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UP School of Library and Information Studies  
Quirino Ave., UP Diliman, Quezon City 1101  
Metro Manila, Philippines  
(+632) 8981 8500 local 2869-71

# Overcoming Challenges in Teaching and Mentorship in LIS Research Education in the Philippines

Elijah John F. Dar Juan  
Associate and Issue Editor, PhJLIS

Iyra S. Buenrostro  
Editor-in-Chief, PhJLIS

The ability to conduct research is one of the common competencies expected of library and information professionals. Research is considered the lifeblood of a discipline, allowing the field of study to move forward and adapt to the ever-changing needs of our society and communities. Library and information science (LIS) is certainly not exempt from such change as a dynamic and interdisciplinary field. Another vital motivation behind developing research skills in LIS is that research is fundamental to offering information services and managing information organizations. Librarians offer research assistance/consulting to their clients (research not in the fact-finding aspect but in the context of generating new knowledge by applying methods to gather and analyze data) (Katz, 2002; Tyckoson, 2020). Research enhances practice by evaluating processes and resources when offering information services (Moran & Morner, 2018).

Aside from published texts that enumerate the expected skills of information professionals, organizations such as associations of librarians and government regulatory bodies prescribe standards for librarians, either as a requirement or as a recommendation. ALA's Core Competences of Librarianship (2023) has item "7. Research and Evidence-Based Practice" (p. 8), while CILIP (2021) includes research in its Professional Knowledge and Skills Base (PKSB). Though not explicitly mentioned, research skills and competencies are blended within the National Competency-Based Standards for Filipino Librarians (NCBSFL; PRBFL Resolution No. 03, s. 2015).

To support the development of research competency among LIS professionals, LIS schools in the Philippines adhere to local standards in teaching research, among other areas of LIS. In

Philippine LIS higher education, the inclusion of research courses into the curricula is stipulated in the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum (CHED Memorandum Order No. 24, s. 2015) as a requirement for LIS students to have the ability to conduct research and participate in knowledge-building. As a requirement for graduation, among the LIS schools in the Philippines, most of the research courses mainly focus on research methods and are taken during the last or final years of the students in their degree programs. This requirement not only underscores the importance of research but also places significant pressure on faculty and students.

The UP School of Library and Information Studies has several research courses in its undergraduate and graduate programs. The BLIS program requires qualitative (LIS 191) and quantitative research (LIS 192) methods, each offered as three-unit courses. The student must also take LIS 199 Research in Library and Information Science to develop their research proposal for the LIS 200 Thesis course. In the 2021 revisions of graduate programs, LIS 299 Foundations of Information Research (earlier course title: Research Methodology) prepares MSLIS students for the LIS 300 Thesis course. To instill mastery, one research methods elective is required in the MSLIS program, either LIS 299.1 on quantitative methods or LIS 299.2 on qualitative methods.

As LIS educators, the main question that we usually ask ourselves is, “How do we teach research to our students?” We design and perform pedagogical approaches because we want our students to develop particular research competencies and experiences – and while it is already challenging to conduct research and teach research, in recent years, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought even more challenges and issues that both the faculty and students need to confront.

One of the PhJLIS editors was able to have brief conversations with LIS faculty members in

different schools in the Philippines. According to some LIS faculty members, the most common problems they and the students encounter are the difficulty to finish their research on time and the faculty to advise all the students. There is also a lack of students’ exposure to methods, diversity of topics and theories, and resources, and also the faculty’s lack of actual research experience. In this situation, both the faculty and students are sometimes left with almost no choice – because, one, research is a requirement for graduation, and two – the faculty are required to teach and at the same time conduct their research. While these experiences are not conclusive, these are nevertheless sound reflections of what LIS schools are facing in the country regarding teaching and conducting research.

Aside from these, a common challenge in research teaching and mentoring includes the faculty’s knowledge of LIS as a field of study and the research areas that can be covered. Research teachers should have sufficient knowledge so that students may be guided well enough to address the intricacies and nuances required of research inquiry. As faculty teaching research, it is expected that we already have the research knowledge and skills, and there are times when those knowledge and skills are tested due to the topics submitted by students. We, research teachers, should embrace lifelong learning as this is critical in our ways to contribute to the growth and expansion of our field of study.

The challenges with teaching research in LIS were compounded by the inevitable switch to remote learning delivery during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The curriculum and syllabi were revised, learning outcomes were redefined, and new strategies were developed to ensure that students could continue their education despite the disruptions caused by the pandemic. These adjustments included creating study guides, course packs, and other materials that students could access asynchronously, catering primarily to those with unstable internet connections or limited

access to technologies. While we are now almost back to our pre-pandemic ways, these study guides and approaches that we developed during the pandemic are still being utilized for the benefit of our students.

It is also important to provide enough emotional support to our students. As teachers, we try to be more understanding of our students' situation and their concerns, especially in satisfying the research requirements and their worries about whether they will be able to conduct their research or even graduate on time. We tried to assure them by simplifying things, without sacrificing the quality of their outputs. Students have different skills and mental abilities; thus, we should be more forbearing in dealing with those needing more time and guidance.

LIS teachers should be mindful of their role in facilitating student learning. We should be present throughout the process, from when the students acquire knowledge of research methods and techniques to the actual research process (from conceptualizing the research problem to writing the research report). As much as possible, the students should not be simply left on their own. A considerable amount of guidance should be given to the students to keep them on track. Research guidance should strike a balance between giving the students the freedom to decide on their research direction and ensuring that they will not go astray and make unnecessary mistakes.

Protocols and procedures should be established for student research advising. The roles and responsibilities of students and advisers should be defined, expectations should be made apparent, and both parties should understand and exercise such roles effectively. Mechanisms should also be in place for future research utilization (e.g., submission to journals or conferences, co-authorship, etc.) and addressing disagreements between students and research advisers, if there would be any.

Faculty members get to be mentored, too. As stated earlier, faculty members teaching research and advising student research should continuously learn. We acknowledge that utilizing books and learning resources has its potency; more than that, faculty-to-faculty mentorship could also substantiate the experience. At UP SLIS, there were consultation sessions with visiting professors Diljit Singh, Michael Olsson, Maureen Henninger, and Michelle Caswell, to name a few, to flesh out research topics and agendas and develop strategies for academic publishing.

Peer-to-peer coaching and mentoring among faculty members can take in so many forms. At times, even informal conversations in the faculty room could lead to discussions about research problems and methods that eventually lead to collaboration for co-authorship. Structures can be set up to catalyze research activity, such as conducting research clinics, workshops, and similar sessions, organizing research interest groups and research laboratories, and reaching out to counterparts in other departments and universities to discuss and cooperate for research.

Indeed, there are many challenges in teaching and mentoring our students in conducting LIS research. As teachers, we should always find and innovate ways to improve ourselves as educators and researchers – and at the same time help our students appreciate not only the end benefits of research but also the experience of engaging in the research process itself.

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# A Scoping Review of Health Sciences Librarianship Research in the Philippines

Simon Philip R. Sacramento  
Postgraduate Intern, East Avenue Medical Center

Alma B. Colarina  
Chief Librarian, University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center, Inc. (UERMMMCI)

Danzielo-Auristelo T. Lagustan  
Chief Librarian, World Citi Colleges, Inc.

## Abstract

*Health sciences librarianship is a specialization focusing on medical, clinical, and scientific data in support of healthcare functions, including clinical decision-making, medical research, and medical education. Being tied to a scientific field, health sciences librarianship handles rapidly changing information and information needs, which presents a challenge for the services offered by the profession, as well as an opportunity to discuss theoretical and professional ideas in research forums. In the Philippines, there are a number of avenues through which health sciences librarianship research can be produced and disseminated. Despite these avenues, there has been no in-depth review of the types and directions of health sciences librarianship research in the country. This study aims to establish the current research coverage of health sciences librarianship in the Philippines. This is done via a scoping review. The findings indicate that there has been an uptick in the number of health sciences librarianship research in the country in the past two decades, though many of these studies are unpublished theses. Descriptive studies via surveys remain the go-to methodology of choice, being practical, easy to execute, and extracting data relevant to practitioners of health sciences librarianship. Subject areas of interest are very practical, with health sciences education, library materials/collections, user studies, and the status of the profession as the top subjects of research. Despite this, new ground is broken regarding novel topics, and more diverse methodologies are being applied to research in the country.*

**Keywords:** Health Sciences Librarianship, Research, Scoping Review, Philippines

## INTRODUCTION

Health sciences librarianship is a specialized track of librarianship focusing on medical, clinical, and scientific data in support of a variety of healthcare-related functions, including clinical decision-making, medical research, and medical education (Medical Library Association, 2023). According to Shedlock (2014), the term “health sciences librarianship” (p. 4) is the preferred term over medical librarianship (which is instead used as a shorthand) due to the term encompassing the practice more completely, including academic, clinical, and all other allied health contexts. Being tied to a scientific field, health sciences librarianship fundamentally

handles rapidly changing information and information needs (Shen, 2005), and this presents a challenge for the services offered by the profession, as well as a ripe opportunity to discuss theoretical and professional ideas in various research forums.

In the Philippines, most health sciences libraries are academic in nature (Masalinto et al., 2015). In addition, a few higher education institutions offer health sciences librarianship courses (Santos, 2017). These few courses and institutions are avenues to discuss the nuances of the profession and explore research ideas (especially at the graduate level), which

may eventually lead to publication or at least comply with research requirements by producing theses and research papers.

Other than pursuing formal academic degrees, various organizations and forums encouraging the production and dissemination of health sciences librarianship research also exist locally. These include the Medical and Health Libraries Association of the Philippines (MAHLAP), the Philippine Librarians Association Inc. (PLAI), and the UP School of Library and Information Studies (UP SLIS) through its Philippine Journal of Librarianship and Information Studies (PhJLIS). In addition, the Health Research and Development Information Network (HERDIN) database also provides access to health sciences research, which includes articles on health sciences libraries. Outside of these local forums, international publications and conferences are also avenues for local researchers to disseminate their studies.

