or more of the themes that had already been developed. The final diagram of themes that resulted is expressed in Figure 2, on the next two pages. Phase 5 of Braun and Clarke’s guidelines is represented below in Figure 2 and in the discussion of themes on the following pages (2006, pp. 92-93). Phase 6 of Braun and Clarke’s guidelines, the report, is represented by the Discussion Section of this dissertation (2006, p. 93).



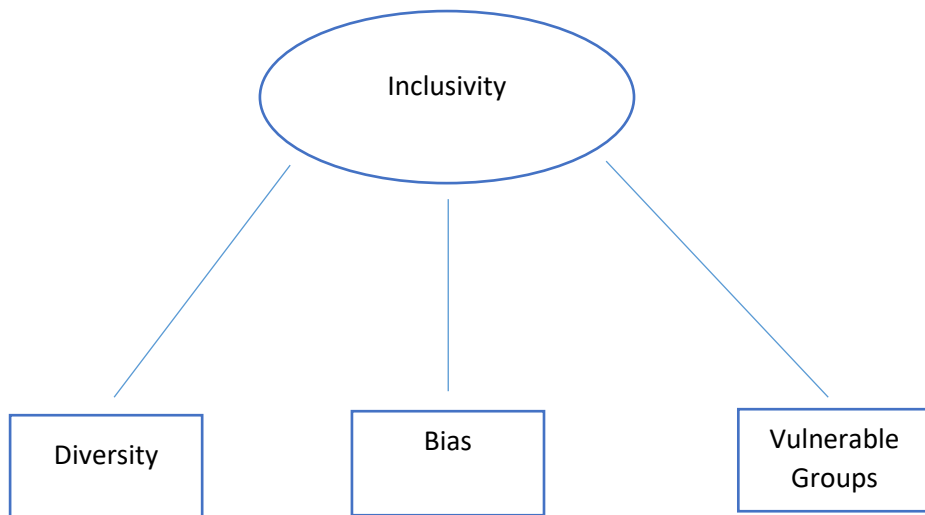


Figure 2, Final diagram of themes

3.3 Themes

3.3.1 Cataloguing Ethics

Cataloguing ethics comprises a certain level of awareness in the decision making process of organising library materials. As a concept, cataloguing ethics was inherent throughout the interviews. Librarians A and C attested to the presence of ethical library considerations in their everyday roles as academic librarians. Librarian A asserted that “. . . the IFLA Code of Ethics would be one thing that people would refer to in terms of access to information, intellectual property, responsibilities to individuals and society” Referring to the copious amounts of information available to everyone, Librarian C stated that, “. . . somebody who can help you orient your way through that again without abrogating your rights as a reader or a user is a very useful support person to have.”

Librarians A, B, and D focused specifically on cataloguing ethics in relation to both the organisation and the retrieval of information by library users. Each of them had comments with regard to their professional commitment to meeting the information needs of all of their library users, especially when the library users to which they referred were students. Librarian A summed up the issue in relation to recent work done in the area of cataloguing ethics, explaining, “I think that there has been more need for it because the standards that we use lag behind the terminology that is being used in the real world” There is an awareness amongst the academic librarians that were interviewed of the growing need for some form of cataloguing ethics in their library environments. Librarian B presumes an inherent knowledge of ethical principles, saying, “I think that cataloguing ethics is probably just being conscientious.” In relation to forming specific ethical principles,

Librarian D raised a pertinent question, “. . . is the task of cataloguing the place to work out ethical questions . . .?” It would appear from an analysis of the interviews that there is a requirement for the development of an ethical framework.

3.3.1.1 ethical frameworks.

One key aspect of ethics in the library that has been emerging over recent years is the development of frameworks that guide the ethical practices of library professionals. A suggestion has been made by one librarian that ethical frameworks can assist librarians in defining what they think that their roles should be. Librarian C intimated, “There are a number of library ethical frameworks out there most of which I fundamentally agree with.” Librarian C then added, “To me the librarian as the custodian of information is always first and foremost somebody who respects the library user so to my mind that means putting as few impediments in their path to finding information as possible.” Moreover, the focus for a number of library associations has been the development of frameworks with a particular focus on cataloguing ethics.

Librarians A, B, C, D, and E, were all aware of the most recent developments regarding frameworks for cataloguing ethics. Librarians A, B, C, and D seemed keen on adapting the same principles in their library manuals. Referring to the Cataloguing Code of Ethics finalised by the Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee in January 2021 Librarian A stated, “So I’d be hopeful as that develops, as we look back, that we can update our cataloguing manual to include more aspects of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics within it.” Due to the nature of Librarian E’s library, Librarian E stated that, “There wasn’t an ethical way we really didn’t need to have an ethical code for cataloguing, no.” In any event, the theme of ethical frameworks is a topical one.

Stating that the interview questions were “thought provoking”, Librarian C alluded to the usefulness of written ethical frameworks that could be, “. . . accessible to users so that they know that that is the protection that they have. It’s an intellectual freedom, in fact, that they have.” The researcher’s interpretation of Librarian C’s comment was that ethical principles are inherent to the protection of the library user’s rights. Librarian D suggested that, when using any type of a framework, one must assure that the structure remains flexible. Librarian D said, “. . . there’s risks in terms of implementing theories or frameworks in the interest of inclusivity that are always at risk of being exclusionary if it doesn’t remain adaptive or open or responsive . . .”