Given the expansive nature of the profession and the existing academic and research forums available to Philippine health sciences librarians (and other interested parties), a pressing question is asked by the authors of this study: “What is the current scope of research about health sciences librarianship in the Philippine context?” The answer to this question can guide future researchers to the areas that need more studies and give LIS educators and students ideas on where to focus their scholarly efforts.

## METHODOLOGY

This study is a scoping review that aims to establish the scope of health sciences librarianship in the Philippines, published locally and abroad. This was accomplished by searching various databases focusing on published research (Google Scholar, PubMed, EBSCO, HERDIN, and ScienceDirect) alongside a brief discussion of gray literature (e.g., OPACs of local universities with LIS theses) and data concerning health sciences librarianship in the Philippine context. The retrieved results were screened, and the involved researchers selected articles for inclusion by consensus.

### Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The review of de Lannoy et al. (2023), which reviewed the scope of published studies on children’s and youth’s outdoor play in Canada, is a methodological reference for this study. The inclusion criteria for this study are peer-reviewed articles on health sciences librarianship in either English or

Filipino, from Filipino authors, or works that cover the Philippine context or a Philippine population. The articles included were from January 1980 to August 2023. In the context of this study, health sciences librarianship studies are defined by the subject classification scheme utilized by Gore et al. (2009) and developed by Dimitroff (1992), including all the articles under the study’s broad categories of general, professional concerns, theoretical, applied, and related fields.

Of special mention is the explicit exclusion of topics not directly related to health sciences librarianship, libraries, and librarians; this includes the field of health informatics and health information technology. While these fields are significantly related to the topic of interest, dealing with the study of information as it relates to healthcare and the technology that assists the use of information in healthcare, respectively (Hersh, 2009), the researchers view the topics as related, but not the same as the subject of the scoping review. The fields mentioned may be more appropriately addressed in another study or via a more extensive scope, unifying review.

All types of published articles, including reviews, letters to the editor, and commentaries, were included in this study. Studies were excluded if they did not come from a Filipino author, did not study the Philippine setting, and did not focus on topics within health sciences librarianship.

### Search Strategy

The search strategy was documented following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis Extension for Scoping Review (PRISMA-ScR) checklist (Tricco et al., 2018). The authors created a flow diagram to document and preserve the integrity and reproducibility of the search process, especially in the results and discussion stage.

The search strategy was generated by the authors, who are experienced health sciences librarians. Databases searched include EBSCO Academic Search, Science Direct, PubMed, and HERDIN Plus. For this scoping review, Google Scholar was included as a database, a practice reaffirmed by the paper of Rethlefsen and Page (2022). This is done to expand the search into studies not otherwise included in the available mainstream databases (Haddaway, Collins, Coughlin, & Kirk, 2015) and to cover articles regardless of where it is indexed, as many local

journals are not indexed in Scopus and other citation databases.

The University of the Philippines Diliman Tuklas Discovery Service was used to search for gray literature and unpublished theses. The UP SLIS has health sciences librarianship courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Santos, 2017). As such, it produces research on the subject area from faculty and students.

### Selection of Studies

For the selection of studies, studies were included via the subject classification system utilized in the study of Gore et al. (2009), which itself was adapted from Dimitroff (1992); specific examples include library administration and management, technical services such as cataloging and acquisitions, library user behavior and information science theory.

Studies were also grouped according to year of publication and methodology as determined by the

researchers from the studies themselves (as opposed to adapting the categorization of previous studies). From the studies included, areas and types of studies lacking in the literature were identified.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total number of articles retrieved from the six databases included totaled 80,503. In these studies, duplicates were removed, alongside the automatic removal of all but the first 300 articles from Google Scholar, as recommended by Haddaway et al. (2015). After the initial removal of articles before screening ( $n = 79,847$ ), 656 articles underwent screening, with their abstracts being assessed for eligibility. After removing articles with irrelevant abstracts ( $n = 603$ ), 53 were left for full retrieval, though some articles could not be retrieved ( $n = 2$ ). Of the 51 articles remaining, articles not deemed to cover the scope of the study were removed ( $n = 19$ ), leaving 32 articles to be included in the review. See Table 1 and Figure 1 for the search strategies and the flow of screening for the scoping review.

**Table 1**

*Search Terms and Number of Retrieved Articles (N = 80,503)*

Search Term	<i>Ebsco</i>	<i>Science Direct</i>	<i>PubMed</i>	<i>HERDIN Plus</i>	<i>Google Scholar</i>	UP Diliman Tuklas
Health science librarian AND “Philippines”	6	56	55	0	37,100	36
Health librarianship AND medical librarianship AND Philippines	3	40	37	0	22,300	13
Librarianship AND Medical AND Philippines	3	58	50	0	20,700	18
Librarianship <sup>a</sup>	—	—	—	1	—	—
Librarian <sup>a</sup>	—	—	—	4	—	—
“Medical” OR “Health” OR “Health Sciences” AND “Librarian” OR “Librarianship” OR “Library” OR “Libraries” <sup>b</sup>	—	—	—	—	—	—

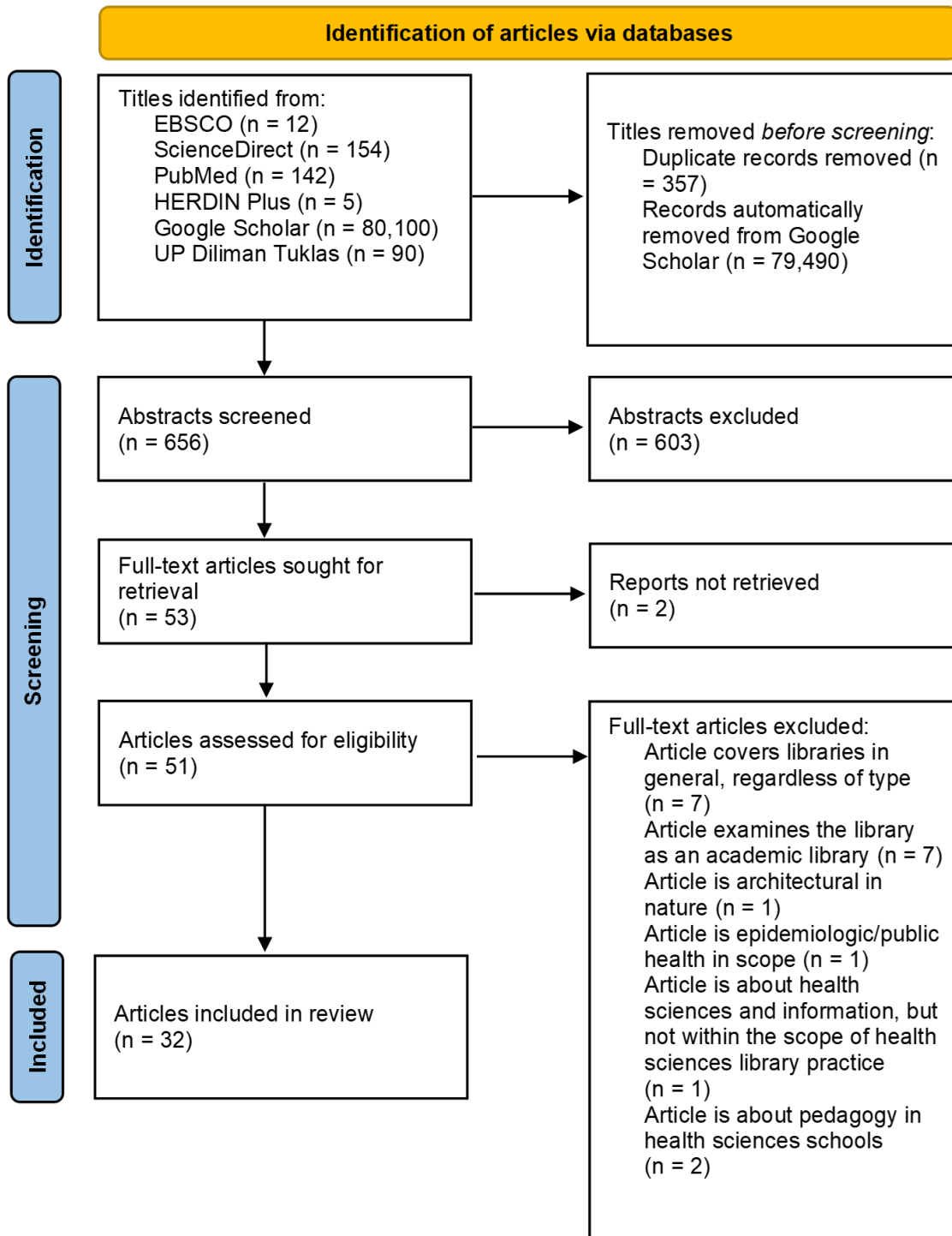
*Note.* This table lists the search terms that form the overall search strategy of this paper.

<sup>a</sup> Due to the failure to retrieve articles with more specific search terms, broad search terms were utilized for the local database HERDIN, which yielded results. <sup>b</sup> The search term was used specifically for UP Diliman’s Tuklas, as there was no need to specify “Philippines” because all studies published in UP automatically meet the inclusion criteria. In addition, dates were limited from 1980 to 2023, and the resource type was limited to “theses.”

## Retrieved Studies

Figure 1

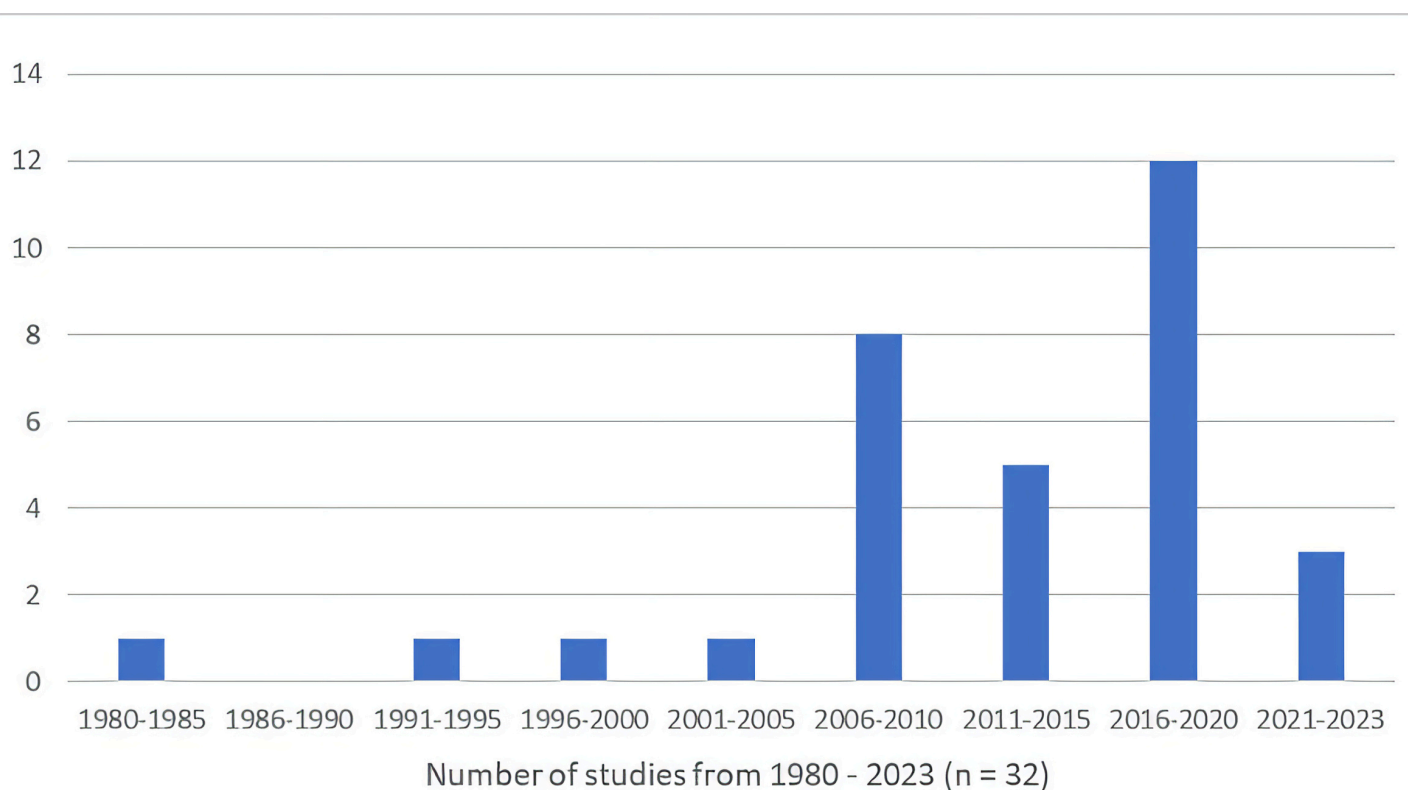
PRISMA-ScR Flow Diagram of the Identification, Screening, and Inclusion of Studies in the Scoping Review



## Characteristics of Retrieved Studies

**Figure 2**

*Number of Health Sciences Librarianship Studies per Five Years, 1980-2023*



*Note.* This graph illustrates the number of studies in five-year clusters.

Figure 2 illustrates the number of Philippine health sciences librarianship research produced from 1980 to 2023; this includes theses searched from the UP Diliman Tuklas ( $n = 15$ ). The remaining 18 studies are published articles searchable within databases from a mixture of local and international journals.

A noticeable trend is an increase in the number of publications from the clusters of 2006 onwards; the researchers hypothesize that this may be related to the establishment of undergraduate health sciences librarianship courses in UP SLIS from 2002 onwards (Santos, 2017), which gave way to the formal training of students, and eventual production of health sciences librarianship theses to fulfill the component for the undergraduate degree. Indeed, 13 of the 32 studies (40.63%) included in the review are theses published in UP SLIS from 2002 onwards, which presents an interesting trend that warrants further investigation in future studies.

**Table 2**

*Number of Articles per Study Design (n = 32)*

Study Design	Number of Articles, $n$ (%)
Review Articles	3 (9.38%)
Bibliometric, Content and Citation Analysis	3 (9.38%)
Descriptive - Survey	13 (40.63%)
Editorial, Opinion, and Perspective Articles	2 (6.25%)
Case Study	2 (6.25%)
Collection Analysis	3 (9.38%)
Historical Articles	1 (3.13%)
Analytic - Cross-Sectional Studies	1 (3.13%)
Descriptive - Mixed Method Qualitative and Quantitative	4 (12.5%)

The articles were analyzed to identify their study methodology, either through explicit statements by the author or evaluation by the researchers. Descriptive - Surveys, which consist of distributing quantitative or qualitative surveys and stating and analyzing the results, dominated the study designs, consisting of 13 studies (40.63%). Descriptive - Mixed Method studies were the second most common study designs, consisting of four studies (12.5%). More than half of the studies scoped by this review are descriptive, likely due to the applied nature of health sciences librarianship. Research questions, such as job satisfaction, the influence of LIS subjects on job performance, and the usefulness of a library collection, are easily answered by asking the concerned subjects of the study via a survey. Inferences on the data collected, however, are not made in these studies, as they do not aim to definitively establish a correlation between variables of the study.

The third most common study design is a three-way tie between 1) Collection Analysis, 2) Bibliometric, Citation and Content Analysis, and 3) Review Articles, at three (9.38%) each. These types of studies play to the strength of a librarian, as they involve the retrieval, organization, and analysis of literature, which are all library functions. Furthermore, these study designs are practical because they are not resource-intensive and do not require the distribution of any survey or contacting outside responders (except for hard-to-retrieve articles), making these types of studies relatively easy to pull off.

The second least common study designs are Editorial, Opinion, and Perspective Articles, as well as Case Studies, at two articles (6.25%) each. The former is somewhat similar to a review article, except the literature is used to primarily support a position on a certain professional/practice issue; these articles, while valuable, are not considered “true” studies, though they do present the groundwork for theorizing or further research to prove the arguments presented. Meanwhile, case studies are intensive explorations of a particular experience or practice of interest; usually, these are novel in the context of the study. This is fulfilled by the two included studies, as they explore embedded clinical librarianship, a relatively new modality of health sciences librarianship in the Philippine context.

Lastly, the least common study designs are Historical Articles and Analytic Cross-Sectional studies, with only one (3.13%) per study type. Historical articles intersect archives and records management, LIS, and

**Table 3**  
*Number of Articles per Topic/Subject Area (n = 32)*

Topic/Subject Area	Number of Articles, n (%)
Other Related Fields	1 (3.13%)
Education for Librarianship	7 (21.88%)
Library Users	5 (15.63%)
Cooperation or Networks	1 (3.13%)
Status of the Profession	5 (15.63%)
Technical Services	3 (9.38%)
Materials or Collections	6 (18.75%)
History of Librarianship or Libraries	1 (3.13%)
Structure of Knowledge or Information	3 (9.38%)

*Note.* The study topic/subject area is derived from Gore et al. (2009) and Dimitroff (1992). The categories included are the ones with actual studies; subject areas with no studies will be discussed further in a separate analysis.

the practice of history; such articles require multidisciplinary training and perspectives and thus may not be accessible as a methodology to the typical health sciences librarian. Nonetheless, these types of articles provide valuable insight and contextualize the practice of the profession, allowing deeper context-aware analyses in future studies. Analytic cross-sectional studies, which use inferential statistics to analyze correlations between variables, are as uncommon as historical studies, probably due to the added level (and depth) of analysis compared to the typical and more common descriptive study.

Examining the subject areas covered by the included studies, Education for Librarianship is the most common topic for health sciences librarianship studies, featuring as the main topic in seven articles (21.88%). Education for Librarianship is a broad area covering competencies, continuing professional development, training, and LIS curriculum. It is a topic of interest for all practitioners, including academics and faculty, who are likely to write and publish on the topic due to the nature of their work.

Following Education, Materials and Collections is the second most common topic for health sciences librarianship research in the Philippines, with six

articles (18.75%). Collections and library materials form the core of a library's performance, directly linked to user satisfaction and all library functions such as storage, retrieval, and preservation. In performing these functions, librarians may be compelled to document their experience, benchmark/compare them to other libraries, and find ways to strengthen their collections; these can all be translated into publishable articles, utilizing data already available.

Library Users and Status of the Profession occupy the third most common subject areas, each having five articles (15.63%). Library user data is an almost universal feature of library and information services, being the basis for budget and resource allocation, as well as a measure of the impact of a library (and a determinant of its existence in some cases). The conversion of user data and statistics into publications is easily done for library professionals. On the other hand, the prominence of literature on the status of the profession stems from the universality of its experience; the topics of salaries and job satisfaction are easy to write about and are important to give professionals insight into the state of the profession and what can be done to improve it and their personal status.

Theoretical articles within Structure of Knowledge or Information and applied articles on Technical Services rank fourth in prominence in publications, having three articles (9.38%) per topic. Structure of Knowledge or Information covers theses and articles that utilize content and bibliometric analysis to explore common themes in collections of literature. Bibliometrics, citation, and content analysis are the realm of LIS professionals and are a particular specialty of the profession. The process of this study is rigorous and time-consuming and may not be a practical publication, especially in those not theoretically and practically grounded in the methods of these types of studies.