Even in the absence of an ethical framework, Librarian B refers to an awareness of ethical principles that Librarian B employs in the everyday library practice, “So I think that there is no framework but there was my kind of internal kind of, um, ethics . . .” With regard to cataloguing specifically, Librarian B explained, “. . . there has been stuff on let’s say gender and sexual minorities and I’m like I’m not using, some of these terms don’t sit right with me because like I said they’re very reductive, maybe reductive, that might be a useful word.”

3.3.1.2 ethical awareness.

The desire to adopt some form of an ethical framework that would apply to academic libraries appears to derive from the conscientious approaches of Librarians A, B, and C to their professional environments. A pattern of professional, ethical awareness was noted by the researcher throughout the interviews. In relation to ethical awareness, Librarian A comments that “I think that it could only be a positive thing to have more study and research on the awareness.” On an institutional level, Librarian A refers to online

training that had been provided by the college, “. . . they have had all of our staff in our organisation would have done online diversity equity and inclusion, online training this year”.

Similarly, Librarian B maintains that “I don’t see how adding some ethical awareness in, of how your role or even just your behaviour is going to impact others is never going to be a negative thing.” The recognition in Librarian B’s comment being that one’s role in the library can affect the library user in a variety of ways. Librarian B emphasises that, “. . . we should be aware of the words that we use and the impact that they have or on the subject headings.”

As an indication of professional, ethical awareness, Librarian C adds, “So I am anticensorship. As a librarian, I think that everything that is available to read and published should be published and discussed.” With reference to Librarian’s D’s college, Librarian D states that, “. . . increasing ethical awareness is definitely a factor that’s discussed.”

3.3.1.3 advocacy.

Librarians C, and E were expressly advocates for libraries and for librarianship as a profession. Librarian E explained, “. . . I’m an advocate for libraries and a person who really stands for the library and the fact that the libraries should be open for everybody.” Librarian E continues, “Yes, I had to teach what a librarian is to senior management because they think that we just put books on shelves.” Asked what initially interested Librarian C in becoming a librarian, the response is that, “. . . getting access to information and being able to find things and being able to borrow materials was extremely important and I still believe that is an ethos that underpins libraries as institutions and as aspects of culture.”

Librarians B and D each commented on some of the ways that libraries could advocate for improvements in open access. Librarian B states that, “. . . every library should push for as much open access things as possible; I just think that is the kind of moral thing to do.” While Librarian B reiterated their view of ethics, “I think that probably in terms of library ethics, where I think that cataloguing ethics is probably just being conscientious”, Librarian B took a more firm stance with regard to the position of libraries to actively pursue open access, saying “I think like just the more things are open the better I think that it just benefits everyone, you don’t know, it may benefit people you’ve never even realised”

In relation to the actions that libraries and librarians could take in relation to words used to describe items being classified, Librarian B stated that, “. . . some things are more consistent across libraries but also if they could advocate to the ALA or the Library of Congress and say stop using these terms or let’s use better language.” Librarian D’s library is located in a college where, “. . . within a few weeks of starting I was attending on-line events that were about questions of, you know, decolonizing the curriculum.”

3.3.2 Role of the Librarian

The role of the librarian as recounted to the researcher by all of the librarians interviewed is multi-faceted. In some cases the emphasis is on creating a welcoming atmosphere. After hearing a report by a library user of an incident that occurred at another institution, Librarian B stated that, “Maybe they were just rude or maybe they could just have worded it in a gentler way and create a friendlier situation because people can be insecure about stuff.” In relation to a preferred way of treating library users, Librarian B explains, “So I think that topics like this might be about additional insecurities where a good librarian would want to create an open atmosphere when you’re on the desk.”

Assistance provided to students in locating information by the librarian was also featured in the interviews. Librarian B, “I ask if they have used our catalogue before and if they give me a list and say ‘I need to find these three books’ I’ll show them how”

Librarian C explains that, in relation to what librarians do, “. . . we are there to help people navigate information so that follows that we have to think about the artefacts that we use.” Librarian C says, “. . . treat all of their requests for information with equal seriousness irrespective of where they come from”

Librarian D was careful to highlight possible biases that the librarian might have. Librarian D explains that, “. . . it becomes almost about your own subjective interests and what you’re more likely to know.” Also, Librarian D pointed to, “. . . the element of the dynamic that’s involved in that level of communication between a librarian and a student or a researcher.”

3.3.2.1 additional advice.

One of the main roles that the academic librarian undertakes is as the public face of the library. There are a variety of scenarios whereby the academic librarian assists the library’s stakeholders in offering a variety of advices to them. Librarian B maintains that questions from students are often focused on their academic subjects and are dictated by module title or what their lecturer told them to find in the library. With reference to a typical question that one might get from a student, Librarian B maintains that, “It’s fairly focused on whatever their academic study is; I’m looking for a book on blah, blah, blah, blah.” Librarian B will show them how to use key words or Dewey decimal classification in their searches. Librarian B will direct students to search for books or journal articles depending on what they need the materials for. Librarian B also asserts that it is important for the librarian to realize that they are not there to protect information.

Librarian C suggests that the librarian should take all requests for information with equal seriousness, to help them navigate the information that the library has access to, and help with academic writing. Librarian C elaborates that help given to students from the librarian is often, “. . . with respect to academic writing and how to submit and how to present their project . . .” Librarian C continues that the librarian does “. . . give significant support in terms of academic writing so that feeds back into how they would search and how they would navigate information.” Particularly in relation to students seeking information with regard to some more vulnerable groups, Librarian C states that, “First of all it’s how we can help the students find stuff –how”

Librarian D Stresses the importance of allowing the student to take the lead in the search for information and Librarian D specifically draws attention to the dynamic between librarian and student, saying, “there’s the element of the dynamic that’s involved in that level of communication between a librarian and a student or a researcher.”