In contrast to bibliometric analyses, most librarians provide technical services, especially in the field of health sciences librarianship; this covers functions like search strategy formulation and embedded/clinical librarianship services. Despite the prominence of such functions in health sciences librarianship, it is a curiosity that it has a low proportion of published articles. However, other (non-published) avenues for knowledge sharing, such as training programs, conference presentations, and workshops, may contain technical services as a topic due to being seen as a practical rather than an academic endeavor.

The least common subject areas for research include Cooperation or Networks, History of Libraries and Librarianship, and Other Related Fields, with one article (3.13%) each. The first topic concerns partnerships, consortia, and professional organizations. While all librarians are part of these structures, publications on this topic are lacking, which is both a weakness and an opportunity for health information science professionals looking to expand their knowledge in the field.

History of libraries and librarianship (with an emphasis on health sciences librarianship), as well as literature on other related fields (e.g., health information seeking behavior, consumer health, etc.), are frontier areas for research, and the presence of one study each for these categories presents a picture of starting development. As the field is relatively young in the country, more studies on novel (and not entirely within health sciences librarianship) topics such as health IT and informatics, clinical librarianship, and historical perspectives for Philippine health sciences librarianship practice are forthcoming to be written about by and for health information professionals.

#### Analysis: Areas Lacking in Studies

**Table 4**  
*Subject Areas/Topics Lacking in Studies*

Topic/Subject Area
Public Services
Other Applied
Publishing
Other Professional Concerns
Dissemination or Retrieval of Information
Administration and Management
Systems
International Librarianship
Organizations
Organization of Knowledge or Information
General Theoretical
Ethics

The subject areas without studies, as per Dimitroff (1992), are highlighted in this section; except for the other applied and other professional concerns (covering miscellaneous/loosely defined aspects of LIS practice and LIS professional life), most topics are regarded as more prominent, concerned beyond the practice of health sciences librarianship on the individual level. Management, organizations, dissemination or retrieval of information, theoretical foundations, ethics, public service, and special topics (i.e., international librarianship, publishing) are not immediate individual practiced-based topics but point to a grander scope. These topics concern managing the whole library and organizations, theorizing on ways to practice the profession, setting ethical standards grounded on philosophy, and other higher-level discourse.

With few exceptions, most published studies cover applied and practical knowledge. This is not to say that Philippine health sciences librarianship research is lacking or deficient in any way; instead, the identification of these potential areas of research points to exciting opportunities for the future, as articles on these topics will slowly but surely shape and define the professional practice in the country. Publicly run health libraries, librarians dabbling in health informatics and software, Filipino culture-based management principles, and other novel ideas are on the horizon for researchers in the profession.

#### **Analysis: Gray Literature**

Technically, all retrieved articles that are not published journal articles are considered gray literature; in the context of this study and its search strategies, this covers theses retrieved from the UP Diliman Tuklas search engine. The gray literature retrieved for this study is diverse, ranging from the evaluation of health sciences periodicals, the influence of health sciences courses on the career of LIS graduates, and the evaluation of a local database (HERDIN), among others. Gray literature, while valuable, is seldom referenced in the building of academic discourse, as they are difficult to retrieve.

Other topics excluded in this study could arguably be considered under health sciences librarianship or, more appropriately, in the related concepts/fields of health informatics, information studies, scientific librarianship, and health information science. This includes numerous studies on the creation of medical thesauri and the study of health information seeking behavior outside of the context of libraries, librarians, and library resources. These topics are related but

better understood under a broader label, such as “health informatics,” “health information science,” or “health information studies,” being concerned with contexts beyond libraries and librarianship.

A study by Celajes (2017) is of particular interest: a content and bibliometric analysis of theses on health sciences librarianship. Unlike the current study, Celajes (2017) includes the medical thesauri as the bulk of the studies analyzed. In addition, Celajes included 71 studies in her review, which is a larger size than the scoping review done in this study; this discrepancy is primarily due to the decision to exclude studies that involve creating medical thesauri from this research (of which there are 50 in the aforementioned study), as they are related, but not explicitly of, the domain of health sciences librarianship.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It can be concluded from the data gathered that there has been an uptick in the number of health sciences librarianship research in the country in the past two decades, though many of these studies are unpublished theses. Descriptive studies via surveys remain the go-to methodology of choice, being practical, easy to execute, and extracting data relevant to practitioners of health sciences librarianship. Subject areas of interest are very practical, with health sciences education, library materials/collections, user studies, and the status of the profession as the top subjects of health sciences librarianship research.

Despite the practicality that seems to dominate health sciences librarianship research in the country, there is hope, as new ground has been broken in the past two decades of research. Historical studies on the cholera outbreaks utilizing archival materials, clinical librarianship services in a neurointensive setting, and health literacy education concerning the recent pandemic are just some of the topics explored in recent local literature. With the illumination of the topics needing more exploration, it is hoped that further, newer studies will be conducted in these areas and beyond to advance the quality and identity of Philippine health sciences librarians.

Recommendations for this study are two-pronged, concerning recommendations for future studies and for researchers/LIS professionals. For future studies, it is recommended that researchers define (as many fields broadly encompass, or are encompassed, by health sciences librarianship) and then scope fields,

such as health information behavior, health informatics, health information science, health information technology, and even distantly related fields like bioinformatics and medical informatics. Shedding the traditional library context and expanding into these areas of study, alongside collaboration with professionals within and outside the field, can strengthen the quality of reviews and integrate librarians into the greater biomedical and scientific community.

For researchers and LIS professionals, publication of studies on health sciences librarianship and related fields should be sought, as many studies are still considered “gray literature.” With the expansion of our body of knowledge, health sciences librarianship in the country may be able to evolve into information science, unbounded by but still respecting the traditional context of the health sciences library.

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#### APPENDIX

##### List of Articles Included in the Scoping Review

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES



**Simon Philip R. Sacramento** is a licensed librarian, graduating with a BLIS degree from UP SLIS in 2019, and garnering Top 5 in the 2021 Librarians' Licensure Exam. He is also a medical intern, graduating with a Doctor of Medicine degree from UERMMMC in 2023. He is currently a postgraduate intern at the East Avenue Medical Center. In addition, he was a part-time clinical librarian under a doctor from the Neurocritical Care Unit of St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City, and also does freelance work and volunteers for projects in the areas of health sciences and information research. His research interests include information science, health sciences, and health informatics. His personal and professional advocacy is to connect the fields of information science and the health sciences in order to improve the access and impact of the services in both fields.

Email: [sacramentosimon@yahoo.com.ph](mailto:sacramentosimon@yahoo.com.ph)

**Alma B. Colarina** is currently the Chief Librarian of the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center, Inc. (UERMMMCI). She is a graduate of the Bachelor in Library and Information Science program at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines and a holder of a Master in Library and Information Science program from the same university. She is a licensed librarian and was a former faculty member of the BLIS program at PUP. She was awarded as one of the ten (10) exemplar employees of UERMMMCI in 2017 for spearheading the various services and the automation of the UERM Medical Center Library.

**Danzielo-Auristelo T. Lagustan** is a licensed librarian and holds the Chief Librarian position at World Citi Colleges, Inc. WCC is an educational system with campuses in Antipolo, Nueva Ecija, and Quezon City, specializing in allied health, business, information technology, education, and hospitality management. He was the Treasurer of the Aurora Boulevard Consortium Libraries, Inc. (ABCLI) and the current Ex Officio and former President of the Medical and Health Librarians Association of the Philippines, Inc. (MAHLAP). He graduated with a

Bachelor's Degree in Secondary Education, major in Library Science at the University of Santo Tomas (UST) and a Master of Education in Library Science at the Philippine Normal University (PNU). Mr. Lagustan was certified as an ISO 9001:2015 Internal Quality Auditor and PACUCOA Accreditor for the library.

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# Uncolonized Thailand: A Historical Perspective on Modern Thai Archival Education

Naya Sucha-xaya, PhD  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Library Science, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University  
Arc of Memory Research Unit

## *Abstract*

Historical context significantly shapes archives management practices and archival education within a country. This article aims to examine how Thailand's recordkeeping traditions, both pre-modern and during the era of Western imperialism, have evolved to influence the current state of archives management and archival education in the country. By comparing the Thai context to other countries, it is found that Thailand's status as a non-colonized nation has led to relatively fragmented recordkeeping knowledge and practices. Ultimately, the study identifies essential elements learned from other countries in the region that can help address the gaps in Thailand's archival development.

**Keywords:** Archival education, Thailand, History of recordkeeping

## INTRODUCTION

As an archives educator, engaging with international perspectives through participation in international conferences presents a valuable opportunity for professional growth and knowledge exchange. In 2023, I contributed to two panels focusing on archival education. The first panel took place at the Southeast Asia Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (SARBICA) Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in November, followed by the Asia-Pacific Library and Information Education and Practice Conference (A-LIEP) conference held in Taipei, Taiwan, in December. This history, as well as other factors, formed the current situation of archival education in Thailand, which I will present in this article, along with comparisons with other experiences from countries in Southeast Asia.

## TRADITIONAL THAI RECORDKEEPING

Prior to the onset of imperialism in the 19th century, Siam maintained a traditional governance structure that encompassed a recordkeeping system akin to other kingdoms of the era. Songsan Nilkamhaeng (1974) conducted an investigation into Thai recordkeeping history as a part of her thesis, delineating its evolution across distinct historical periods. Notably, during the Sukhothai period (1238–1438), renowned for the creation of Thai script following the discovery of King Ramkamhaeng's inscription in 1292 (UNESCO, n.d.), inscriptions and palm leaves were found as two main pieces of historical evidence (Nilkamhaeng, 1974, p. 22). These inscriptions and palm-leaf manuscripts presented reading and writing culture as well as the recordkeeping landscape.