3.3.2.2 extra guidance in searching.

Librarians A, B, and D speak extensively about the complexities involved in searching when materials are classified using old terminology. Librarian A explains that, “Even something like transgender issues are under sexual orientation, which it isn’t really ‘sexual orientation’”. Other issues arise when terminology changes. Researchers may require assistance from the librarian when a topic is commonly described using new terminology but materials that they are looking for are still classified using the old terminology.

When researchers are looking for certain materials and terminology has changed Librarian B says, “. . . that could impact them finding it” Librarian B points to the possibility of conducting user experience surveys to find out what search terms students are

using to locate information in the library, “. . . they might not be using the correct words that we’re picking for it and so like that could be an issue with any book I suppose.”

Librarian D explains some of the issues prompting the evolution of terminology, which thereby requires the librarian to give assistance, “. . . the controversy about immigration and how to describe immigrants and the idea of illegal aliens”

3.3.2.3 library classes.

Librarians A, B and C each consider the integration of library classes an appropriate way to instruct students. Librarian A identifies library classes in searching as one way of reaching students, “We try and, obviously we’ll have library classes telling people about how to search to help them.” Librarian B views library courses as a conduit for training staff and explains “. . . I think that it would be best worked in, maybe the library course is the best way or library courses are the best way to introduce these topics. Librarian C views academic integrity support classes as a means of instructing students, “. . . you know I give the academic integrity support classes and so class visits and you want to go in with a positive note”

3.3.3 Information Organisation

Information organisation is a key aspect of the academic librarian’s remit. Cataloguing and classifying information accurately and in a manner that makes information accessible to the library user is a complicated but crucial task. Librarian D “. . . so then the information organization could be made more open in terms of how the classifications or and the subject headings and the like are, how they are formed and also how they link is the other aspect.”

3.3.3.1 cataloguing.

Cataloguing refers to the description of books using metadata. Cataloguing books with more than one aspect was discussed with Librarian A. In relation to how books with multiple aspects are catalogued Librarian A states that, “. . . it would depend on what the expected, the main subject of the book and also depending on what we would expect it to be used the most for.”

Librarian B explains cataloguing books where the terminology used to describe the subject matter varies, “. . . the Library of Congress would tell you to use personnel management but we don't use that kind of terminology.”

Librarian C highlights the significance of maintaining diversity in the library collection “. . . materials have to reflect their needs and the courses that they are doing I would like them to have access to other things that are not necessarily germane and allow them to access more general materials, as well.”

Referring to the time and effort involved in cataloguing, Librarian D says, “I think if you bring it down to the actual classification, acquisitions and cataloguing is very much, it's process driven . . .”

3.3.3.2 classification.

Classification refers to the location of materials, such as where on the shelves books are placed. Librarian C explains how terms are chosen for works being placed in the college repository, in the event that user-generated terms had not been assigned to those works, “If they haven't created key words then we read the piece of work through to determine what key words we can use.

In relation to the choice to employ more ethical terminology used to classify, Librarian B explains that, “. . . especially when you have a system like Koha where you are saying that we are not going to use let’s say we’re not going to use LGBT were going to use LGBTQ and you would just say Koha swap it all over.”

3.3.3.3 subject heading classification.

The researcher has included subject heading classification as a separate sub-theme to emphasize the significance of the choice of words used to classify a work. In relation to the choice to employ more ethical terminology used to classify, Librarian B explains that, “. . . especially when you have a system like Koha where you are saying that we are not going to use let’s say we’re not going to use LGBT were going to use LGBTQ and you would just say Koha swap it all over. I think especially if you have those tools that make it easy I don’t see why not.”

With regard to including additional terminology in order to make a work more accessible, Librarian A suggests that, “You can then sometimes set up within your catalogue things to, if they search one term, to see another term as well until . . . the new term has become the dominant term. . . .”

Librarian C refers to circumstances for which user-generated key words are provided, saying “Now sometime they have chosen the key words themselves along with their abstract and whenever they do we respect that and those are the key words that we use when we are creating the metadata for that record when it is published on the repository.”

3.3.4 Inclusivity

Librarian B recognises that biases exist in some of the terms that are used to catalogue and to classify works. In an attempt to circumvent the problems caused by such biases, Librarian B describes their focus to be “. . . about making people aware of the biases that exist and how to search around them. I think that’s true and it almost just ties back to maybe IL anyway.”

Librarian C comments on the importance of accessibility, saying “In the academic setting that has become more oriented towards how you replicate that sense of openness and accessibility to all in terms of the resources that are used and in many cases in terms of the educational resources that are actually used.”

When asked if it would be possible for your library to use a more inclusive system of information organisation, Librarian D states, “I think so. Yes, I think so.”

3.3.4.1 diversity.

The researcher pointed out to Librarian D that many companies currently appear to focus on diversity as part of their mission statements. In relation to the commercial focus of their college, Librarian D responds, “. . . it would never be the main thing or it would never be the reason why you were there in the first place and that in itself I suppose is a reflection of maybe why it should be there!”

3.3.4.2 bias.

Librarian A comments on the training to make staff aware of bias in their organisation, “Maybe it is definitely an area that is becoming more visible and there is definitely much more emphasis on it from a lot of areas including even the institution they have had all of

our staff in our organisation would have done online diversity equity and inclusion, online training this year and I think that it is something that they will continue to add to as time goes on, which all helps to increase awareness in areas where there may be unconscious bias in everyday working but also on the cataloguing side of things as well.”

Librarian B stresses the importance of using correct, sensitive terminology, “. . . people who want to find a book on sexual orientation and they find the term like gays or something that’s like, I’m using the term scientific because that’s what they use not because what does that say to them as a um a person exploring a sensitive topic? That can be very powerful in unfortunately like in a negative way potentially. We don’t know how they’re going to interpret that and it is a thing,

Librarian D is concerned about how the librarian could potentially affect an unconscious bias into the retrieval of information, saying “I suppose there’s your interests on the one hand but you could also talk about your, what that means in terms of the information provision to the user or even in terms of even your own prejudices or values or whatever you might, if your caught, unconsciously bring or what you might neglect”

Librarian E talks about a situation where a college did not make certain books available to students. Librarian E says, “I went to this college so Edna O’Brien was not supposed to be taught.” Librarian E continues, “In the library they didn’t have Edna O’Brien’s books. So you have to go to the National Library in the same city . . . to borrow books from Edna O’Brien.” Librarian E ends on, “. . . my point would be since we are to include everyone because they’re part of society and they’ve always been part of society and we shouldn’t exclude them. So I don’t think I would have a classification separate like a tape saying LGBT.”

3.3.4.3 vulnerable groups.

Commenting on words used in some forms of classification, Librarian B points out how damaging they can be, saying, “But if you look, I think LCSH is a bit slower to change and I think that a lot of the terms are still not, I think that they’re slower to change to their detriment, like I know there’s issues where maybe our language changes faster than they’re able to change it but I think there are some words that I just can’t believe that, like they’re not slurs but they are not words that I think that you should use.”

When asked if students are looking for topics on race or sexual orientation Librarian C responds, “Yeah there have been, yeah. There have been a number of project in recent years on women in business and in leadership roles and the various types of hurdles and exclusions they can encounter. In that sense that is a topic that comes up quite a lot.”

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Introduction

The discussion section summarizes the findings and views them in the context of the Research Aims, the Research Objectives, and in comparison to previous research conducted in the area and as outlined in the Literature Review in Chapter 1.0 of this dissertation. In this section is a discussion of the strengths of the research and of the weaknesses of the research. Also discussed in this section are recommendations for future research and, finally, suggested applications of the research.

The aim of this dissertation is to evaluate the manner in which information is organized by academic libraries in Dublin. The research objectives have been met by conducting interviews with five academic librarians from private, third level colleges in Dublin. The researcher then performed a thematic analysis of the data collected from the interviews.

Overall, the librarians interviewed do not refer to specific, ethical frameworks when carrying out cataloguing in the libraries in which each them work. There is, however, an acknowledgement of ethical principles amongst all of the librarians interviewed. The principles identified by the librarians interviewed for this research incorporate ethical awareness in relation to cataloguing. Ethical awareness in relation to each of the librarians interviewed also includes strong, professional ethics and a willingness to further develop an ethical framework that would apply to their own libraries. In some instances, the development of a framework that could apply to a majority of private colleges was suggested. Also, the possibility of conducting further studies on ethical awareness in academic libraries was considered.

4.2 General Information

Only two of the five librarians interviewed for this research are currently active, cataloguing librarians. All of the librarians interviewed have cataloguing experience. Two of the librarians interviewed were able to recount to the researcher the knowledge that they had gained from their work at colleges where they had previously been employed. Two of the librarians interviewed are library managers. Out of the five librarians, three discussed classification of works within their colleges' dissertation repository. One possible weakness of the research is that not all of the librarians interviewed are currently cataloguing librarians. The librarians who were interviewed for this research, however, now work at different levels in their libraries. That fact has added a depth of insight to the research, sometimes from the perspective of library managers, with regard to what might be possible to achieve in the academic library environment with regard to cataloguing ethics.

As the researcher was conducting interviews from a purposive, heterogeneous theoretical approach, the variety of experiences of the librarians interviewed presented the researcher with a valuable array of data. Any possible differences in the variety of experiences that the librarians interviewed presented is not viewed by the researcher as being particularly problematic. On the contrary, variations of the sort that may have been encountered in the research were utilised to the advantage of the research. The researcher does not detect that any biases emerged from the librarians based on their varied experiences.

4.3 Themes

4.3.1 Cataloguing Ethics

It has been long recognised that the role of ethics is inherent in the field of information organisation (Mai, 2016, p. 329). The interviews that were conducted by the researcher in this study reveal that, for some academic librarians in Dublin, the manifestation of ethical principles in their everyday library practices fits under a number of headings. Two of the librarians interviewed spoke about ethics specifically in the context of the rights of the library user and access to information. One of the librarians also focuses on the use of terminology as a practice that presents issues in relation to both cataloguing and searching for information. The use of outdated terminology can act as an impediment to students being able to locate the information that they require for their studies. Two more of the librarians have slightly different views, one saying that ethics is a matter of being conscientious, and the second opining that questions of ethics should probably be deliberated before the librarian starts cataloguing.

4.3.1.1 ethical frameworks.