The subsequent Ayutthaya period (1351–1767) left behind a diverse array of documentary heritage comprising chronicles, documentation of foreign travelers, palm leaf manuscripts, *samut Thai*<sup>1</sup>, and various communication materials akin to records (Nilkamhaeng, 1974, pp. 26–31). The royal palace notably housed the *Ho Luang*, serving as a repository for knowledge in the form of books and archives (p. 31). Within this milieu, a professional class emerged. Scribes known as *alak* were responsible for recording court proceedings in daily diaries termed *jotmai*het - a term used for the word archives in Thai today. The *alak* played a crucial role in documenting daily events, a practice instrumental in chronicling historical narratives.

The chronicle has served as a vital historical testament in shaping mainstream narratives that often center on monarchs and their lineages. This method of recording events through the interpretations of historiographers embodies the fundamental essence of archives. The scribe, possibly the initial archivist in traditional Thai contexts, reflects a practice that could have been influenced by Chinese scribes (Sucha-xaya, 2021). Moreover, the tradition of chronicling events in Thai culture bears traces of Indian influence, where kings are revered akin to gods and believed to reincarnate across multiple lives, echoing parallels with the Hindu deity Narai (Vishnu).

Hence, it is evident that traditional Thai archival practices do not solely originate from Thai roots but bear influences from ancient civilizations and other kingdoms. Despite subsequent Western influences during the *Thonburi* (1767–1782) and *Rattanakosin* (1782–present) periods, these kingdoms persisted in their commitment to recordkeeping practices. This enduring legacy of meticulous event documentation remains a cornerstone of contemporary Thai archival practices, a facet that will be elaborated in subsequent discussions.

### COLONIAL ERA AND WESTERN INFLUENCE

Transitioning from traditional governance, the nineteenth century marked a significant shift in recordkeeping practices in Siam, driven by strong Western influence. This influence not only urged Siam to modernize and align with contemporary standards but also served as a defensive measure against Western imperialism. Under the reign of King Rama

<sup>1</sup> A kind of manuscript made of *khoi* leaves to document different kinds of knowledge such as literature, medicine, horoscope, and so on.

V, records management was embraced as a mechanism to transform traditional governance for the demands of the modern era. Historical evidence indicates Siam's deliberate adoption of a modernized recordkeeping system to align with evolving administrative standards.

The transition from traditional administration to a Westernized, modernized system necessitated the establishment of educational institutions to produce a new workforce capable of serving the new system. The Royal Pages School, which later evolved into Chulalongkorn University, was founded in 1910 to fulfill this imperative. However, evidence pertaining to recordkeeping training suggests that such recordkeeping practices had been adopted across various government ministries. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, then referred to as the Pavilion of Foreign Affairs, emerged as a leader in recordkeeping endeavors. The document “Regulations of Pavilion of Foreign Affairs” delineated four distinct positions dedicated to recordkeeping tasks. One position entailed maintaining a register of sent and received records, while the remaining three positions were responsible for the creation of records (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regulation, 1889, pp. 1–2). Governance in Absolute Monarchy time impacted quite a centralized recordkeeping system, with the same standards and training.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs served as a role model and training ground for other ministries. For instance, the Ministry of Murathathorn (the king's stationery) sent staff to receive recordkeeping training at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Chaijindasut, 1991, p. 77). The Ministry of Interior also adopted these practices (Chaijindasut, 1991, p. 86). One plausible reason for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' pioneering role in modern recordkeeping is that the ministry's mission was prioritized as the most crucial for the nation, as its policies could determine the country's destiny during the imperialist era. Nevertheless, after the decline of imperialism, the Siamese Revolution of 1932 occurred. This event impacted the centralized recordkeeping system, rendering it the responsibility of each individual ministry. Subsequently, the recordkeeping system in Siam declined (Prudtikul, n.d.).

On the side of archives management, the establishment of an agency working like the National Archives was initiated in 1916 as a part of Wachirayan

Library, according to Prince Damrong<sup>2</sup>'s initiative. He stated that public records should be kept in this institution so that in the future, there will be records available for making history (The National Archives of Thailand, 2024). However, it is also stated that people who were recruited as keepers at the beginning of this archives are expected to be ladies as they are not breadwinners. This could suggest that the archival profession was not held in particularly high regard during that period. The archival work then was a part of the National Library and became the National Archives in 1952.

Regarding archives management, the establishment of an agency akin to the National Archives was initiated in 1916 as part of the Wachirayan Library resulting from the initiative of Prince Damrong. He stated that public records should be kept in this institution to ensure the availability of records for historical purposes in the future (The National Archives of Thailand, 2024). However, it is also noted that the initial keepers recruited for this archives were expected to be women, as they were not breadwinners (The National Archives of Thailand, 2024). This might imply a lack of professional esteem for the archival profession at that time.

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND FORMATION OF ARCHIVISTS

Archival work in the modern sense was not practiced at the Wachirayan Library but was done in Ministries and the Office of His Majesty's Principal Private Secretary until the establishment of the National Archives in 1952. Archival documents created by the National Archives around that time showed the formation of archivists in the early period. The archival document entitled National Archives Project (2497 B.E.) delineated two primary functions within the National Archives: the documentation of events, reflecting the legacy of traditional Thai archives, and modern recordkeeping (The National Archives, 1954, pp. 4–5). Initially, the traditional mission held greater significance, involving activities such as sourcing news from newspapers and onsite documentation of key events. In contrast, modern recordkeeping played a relatively smaller role. Some national archivists at the time left their study notes on archival administration practice in the National Archives of the US (The National Archives of Thailand, 1944, p. 4), and Sir Hilary Jenkinson<sup>3</sup>'s definition of archives was

studied (The National Archives of Thailand, 1944, p. 27), implying that archivists were trying to educate themselves on modern archives management. Archivists underwent in-house training, with recruitment criteria emphasizing proficiency in Thai, foreign languages, and documentation skills (The National Archives, 1954, p. 4). Over time, modern recordkeeping gained prominence within the National Archives of Thailand, aligning with the expansion of records in contemporary public administration.

In sum, the archival documents from the National Archives I studied suggest that modern recordkeeping initially received less emphasis at the National Archives in early times. Furthermore, the education of national archivists during that period primarily involved internal training (Sucha-xaya, 2017, p. 161). However, as time progressed, a few archivists were selected to pursue education and training opportunities abroad, contributing to the development of modern archives management practices.

### FORMAL EDUCATION FOR ARCHIVISTS

For formal education, archival management programs were formed in some universities in two disciplines. One side is in archaeology, and the other is in library and information science.

For the archaeology side, Silpakorn University offers a postgraduate program titled "Master of Arts Program in Archives and Cultural Heritage Information Management." This program caters predominantly to practitioners seeking to augment their practical experience with theoretical knowledge through the pursuit of a master's degree. The program's longstanding establishment aligns with the country's emphasis on cultural heritage. Notably, it maintains a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the National Archives of Thailand, which operates under the Fine Art Department.

Within the library science education, archives management is typically taught as elective courses. Librarians often encounter special collections, including archives and ancient manuscripts, necessitating familiarity with archival principles. Similar to other Southeast Asian countries, library and information science departments primarily offer bachelor's degrees to meet the workforce demands of various information institutions. Postgraduate programs in these departments also include elective courses in archives management. Consequently, archives have historically constituted an additional

<sup>2</sup> Prince Damrong is called the Father of Thai history.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Hilary Jenkinson (1882-1961) is a renowned British archivist at the Public Records Office.

component of early education. At present, archives management remains part of the undergraduate curriculum, although some universities mandate records and archives management as a compulsory course.

Recently, the field has witnessed a shift, with information science programs introducing postgraduate offerings specifically focused on archives and records management. Notably, Chulalongkorn University launched its postgraduate program in Data and Information Curation in 2021. The primary objective of this postgraduate program is to equip archivists and related professionals, including data curators, with the necessary skills to manage both traditional physical materials and newly born-digital materials artifacts within archives and other responsible institutions. These professionals play a critical role in preserving our cultural heritage and ensuring the accessibility of information for future generations.

The program comprises a balanced blend of compulsory and elective courses:

Compulsory courses from both physical and digital sides, namely Principles of Records and Archives Management, Principles of Digital Curation, Linking Structured Data, and Professional and Communication Skills for Data and Information Curators. For elective courses, the program also offers courses focusing on archives theories and practices such as archival appraisal and acquisition, document preservation and conservation, history of recordkeeping, and so on, but also a pathway to new technology such as building trustworthiness of digital repositories, digital preservation management, interaction design for information exhibits, to name but a few.

In summary, this program bridges theory and practice, preparing graduates to navigate the dynamic landscape of archival management while embracing technological advancements.

### **THAI ARCHIVAL EDUCATION: COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

When comparing Thailand to other Southeast Asian countries based on my experiences attending two conferences, a notable disparity emerges. Most countries in the region have established governmental systems that mandate formal education and training for archivists and records managers. These

requirements ensure that professionals are well-prepared to handle the complexities of archival work. The historical context may also contribute to this phenomenon.

The examination of archival education revealed that certain nations have enacted laws or regulations to bolster the recruitment of archivists through formal archival education programs. This can be attributed to the well-established role of recordkeeping within governmental administrative systems. For instance, legislation in Indonesia supports the archival profession, resulting in robust records management and archival programs within institutions of higher education. Annually, a substantial number of students gain admission into these programs (Nurtanzila, 2023). Similarly, Malaysia and Singapore, influenced by their colonial history under British rule, have adopted recordkeeping systems with close ties to various governmental agencies and the position of Departmental Record Officer. In Malaysia, archivists must possess specific qualifications to work in archival institutions.

Other countries have demonstrated knowledge in archival management, which is a legacy of colonization. For example, Vietnam received many such influences throughout its history, such as from China and France (Henchy, 1998, pp. 2–3), as well as the Soviet Union. Vietnam still strictly adheres to the Soviet Union's influence when it comes to archival education. Also, the Philippines, with its historical ties to Spain and the USA, has a rich archival history that significantly impacts its archival education. Nevertheless, education in LIS in the Philippines and archival studies has also evolved, with some, such as Buenrostro (2015), proposing that education shift further from focusing on storage to access and a shared paradigm of social memory.