The release of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics by the Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee in January, 2021 (pp. 1-6), was a display of activism within the library world. In it, the Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee produced a guide to which cataloguing librarians can refer when they are required to manage issues of an ethical nature in their library practices (2021, p. 2). The development of the Cataloguing Code of Ethics required collaboration (Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee, 2021, p. 1). Academic libraries in some of Dublin's private, third level colleges have not yet adopted any similar frameworks. There is an interest on the part of some of the librarians interviewed, however, in possibly

developing ethical frameworks in the near future for their libraries. One of the librarians interviewed voiced the premise that the role of the librarian is to be a custodian of information. As a custodian of information, the librarian should give access to information to library users with minimal obstruction, which is something that an ethical framework would encourage. An ethical framework would also address the rights of the individual library user to the freedom of information. Another one of the librarians spoke specifically in relation to hoping to eventually adopt something similar to the Cataloguing Code of Ethics as developed by the Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee (pp. 1-6), in the library manual at their college library.

Three more librarians interviewed expressed quite different views: one expressing the view that a more personal, ethical viewpoint prevents the use of certain terminology when cataloguing; and one cautioning that, in order to remain inclusive, any framework developed should remain adaptive; and one stating that an ethical code for cataloguing would not be required in their library.

4.3.1.2 ethical awareness.

As early as 2005, Sheila Bair had already outlined her notion of a code of ethics in relation to cataloguing (pp. 23-24). Bair also acknowledged the ethical competencies displayed by librarians in their library practices everyday (2005, p. 14). Before the development of an ethical framework, it would be important to evaluate ethical awareness in college libraries. Such an evaluation would be beyond the scope of this study but ethical awareness is already existent in the practices of academic librarians. Adler and Tennis maintain that with agreement over the precepts on which knowledge organisation is based, it will be possible to decide on ethical principles and to detect what is causing harm (2013,

p. 268). Referring specifically to diversity, equity, and inclusion training provided to the staff in their college, Librarian A was also particularly enthusiastic with regard to the possibility of conducting a study in their library evaluating ethical awareness. Of paramount importance to Librarian A was an awareness of the impact that words and subject headings have on other people. Librarian C considers ethical awareness to involve guarding against censorship. Librarian D notes that in their college ethical awareness is a topic currently being discussed on an institutional level. Fox and Reece consider the ethical considerations that are required throughout the practice of information organisation (2012, p. 378).

Senior and Scott have developed a self-study for colleges to evaluate the level of ethical awareness in their libraries (2018, p. 899). Librarians A and C, in particular, were interested in the possibility of conducting a study in ethical awareness at their colleges to measure the level of ethical awareness already in practice there, and with a view toward developing a written, ethical framework.

4.3.1.3 advocacy.

Librarians B, C, and E were particularly vocal on the topic of advocacy in and for libraries. Librarian B highlighted the moral imperative behind open access. Librarian B also asserts that libraries should lobby organisations such as the ALA when required, with a view to urging them to use more appropriate terminology in some of their subject headings and classification. Librarian C noted the role of the library in society as a cultural institution. The notion that librarians and classification should remain neutral was contrasted by Mai in 2016 (p.327). In a review of the works of Hope Olson, Mai identified the aims of plurality and diversity to which knowledge organisation should aspire (2016, p. 239). Olson proposed the establishment of an ethical, feminist theory of classification (2007, p. 522). Both

positions suggest activism, rather than the more subtle advocacy approach. Librarian E advocates for the college library to be open to all and began a library fund for the purchase of additional books for students to access. Librarian E also advocates for librarianship in their college, where management was not aware of the librarian's professional skills.

4.3.2 Role of the Librarian

The role of the librarian is not a theme that emerged from the literature review. This theme, however, is relevant to answering the Research Question as it gives insight into professional and ethical considerations that relate to the retrieval of information. Fox and Reece do consider the ethical considerations that are required on every level of the practice of information organisation (2012, p. 378). Although there were no questions asked by the researcher specific to this theme, Librarians B, C, and D each had much to contribute in relation to the role of the academic librarian.

Librarian B, in particular, expressed great sensitivity to the manner in which the librarian communicated with library users. Librarian B was most concerned with creating a friendly atmosphere, which was intended to encourage students to go to the library and to ask questions of the librarian. For librarian B, this influenced communications between the librarian and the student when additional advice or guidance in searching was involved. Librarian B was also aware of the role of the librarian as it pertains to non-library advice, which might entail sending students for help from student services within the college should the circumstances require such recommendations.

Librarian C stated that the role of the librarian is assisting in the navigation of information, stressing the importance of regarding each request with an equal level of

seriousness, while stressing that access to information was crucial to libraries as cultural institutions.

Where Librarian D was cautious in relation to biases that might be inherent in the guidance in searching for information that a librarian gives to a student, Librarian D also stressed the importance of the dynamic that exists between the librarian and the researcher.

4.3.2.1 additional advice.

Librarian B maintains that often the questions that come from students revolve mainly around the academic subjects that they are taking. Librarian B will usually give assistance in using key words or in Dewey Decimal Classification. Librarian B will also direct students to either books or to journal articles, depending upon what the material is being used for; i.e. an exam or an assignment. Librarians B and D both value the relationship between librarian and student. Librarian B communicates this by the way the students state of mind is taken into consideration when the librarian is offering advice. Librarian D refers to the dynamic that exists between the librarian and the student. Cook and Heath refer to the intimidation experienced by undergraduate researchers when entering the library (2001, pp. 557-558). In the sense of enabling students to find the information that they require, the extra care taken by Librarians B and D to respect the student is pertinent to library and, perhaps, even to cataloguing ethics. As an example of library advocacy, Librarian E first had to concentrate on establishing contact with students, who did not realize to what end they could utilise the library's resources. Such contacts between the librarian and the students at Librarian E's college had not previously been established.

4.3.2.2 extra guidance in searching.

Hope Olson referred to some of the difficulties that the traditional, hierarchal systems of classification present to cataloguers (2001, p. 653). Olson explains that the attempt to organize information with reference to a universal language makes it impossible for classification systems to capture the various facets of a work. Referring to the in-house system at their college library that does not require the construction of long strings or descriptions, Librarian A explains that students can narrow their searches by adding facets of the items they are looking for. Some of the other issues outlined by Librarian A in relation to searching involve cases where terminology has changed but older materials in the library are still catalogued using the old terminology; or where the new terminology is not reflected in the search terms the student is using, especially if they are searching using the title of their module. If students are not using new terminology to search for items, they might not be able to find the most current material that the library holds on a subject. The students then might require the assistance of the librarian.

Melissa Adler comments on the privilege given to selected subjects by Library of Congress Subject Headings and Classifications (2017b, p. 2). Adler adds that other subjects can be marginalized (2017b, pp. 44-45). In the opinion of Librarian D, terminology often changes in an attempt at greater inclusivity, where older terms have the ability to marginalize or exclude. Changes in terminology that excludes people or groups often requires persistence.

Librarian B suggested the use of user experience surveys to find out what search terms students are using when they search for information, pointing out that students

might not find the information that they require if they are not using appropriate terminology.

4.3.2.3 library classes.

Cook and Heath refer to the expectations of library users in their evaluation of the quality of library services at a variety of North American research libraries. The researcher has found in the interviews that some of the academic librarians interviewed see library classes as a viable means of connecting with students and teaching them to conduct successful searches. Librarian A, for instance, cites the library classes given in the college library as one way to teach students to conduct searches. Librarian C refers to classes given in academic integrity as one way for the librarian, as the personification of the library, to connect with students. According to McClary and Howard, the desire for self-reliance occurred in groups searching the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender subject areas (2007, p. 158). Ironically, it seems that materials in those subject areas can be the most marginalized due to the terminology used to classify them.

Librarian B points to library classes as a way of introducing the topic of ethics to library staff.

4.3.3 Information Organization

In their research, Maurer and Shakeri have identified academic subject areas made less accessible due to the manner in which they were classified (2016, p. 214). Librarian D advocates for openness in the library, pointing out that there could be improvements in the way classifications and subject headings are formed and linked together.

4.3.3.1 cataloguing.

Melissa Adler identifies one of the most important tasks of a cataloguer as classifying library books on shelves (2017b, ix). Librarian A commented on the way books for different courses might be catalogued when more than one aspect is present. Librarian A said that reviewing the cataloguing records in relation to non-circulating items is one way to make improvements that might make those items more accessible to students.

Librarian B points to differences in terminology that arise due to the use of terms in various geographical regions. Librarian B also identified such differences in terminology as being particularly confusing in the case of students for whom English is not their first language. With regard to improvements in the catalogue record, Librarian B points to Library Management Systems that allow the cataloguer to easily replace more current terminology for inappropriate terminology.

Elizabeth Shoemaker recognizes that cataloguers have great influence over who is able to access information (Shoemaker, 2015, p. 355). Librarian C refers to the care required of the cataloguer to think about the item being catalogued and not to use the first term that comes to mind to describe the item, which might be an inappropriate term. Librarian D refers to collaborative models that allow for more openness. As cataloguing is a complex task, Librarian D considers that many of the questions around appropriate terminology should be decided prior to the cataloguing stage.

4.3.3.2 classification.

The matter of where to place books on shelves is one traditionally carried out by reference to a controlled vocabulary. Julia Marshall explains how to create a controlled vocabulary based on a hierarchal structure and then how to implement and evaluate a controlled vocabulary (2005, 120-124), (2006, pp. 53-59). Librarian C, however, clearly illustrates the importance of considering the work and using terminology other than that recommended by predetermined lists of terms.

Hope Olson writes that the way that materials have traditionally been classified prevents librarians from taking all aspects of a work into account (2001, p. 652). Librarian B elaborates that, depending upon the library's LMS, the librarian might have access to the functionality to easily swap terms in order to make works more accessible.

Melissa Adler cites the Task Force on Gay Liberation with successfully petitioning the Library of Congress to make changes to subject headings and thereby making works accessible that had previously been considered perverse (2017b, pp. 44-45).

4.3.3.3 subject heading classification.

This sub-theme arose in the interviews as an extension of the "Extra Guidance in Searching" sub-theme. Classification by subject heading goes hand-in-hand with guidance in searching because it is where the decisions about what terms to use in describing items are made. Librarian A explains that including other terms in the catalogue record of an item gives students the option to use an alternative search term, thereby increasing the student's chances of locating the required item.

Librarian B refers again to the functionality of some LMSs, which allow the cataloguer to easily change terms over to more currently accepted terms. Librarian B also voiced his discomfort with using some of the Library of Congress Subject Headings.

Librarian C reviews the process that librarians in their college use in selecting appropriate key words.

4.3.4 Inclusivity

Librarians B, C, and D stated their opinions about inclusivity as being an ongoing process toward more openness and better access. Jain and Shohne explain how the IFLA code was drafted in support of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which encourages librarians to support inclusivity by making information accessible to everyone (2020, p. 5).

4.3.4.1 diversity.