Interestingly, the history of colonization plays a pivotal role in shaping modern records and archives management systems across many Southeast Asian nations. It is essential to note that this historical context does not necessarily imply a positive outcome. Instead, it serves as a critical factor influencing archival practices and education in the region. It should be noted that this summary is based on my own investigation. However, further in-depth comparative research, particularly conducted by archival educators in Southeast Asian countries, should be done collaboratively.

Turning our attention to Thailand, despite resistance

from elites during the colonization period, the country lacked a strong foundational archival system. Consequently, Thailand's approach to archives became a blend of traditional and modern systems, albeit only briefly integrated into the administrative framework. Up until now, archival education in Thailand remains an option primarily for practitioners seeking to deepen their knowledge or a select group of students dedicated to pursuing this field of study.

### FUTURE OF THAI ARCHIVAL EDUCATION

While the past cannot be changed, the future of Thai archival education warrants examination, particularly in the context of neighboring countries. Several key elements are necessary for the development of Thai archival education.

**Professionalization of Records Managers and Archivists:** The government should establish records manager and archivist positions as professional roles requiring formal education. This would ensure graduates have access to relevant jobs and that these positions are filled by individuals with essential knowledge and skills.

**Competency Framework for Records Managers and Archivists:** The lack of standardized knowledge and skills for archivists has impeded the recognition of archival work as a profession. Establishing a clear competency framework would allow regulatory bodies like the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) to formally recognize archival work as a distinct profession.

**Awareness and utility of archives:** archives in Thailand are mainly perceived solely for their historical and cultural values, with their preservation often focused on serving historians and researchers only. There is a need to raise awareness of the broader societal benefits of archives and promote their utility in more concrete and impactful ways.

### CONCLUSION

The development of archives management in Thailand has been significantly influenced by historical factors. These factors have shaped both the archival system and the composition of the workforce within the profession. During the imperialist period, Siam faced temporary pressures, leading to the adoption of modern records and archives management practices. However, these practices were only implemented for a brief period. Archival education, initially catering to a niche group of learners, has gradually expanded.

Meaningful change can only occur when archives are recognized as an integral part of society, with the understanding that they have the potential to enhance the lives of citizens.

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### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

**Naya Sucha-xaya** serves as a faculty member in the Department of Library Science, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. She teaches archival management courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She also teaches elective courses relating to cultural heritage and society such as cultural heritage information management, information and society, and history of recordkeeping. Her research interests include archives management and its relationship to society.

Email: [naya.s@chula.ac.th](mailto:naya.s@chula.ac.th)

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# Embodied Information Practices in Remote Education: Insights from Teachers' Sense-Making\*

Kathleen Lourdes B. Obille  
Assistant Professor

University of the Philippines School of Library and Information Studies

Marina Lucas Giron  
Master Teacher II

Ilocos Norte College of Arts and Trades

## *Abstract*

This study investigates the sense-making processes employed by teachers in bridging knowledge gaps and navigating complexities during this transition. Drawing upon Dervin's sense-making theory and McKenzie's model of information practices, the research explores how teachers engage with information sources, leverage past experiences, and collaborate with peers to make sense of their roles in the digital educational landscape. Interviews were conducted with teachers from Ilocos Norte, Philippines. This study presents the embodied nature of teaching as an information practice. The findings underscore the resilience and adaptability of teachers in the face of uncertainty, offering insights into the dynamics of remote education and informing strategies to support educators and students in the evolving educational landscape.

**Keywords:** Remote education, Embodied teaching

## **INTRODUCTION**

While online and distance learning were practiced in higher education programs, this was not the norm and was an option only by a small fraction of the learning community. The disruption in the education landscape due to the COVID-19 pandemic brought about various modes of learning to replace the in-person classroom setting. The drastic change left teachers unprepared and uncertain about the tasks they are presented with. There have been studies and accounts to show how remote learning has been

conducted in the Philippines highlighting the difficulties faced by students and these include internet connectivity, inadequate learning resources, poor learning environments, and mental health problems, among others (Baticulon et al., 2021; Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022). There have also been studies and accounts of the experiences and perceptions of teachers in their transition to remote learning (Marshall et al., 2020; An et al., 2021) and how learners and teachers in various countries have transcended the digital divide (Vincent-Lancrin et al.,

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2022). Several studies have been made on the topic of education during the pandemic such as challenges faced by teachers (Agayon et al., 2022; Cajurao et al., 2023; Jackaria, 2022; Dulay & Manuel, 2021; Dela Cruz, 2022), perceptions of teachers on the modes of learning (Cahapay et al., 2023; Tas et al., 2021), as well as perceptions and experiences of students (Bustillo & Aguilos, 2022). The use of technology was also among the discussions along these lines and studies looked into how teachers adopted technologies in their teaching (Cahapay & Anoba, 2021) as well as how administrators influenced technology use among their teachers (Mendoza & Catiis, 2022). While there were studies on information behavior of students (Shi et al., 2021; Superio et al., 2021; Tonmoy & Islam, 2023) and health information behavior of citizens in various ethnicities and nationalities (Kim et al., 2023; Piamre et al., 2023; Zimmerman, 2024), we have yet to encounter studies on the information behavior or information practices of teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The shift to remote learning necessitated immediate adaptation of new modes of teaching and learning for which teachers and students alike had to make sense of and adapt to. As these new modes of teaching were implemented drastically during the pandemic, the teachers and students alike encountered interferences in the teaching-learning process such as adapting to the processes and technologies, reconciling the tasks at home and at work, dealing with sickness, as well as financial stability (Alvarez, 2020). The teachers and students alike went through a series of gaps which they needed to fill for them to proceed with the situations they faced. This article presents the findings of the study on the sense-making of the teachers that sought to understand how they bridged the gaps in their knowledge, skills, capabilities, and resources to transcend the challenges they encountered. This investigated the relationship of people and information as well as technology within the lens of Dervin's (1999) sense-making theory in both its senses as a methodology and metatheory. As a methodology, it is an "iterative process by which people construct meaning from experience" (Genius & Bronstein, 2017, p. 750). The interview was not only a data gathering event but also an opportunity for the respondents to look in retrospect at their experiences identifying and realizing the series of learning, unlearning, and re-learning they experienced for which they invoked past learnings, new concepts, authoritative sources,

common sense, their own experiences as well as experiences of others.

Within the sense-making of the teachers, various information practices were noted such as those laid down by McKenzie (2003). These information practices include events described as follows:

*Identification of potentially helpful sources, serendipitous encounters, being given information without actively seeking, planned encounters with potentially helpful sources, referrals to potentially helpful sources, proxy searches, barriers to seeking connections, making connections with potentially helpful sources, connection failures, barriers to interaction with identified sources, patterns of interaction with identified sources. (McKenzie, 2003, pp. 23-24)*

Arguably, we encounter such events that help us in our sensemaking. We may be given information whether we have actively sought it or not and become a bridge to our information gap. We may also actively seek information without receiving the correct information immediately, but we still seek information anyway and we look for individuals who may be able to help us.

Teaching is an embodied practice, and it involves the following aspects: "sensory experience, bodily experience, cognitive experience, intersubjective experience, and discursive experience" (Hegna & Ørbæk, 2024, p. 421). As a sensory experience, teaching involves the engagement of the senses of both teachers and students. Teachers sense the reactions of the students as they perform, and the students' senses are stimulated via audio-visual materials and experiential activities. As a bodily experience, teaching involves the use of facial expressions, gestures, and movement to engage the students. As a cognitive experience, teaching enables the development of thinking and knowledge formation with the use of various techniques and methods. As an intersubjective experience, teaching is a form of interpersonal experience with teachers and students revolving in one context. They engage in dialogues and other forms of interaction to facilitate understanding and sense making. As a discursive experience, students and teachers engage in the co-construction of meaning. Any disruption introduces

gaps that cause a pause in the process. During the pandemic, the shift to a different mode of teaching caused a pause in the process and the teachers had to come to terms with the changes first for them to make sense of the current situation—thus the series of learning, unlearning, and re-learning phases for them proceed with the new modalities. Sense-making is a “complex and ongoing process, one involving bodies and emotions, as well as language and intellect, both the product and the creator of a social (discursive) environment” (Olsson, 2010, p. 273) and this paper documents the processes that the teachers went through to make sense of the situation. The study focuses on the teachers within a community—in Ilocos Norte with their shared experiences and context of the locale. As Savolainen (2007) would note that the approach of studying the information practices of particular communities direct the attention “to them as members of groups and communities that constitute the context of their mundane activities” (p. 120).

This underscores the concept of teaching as not merely a transfer of information but rather as an embodied information practice, where the actions and behaviors of teachers are central to the educational process. By employing the theoretical frameworks of sense-making (Dervin, 1999) and information practices (McKenzie, 2003; Savolainen, 2007), the study delves deeper into the intricate dynamics at play within the teaching profession during the transition to remote learning and moving forward to the new normal. It examines how teachers make sense of their roles, navigate challenges, and engage with information in various forms within the said context.

## METHOD

This qualitative study focused on the gap-bridging events that the respondents went through when they transitioned from traditional face-to-face teaching to remote learning. We interviewed seven of our peers who are teaching at varying levels (i.e., basic, secondary, and tertiary levels).

Their consent was sought, and interviews were done via Zoom for easier recording and transcription from December 2022 to June 2023. The interviewees were asked to recall the instances when they transitioned to remote learning and the events for which they found difficulties or gaps in their understanding about the situation they had. They were also asked how they were able to bridge these gaps and how they sought or received help from others.

The respondents are as follows:

Code	Sex	Level
Teacher A	Male	Tertiary
Teacher B	Female	Secondary
Teacher C	Female	Secondary
Teacher D	Male	Secondary – Tertiary
Teacher E	Male	Basic
Teacher F	Male	Secondary
Teacher G	Female	Basic

Teacher A is male teaching in the tertiary education level. Teacher B and C are females teaching in the secondary level, while Teacher F is male also teaching in the secondary education level. Teacher D on the other hand is male who taught secondary level and then moved to teach in the tertiary level. Teacher E is male teaching in the basic education level and Teacher G is female also teaching in the basic education level. As all of us are from the province of Ilocos Norte, we opted to use our local language (i.e., Ilocano) as the main language for the interview for better expression of thoughts. However, English and Filipino were sometimes used when the terms were not available in Ilocano. The interviews were transcribed and were coded using Dedoose. Translations were done after coding as both of the coders are Ilocano speakers, but the codes are in English.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the codes, the following main themes were derived: Gap in Technology; Gap in Classroom Management; Gap in Delivery of Learning; Gap in Structure and Administration; and Support from Community. The study’s findings also show the picture of how the teachers bridged the gaps and fissures in their understanding of how it was to teach in the remote learning modality during the pandemic. It was also revealed that in the bridges they used were information from other people such as authorities and experts (from webinars, information technology [IT] experts, etc.), from their peers (fellow teachers), and students who have experienced the same situation/event, as well as information from their past experiences. While in some instances, formal sources of information were sought but due to the severity of the situation, other sources of information were also sought.

### Gap in Technology

All the respondents admitted to having problems with the transition to remote learning, especially with the use of technologies. Many of the gaps in technology they encountered were on the availability of devices, connectivity issues, and insecurities in the use of technology. Even with these difficulties, they were able to proceed with remote learning because of events where they received help from others.

#### *Insecurity in the Use of Technologies*

While Teacher A mentioned that they already had a virtual learning environment (VLE) in place and that they already training in the past, he still had difficulties with the implementation because of internet connectivity and the limitations in the devices he had at that time. He also admits that there are some parts of virtual meeting applications that he did not know, and his students would help him out by showing or telling him how to go about it.

Teacher B indicated her insecurity with the technologies stating that she did not encounter any of the video conferencing applications and had difficulties with Google Docs, Google Sheets, as well as Google Drive.

*Actually, on my part, I was already in my 40s, I was 43 then, and I was nervous about technology back then. One colleague invited us to an online meeting so he could teach us MS Teams etc. I got nervous at the mention of MS Teams because I did not know anything about it. – Teacher B*

Teacher B also added that the struggle really was not on the lessons but on the technologies and applications “*handa sa lesson, pero yung technology hindi ko gamay*” (I was prepared with the lessons but I am unsure with the technology).

Teacher C, while having more exposure and advanced knowledge in technologies, still had difficulties because of the limitations of the devices that she had at that time. She had to buy a new printer, so she does not have to compete with the use of these in their school.

While Teacher E considers his devices as already new and up to date, he still had difficulties in the use of the applications. He said that he had to make do with what he knew and what he had at that time. He did not know how to share his presentation via Zoom, so what he

did was to point the camera of his device to his laptop where he opened his presentation. He learned slowly by doing and he was so happy when he discovered something new.

Teacher G’s difficulty with technology was more on how she has become the “go-to-person” for the technical concerns in their school. Since she is the youngest, her colleagues asked her for help or for her to do the tasks that had to do with technology. According to her, her colleagues would say, “*Haan ko ammo ading, sika man latta mangubran. Napia ta ub-ubing ka ngem siak.*” (I don’t know my dear, please do it for me. Good for you that you are younger than me).

While their insecurity in the use of technologies resulted in a pause in the process, they were able to receive help from others whether intentionally or otherwise. In McKenzie’s (2003) model of information practices, serendipitous encounters and interaction by proxy enabled the participants were to manage their information gaps and satisfy an information need even without actively seeking information from formal information sources. Teacher E for example was able to discover better ways of doing things serendipitously. He did not learn the techniques of screen sharing but he was able to perform it even if it was a more complicated way. But his accidental clicking of a button led him to the correct way of screensharing. Teacher A also received help from his students even if he did not ask for it purposefully.

#### *Availability of Devices*

Teacher A shared that he already had a laptop at that time, but it was not meant for the load brought about by remote learning. He had to download many resources which filled up the space of his device. His laptop was meant for personal use, but it became for teaching already. He wanted to buy a different one but the demand for devices at that time was high since all schools had to resort to remote learning.

There were laptops made available for teachers from the Department of Education (DepEd) but these were very slow. Teacher B was one of the recipients of the said laptops, but she had little or very low use of this because of the speed. This became the dedicated laptop only for the printing of modules but not for online meetings as it was not capable of this.

The mode of learning was mixed as not all students had devices since before the pandemic, the students

did not have any need for individual mobile devices. As such, the teachers opted for modular learning taking to consideration the capabilities of the students and the availability of technologies.

The availability of devices introduced a gap in the teaching process—devices for the teachers and devices for the students as well. Teacher C realized that she needed to provide for her needs so she can proceed with developing and printing the modules and design for their online learning.

The concern on availability of devices also brought about the *Share a Spare* program of the division office where those who had extra or spare devices shared with those who did not have any. Those who thought of the program knew that they had to bridge those who did not have any with those who had some to share, as such being able to refer one to a resource provider.

#### *Connectivity Issues*

Only a few used online learning because of connectivity issues. Students in rural areas have slow connectivity let alone available devices. While tablets were provided to students, internet connections were slow in the province.

Teacher D and E also had a problem because they did not have their own internet connection at home. They only connected to the internet via their mobile phones and had to subscribe to prepaid internet connections. As such, they spent thousands of pesos for their prepaid load. Eventually, they had to get their own subscriptions when the quarantine restrictions were relaxed.

#### *Learning by Doing*

The gaps in their technological know-how were addressed by learning events such as peer teaching, webinars, and serendipitous discoveries. For the case of Teacher B, their fellow teachers who taught IT took on the initiative to teach them about the different technologies available for remote learning. *“He taught us how to navigate Google Drive, Google Docs, and Google Sheets. We had difficulties back then; we would encode in Google Sheets and sometimes delete or type over what was already encoded.”*

All the respondents were able to attend webinars on the different modes of teaching as well as the different applications and approaches. While the webinars came later as they already had initial training from

their peers, the webinars clarified and substantiated what they already learned.

Teacher E shared how happy he was with his little “accidents.” He said it took months before he learned how to share screen, or present his slides via Facebook Messenger. Admittedly, he did not like remote teaching but when he learned about the different techniques, he learned to love this modality. He also regretted that he did not enroll in graduate classes back then as they were conducted remotely.

In these instances, sources were identified, and other potentially helpful resources were sought. Webinars were organized and teachers needed to attend them to gather more information about how to conduct remote learning. But before these were organized, knowing that their fellow teachers needed help, IT teachers have initiated peer training so that when the webinars were conducted, their fellow teachers already knew most of these applications and the webinars somehow reinforced their learning.

Teacher E’s serendipitous encounter with information was a happy event and left an indelible mark on his knowledge.

#### **Gap in Classroom Management**

The change in modality resulted in a pause for the teachers. They have already embodied the practice of teaching in the classroom and teaching in a different modality brings about some setbacks. They have to learn about the intricacies of the different modalities, and they also have to determine the effective and efficient techniques. From the responses, we have determined another theme as gap in classroom management as our techniques in our teaching within the classrooms is not immediately translated online.

#### *Not Knowing the Students Personally*

With online teaching, there’s the tendency to not know the students like how we can get to know them in-person. Teacher G had this difficulty because her students are in the early grades. Teacher F compared his experiences of the modes of learning and said that it was easier to get to know the students when they were inside the classroom since there is better interaction with them. With the remote learning modalities—online (via video conferencing platforms), digital (via learning management systems), modular (printed modules)—it was difficult to establish rapport.

*It was also challenging when we were computing our students' grades because we had to forego our doubts if it were indeed them who answered the activities in their modules and stuck to what they submitted to us. – Teacher F*

After several webinars and some internet searching, the teachers were able to gather online tools to enhance virtual classroom activities. Having the students perform in class gives the teachers more opportunities to get to know them better. This shift away from traditional pen-and-paper assessments not only alleviated doubts surrounding student performance but also facilitated a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. In this situation, the teachers performed active information seeking to be better at their craft since the traditional tools were not addressing the needs at that time. They may not have the traditional teaching space they had in their online classes, but they certainly adapted the tools to enhance the remote learning of the students.

Teacher D recounted his experience after retrieving the modules from the different barangays. He received a module under a different name. Apparently, the parent, who accomplished the module on behalf of the student, wrote the name of their two-year-old child. In the classroom, the teachers are assured that the students do the tasks on their own, unlike in the remote setting where they might receive some form of help from others. Unfortunately, for the modular learning modality, students' accomplishments are measured only by what they accomplish. Whether these were accomplished by others or by the students themselves, there was no way to tell.

#### *Not Prepared for Remote Learning*

While there were available virtual learning environments and webinars to help the teachers in the design and implementation of remote learning modalities, they were still not prepared. Teacher E shared that while the students had cellphones, these had limited capabilities. These could not run Zoom nor have sufficient storage to download other applications. The internet connection is also slow. His students would gather in the field/farm and they would share one device so they could participate. They opt to go in the field because the internet signal would be better there.

The teachers also had to design and print the modules and would distribute them per barangay. However,

due to the capacity of the printers that they have and time it takes to sort the modules they would sometimes miss some tasks.

#### *Consideration for the Students*

All the respondents shared that they have never given so much consideration to students than when remote learning was implemented. They had to do house visits when restrictions were relaxed to follow-up on the progress of the students. Teacher G shared that since her students are in the early grades, she had to spend some time with some of her students just so she can supervise them in their writing assignments.