Elizabeth Shoemaker maintains that, due to the complexity of cataloguing, a code of ethics that cataloguers can refer to is needed to make information in relation to groups of varying diverse backgrounds accessible. The findings in relation to ethical frameworks is included in the theme on cataloguing ethics. The researcher has included reference to Shoemaker's article here as it is appropriate to the topic of openness and accessibility, especially in academic environments serving diverse student populations.

Hope Olson suggests that a feminist theory of cataloguing might facilitate the incorporation of linkages in the way that information is organised in order to make materials more easily accessible (2007, p. 522). All of the librarians interviewed thought that the

implementation of a feminist theory of cataloguing in academic libraries could be useful in attaining greater openness.

4.3.4.2 bias.

Caroline Criada Perez identifies biases in the design of research and the generation of data that determines how many decisions in modern society are made. Librarian A comments on how staff training can help to alleviate some of the difficulties around unconscious bias. Librarian B states that library users are also trained, in part through information literacy, to 'search around' bias in the catalogues.

Hope Olson cites areas of biases in information organization that limit access to a diverse body of information (2001, p. 639). Librarian E recounts an anecdote describing how bias has worked in some libraries to effectually censor works by at least one Irish author.

Melissa Adler states that these biases are built around social processes and then enshrined in the cataloguing process (2017a, p. 23). Librarian B talks about the negative effects that expressions of bias in the terminology librarians might use on people searching for information on sensitive topics.

4.3.4.3 vulnerable groups.

Safiya Umoja Noble identifies LIS as an area that can benefit from feminist and cultural studies to influence the way that information is classified and accessed (2018, pp. 138-139). Again, Librarian B states the position of the effects of changing terminology. Librarian C acknowledges that students in their college do, indeed, look for materials on topics that address matter of race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Feedback from the interviews reflected an awareness of the need to incorporate greater inclusivity in cataloguing and classification. The researcher would venture to state that there is an awareness of the need to advocate for diversity, even outside of the academic libraries within which the librarians that were interviewed work. Clearly, the inability to access information for these vulnerable groups has far reaching consequences.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

The researcher found out quite explicitly how academic librarians in some of Dublin's private, third level colleges implement cataloguing ethics. There is an acute awareness amongst all of the academic librarians that were interviewed of the need for inclusion regarding access to information in their libraries. This was expressed in relation to the training that is given to staff to be aware of unconscious bias and to advocate against bias. It was also expressed through the way that the librarians that were interviewed conduct themselves as library professionals on a daily basis.

The librarians that were interviewed all voiced their roles as advocates for library ethics and for ethics in cataloguing. One of the librarians expressed ideas around lobbying the Library of Congress to use more appropriate terminology. There was a recognition that a change toward greater inclusivity is a slow process. At the same time, it had been acknowledged in several of the interviews that more is required i.e. something more akin to the activist approach the researcher noticed from the literature review. It was also acknowledged in the interviews that the development of an ethical framework in advance of the cataloguing stage would assist librarians. The task of cataloguing is complex, and many of the librarians interviewed do not have the time to adequately addressing some of the ethical issues that should be taken into consideration.

The role of the academic librarian is paramount in tackling issues that arise in relation to the ability of students to access the wide range of information that they require. There is the obvious influence of the cataloguing librarian. The role of the academic librarian in assisting students with myriad questions was clearly outlined in most of the interviews. The academic librarian also occupies the position to assist students in searching and, thereby, increasing the chances that the student will be able to access information, whatever the topic. The provision of library classes was also included as a way to ensure that students attained a sufficient level of information literacy and an ability to 'search around' biases that may exist in the organisation of information.

The librarians that were interviewed were forthcoming about the way that information is organised in their libraries. Overall, there is a strong professional ethic amongst the librarians around organising information. The endeavour here is to maximise inclusivity, openness and access to information. Interviews with all of the librarians covered the choice of terminology in great detail. Most of the materials relied upon by the researcher in the literature review were written from the American perspective. The development of the Library of Congress Subject Headings arose out of the philosophical assumptions that were prevalent in America at the turn of the last century. LCSHs are used to some extent in Ireland, however, so are not irrelevant in the Irish context. Also, issues of inclusivity and diversity are pertinent in the Irish context. Also, there are vulnerable groups and, unfortunately, bias in Ireland. An ethical framework developed in the Irish context could assist academic librarians in Ireland to continue to actively promote access to information for everybody.

4.5 Conclusion

The interviews with some of Dublin's academic librarians has resulted in the researcher answering the question about how cataloguing ethics is implemented in their college libraries. All of the themes that arose in the literature review were addressed in the context of libraries in some of the private, third level colleges in Dublin. In terms of the librarians that were interviewed, more inclusivity and better access to information went beyond information organisation alone. The role that the academic librarian plays in assisting students to access information is also crucial.

The researcher recommends that further research be conducted to ascertain if private, third level colleges in Dublin could benefit from implementing an ethical, feminist theory of cataloguing and classification with a view to making access to materials pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity available to everyone. One potential problem with this study is there was not time to conduct in-depth interviews with more than five librarians. Further studies might be conducted using a mixed methods approach, the quantitative aspects of which might provide the researcher with a broader data corpus.

The qualitative nature of the study suited the research, which was intended to acquire an in-depth perception of the experiences of academic librarians in Dublin. As the researcher commenced the study from the interpretivist philosophical perspective, it is the actions of people from which social reality is developed. This qualitative research, accompanied by a thematic analysis of the data enabled the researcher to develop a wide understanding of the topic of cataloguing ethics in the context of some private, third level colleges in Dublin.

4.6 Weaknesses of the Research

From a methodological perspective, this research does not take into consideration the entire population of academic librarians in private, third level colleges in Dublin. The next step would be to conduct a mixed-methods study to find out if it would be appropriate to apply the findings of the current research on a broader level throughout Dublin.

The research could result in the application of ethical, cataloguing principles to a framework document designed to assist librarians in their duties and to inform library users of their intellectual freedoms.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Dear Librarian:

I trust that you are well. I am attending Dublin Business School, where I am currently studying for the MSc in Information and Library Management.

As part of my studies at DBS, I am researching the relationship between information organisation and inequality from the perspective of some Irish academic libraries. I understand that you are the Librarian at ___ library at ___ College, and I would like to interview you in relation to my research. I intend to conduct the interview via Zoom and would not anticipate same to last for longer than one hour. The interview will be recorded. The recording of the interview will be stored on my personal computer and will be destroyed after it has been used for the purposes of the research

My dissertation will comply with Dublin Business School's guidelines for conducting ethical research. I have copied Mr. Trevor Haugh in on this email, as he is my dissertation supervisor.

Attached is a list of questions that I would like to hear from you about. Also attached is the Participant Information Sheet and the Informed Consent Form. Would you be so kind as to sign the consent form and send the signed form to me by return email?

Please contact me by return email or by calling me on my mobile at ___ to confirm your availability and so that we can arrange a date and time for the interview. I would be ever so grateful if you would agree to participate in my research.

I trust that the above is in order and I look forward to your reply.

Sincere regards,

Appendix B

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS**PROJECT TITLE**

Information Organisation: exploring a potential role for the academic librarian in the promotion of social justice.

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the management of information organisation in your college library. My name is Christopher Berbig and I am an MSc student at Dublin Business School.

The research will evaluate the manner in which information is organized in Irish academic libraries. The paper will endeavour to identify any areas in Irish academic libraries where the employment of an ethical, feminist theory of cataloguing could: (i) highlight existing connections among specific topics and (ii) assist cataloguers in organizing materials in a manner that would enable all library users to gain access to information without impediment, regardless of the topic.

The following are references to some journal articles you might find to be of interest.

Mai, J.-E. (2016) 'Marginalization and Exclusion: Unraveling Systemic Bias in Classification', *Knowledge Organization*, 43(5), pp. 324-530. Library and Information Science Source, EBSCOhost [Online] <https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2016-5-324> (Accessed: 29 January 2021).

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WHAT WILL HAPPEN

In this study, you will be asked to participate in an online interview, which will be recorded for the purposes of this research project only. During the interview you will be requested to discuss your experiences working in the college. Specifically, you will be asked to discuss the steps that you take as an Acquisitions Librarian and/or as a Cataloguing Librarian in

acquiring and cataloguing materials. Any data collected will be destroyed after it has been used i.e. after any appeals process has expired or after the publication of the work.

TIME COMMITMENT

The study typically takes up to one hour and may involve two separate sessions.

PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn / destroyed.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you. The data that is collected will be used in a Masters dissertation and may eventually be published and possibly presented at a conference. There will not be information used by which you will be identifiable.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I or / and Mr. Trevor Haugh will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor by email at trevor.haugh@dbs.ie or by telephone at 01 4170611.

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE:

Information Organisation: exploring a potential role for the academic librarian in the promotion of social justice.

PROJECT SUMMARY:

To conduct interviews with librarians in order to evaluate the manner in which information is organized in their college libraries in relation to the topic of diversity.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

Participant's signature

Participant's Name (Printed)

Christopher Berbig

Student Name (Printed)

Student Name signature

Date

Appendix D

Ethical Cataloguing: exploring a potential role for the academic librarian in the promotion of social justice

1. Librarians offer bibliographic advice to students seeking information on topics. Is there any topic which would motivate you to offer some additional advice alongside bibliographic advice?
2. What would the experience of students in your college be like in accessing materials on topics pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity?
3. With reference to question 2, do library staff regularly give additional advice to students who are seeking information on topics that pertain to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity?
4. Further to question 3 and in addition to such additional advice, what other steps would a librarian normally take to meet the information needs of library users who are seeking information pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity?
5. Are materials on race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity normally placed within any particular bibliographic classifications?
6. With reference to question 5, why are these classifications normally chosen?
7. Does your college libraries normally use key words and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSHs) when classifying materials?
8. With reference to question 7, how effective is the use of key words and LCSHs in locating materials in a college library, especially in relation to topics that pertain to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity.
9. Also with reference to question 7 but if key words and LCHSs aren't used, how are materials in your library classified?
10. Would it be possible to use a more inclusive system of information organisation?
11. In relation to question 10, how is this achieved in your college library?
12. Do library staff refer to any ethical frameworks in the context of cataloguing and bibliographic classification?
13. In relation to question 12 and if there are ethical frameworks to which library staff refer in the context of cataloguing and bibliographic classification, which ones are referred to?
14. Also in relation to question 12 but if there is not an ethical framework to which library staff refer, how are any ethical decisions that arise regarding cataloguing and bibliographic classification decided upon?
15. Could academic libraries benefit from in-house studies being conducted in the area of ethical awareness?
16. How does your academic library typically advocate for library ethics?
17. Would your academic library benefit from implementing an ethical, feminist theory of cataloguing and classification with a view to making access to materials pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, transgender, age, ableism and ethnicity available to everyone?