Teacher B also shared that some of her students who did not turn in their outputs were found out to be working in gasoline stations, automotive shops, or on the farm. The students needed to work because their parents lost their jobs during the pandemic. Since they needed to work, further consideration was given them. Teacher E said that he had to give the students more time, or he had to be patient in retrieving the modules because, if he did not, there was a chance that the student would not progress. According to Teacher E, "*Inan-anusak tapno adda met agradwar kadayta a familia. Binayabay ko... ket nagbalin a blessing kenkuana.*" (I had to be patient in the hopes that one of them in that family would graduate. I guided the student, and it was a blessing for him because he made it.)

Unlike in the in-person setup where they could be strict about deadlines and outputs, during the remote setup, they had to think about the other factors that may affect the performance of the students.

The DepEd issued the Memorandum Number OUCI-2020-307 in October 2020 which suggests measures to foster academic ease with the aim of reducing the stress and anxiety experienced by teachers and students alike. In response, the teachers devised various means to promote academic well-being while prioritizing the needs of the students. However, even without the memorandum, the respondents have indicated a strong sense of empathy toward their colleagues and students. The collective compassion was arrived at even without consulting formal information sources—it resulted as a natural response to the unprecedented circumstances that we all faced.

#### *Class Demeanor*

Before the remote learning setup, there was a clear delineation between home and school environments. But when remote learning was implemented, lines

were blurred. Students and teachers alike experienced multitasking and intertwining of personal and professional/educational tasks and events.

Teacher A narrated how he managed to teach remotely while managing their household—setting up the learning setup of their children as well as household work. He shared that he had to make his students understand that while they are in the comforts of their own homes, they should still be present and focused when they conduct classes. There were background noises like dogs barking, hens clucking, goats bleating, children playing, as well as cars and motorcycles revving.

Information about the conduct of flexible work environments came about in magazines, blogs, and journals, the teachers had their past experiences as basis for declaring proper class demeanor. Balancing this with consideration for students and academic ease, the teachers gave allowances for video conferencing. Not all students are comfortable sharing the insides of their homes and since their devices are not up to par, they could not use the virtual backgrounds available, so they would opt to not switch on their webcams and teachers could not be strict about this. Teacher A said he acknowledges that background noises cannot be minimized so he did not have to demand that the students be in a quiet place for their class.

### **Gap in Structure and Administration**

The difficulties in transportation and communication resulted in implementation issues of directives from various institutions. For one, the community quarantine identification pass had different iterations, and authority over these varied from one community to another. For the case of the teachers, they had to meet many deadlines as if schoolwork was the only task they had. Having blurred delineation between school and home environments complicated the situation as they had to prioritize one role over another in one environment. Unlike before that when they went to school, they were educators, and when they were at home, they were homemakers.

*Aside from the anxiety of being locked down in our homes and having no personal interaction with others, we struggled with stress and restless nights to meet the deadlines set by our supervisors. – Teacher F*

### *Implementation Concerns*

Teacher B shared that the administration did not seem to understand the situation they were in. For as long as the deadlines were set, they had to meet the deadline “*by hook or by crook.*” There were also problems when no memorandum was issued by the DepEd Central Office, but they needed to take action. For example, a typhoon was approaching and there was no directive for any suspension. As such, they decided to take action and prioritize the safety of their students even without any directive.

There were also cases when there were differing interpretations of a directive. They were told that they would be given monthly internet allowance or load for the devices so they can call or coordinate with their students, but they did not receive such support. In another situation, one supervisor told them to report to the office and check their classrooms, but another supervisor said otherwise causing confusion among them. With these differing directives, their gap bridging was resolved by thinking about what’s best for their students and what is least detrimental to them as teachers. They no longer needed to consult with any authority because they are the authorities for themselves as they know what they are capable of and what they need to accomplish all within the boundaries of their roles and responsibilities as teachers.

### *Multiplicity of Responsibilities*

With the quarantine restrictions, work was done remotely with limited in-person engagement in the office or school. As such, there was a multiplicity of responsibilities experienced by the teachers. Teacher B recounts that during the production of the modules, their responsibilities included the design, printing, collating, distribution, retrieval, and evaluation of these modules. In one class, however, there were several options available, depending on the capabilities of the students. For her class, she had modular, digital, and online modalities. It was difficult to manage a class with multiple modes with limited facilities. She had help from their administrative assistants and their custodians learned the techniques of collation and binding of the modules so they can help the teachers produce these. She had to rethink how she can deliver her lessons better. For the subsequent semesters, she was able to manage it better until such time that classes returned to in-person mode.

Teacher C and Teacher G also recounted their experience with the quarantine restrictions when those who can go to school were limited. Aside from

preparing the lessons, designing and producing the modules, they also cleaned their classrooms, tended the gardens, and other maintenance tasks.

The teachers were used to having multiple responsibilities before the pandemic, but this increased because of the limited number of people who could go to school or workplaces due to their comorbidities. The gap they encountered was: who would accomplish the clerical tasks and do menial work? They could either forgo these tasks if they did not want any of these responsibilities or if they had too many of these responsibilities, but they chose to do these because otherwise the remote learning setup would not be successful. Looking back, Teacher B could not believe that they were able to accomplish all those tasks with the skills and time that they had. She is thankful for the help extended to her and realized that help does come when you need it.

### Support from the Community

There was overwhelming support from the community during those times. Teachers supporting their fellow teachers, family members supporting students and teachers, community members supporting the teachers and students were common themes throughout the interview.

Teacher A shared that their student council conducted a program to lend devices to students who did not have any. The student council also solicited money for the students' prepaid load for their internet connection. For the teachers, their cooperative accommodated loan applications for purchase of laptops and the like.

Teacher B also experienced providing load for her students out of her own pocket. Since without the internet load, the students could not attend their online sessions or be able to send text messages as reply to their messages. She also mentioned the program of the DepEd Division Office dubbed *Share a Spare* where teachers and students alike who had extra or old devices which they no longer use shared with those who did not have any.

Teacher C also shared that she took the initiative to call on her friends to sponsor prepaid loads of some of her students. She shared that her friends immediately heeded her call for sponsorship. Teacher C and D shared that they bought printers, prepaid loads, and other materials using their own money instead of

asking from the school since they needed to take action to make remote learning work.

Teacher E on the other hand shared that he felt the support from the community when different groups sent aid in various forms. Some of their alumni sent inks for printers, bond papers, face masks, alcohol, and other materials needed to support the remote learning modality. Eventually, other groups also sent help to their school other than their alumni. He noted that their school principal was also active in coordinating with the alumni and their immediate community. This was also probably one of the reasons why they did not have to struggle like how other teachers experienced.

Teacher F said that their school administration extended sufficient help to them in the form of capability building through webinars. They also pooled the IT experts who extended help to those who needed technical assistance.

Teacher G also received some form of assistance from their alumni. She relayed that she received the unused funds from the retired teacher she succeeded, so, in a way, she had sufficient revolving funds. However, it was her who was giving support to her colleagues as she is the more knowledgeable among them.

Despite the difficulties encountered, people were able to help those who were in need.

*“Due to social media, it was easier for people to send help. Aside from that, there were other facilities that made sending money, food, and supplies easier. It was a moment of people helping other people and it was nice” – Teacher E.*

Information is created and disseminated in social media, and it has become a successful tool in several ways during the pandemic. Communities came together through here even when the quarantine restrictions were strict. By sharing information on these platforms, people were able to identify others' needs and they were able to give help to them or connect them to those who can help them just like what the student council of Teacher A's university did. Teacher E also received inquiries from their alumni through social media as well and he also received notices to expect materials sent by people from their community.

## Moving Forward

Having experienced the traditional and remote teaching modalities, Teacher A and E appreciated the conveniences that remote learning brought. Teacher A realized that he could offer more night classes for the graduate school with the remote learning modality since he no longer had to worry about the fact that he has to drive 23 kilometers after class. He shared that during the remote learning setup, he had graduate students who were in Rizal, Ilocos Sur, and various towns in Ilocos Norte, who benefited from the setup. “It is confusing,” says Teacher A, “for the university administration to return to the traditional face to face set-up. Since we have already had the VLEs and processes in place, why would we go back?”

Teacher E, who initially did not accept the remote learning modality now appreciates the setup. He can be in another place and yet be able to attend classes—both in his capacity as a graduate student and as a teacher. He also advocates for the maintenance of such option.

The process of learning, unlearning, and re-learning was evident in the transition to remote learning. The stages of denial to acceptance were also seen. As Gherardi (2009) has noted, “practices are reproduced and in being reproduced change over time—intentionally and unintentionally” (p. 124). Teacher E’s acceptance came only after he has imbibed the practice of remote learning, thereby embodying its practice in addition to teaching in the physical classroom. The change in the practice of teaching—from traditional to remote learning—may have been slow and challenging, but its continued practice rendered it to be an acceptable and effective means of teaching. The gap in its implementation was bridged slowly and carefully, and its path was paved piece by piece as the elements of the process were understood and imbibed meticulously.

## CONCLUSION

In the face of unprecedented challenges brought about by the sudden shift to remote learning during the pandemic, teachers exhibited remarkable resilience and adaptability in navigating the complex landscape of teaching in a digital environment. Through a lens informed by Dervin’s (1999) sense-making theory and McKenzie’s (2003) model of information practices, this study has shed light on the intricate dynamics at play within the teaching profession. It has presented how teachers, amidst uncertainties and insecurities, leveraged various information sources and practices to bridge knowledge gaps, navigate challenges, and

ultimately make sense of their roles in the new normal. Furthermore, it highlights the embodied nature of teaching as an information practice, emphasizing the central role of teachers in facilitating learning experiences that transcend mere transmission of knowledge. As the educational landscape continues to evolve, understanding these processes of sense-making and information engagement becomes increasingly vital in effectively supporting educators and students alike in the journey towards the new normal.

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## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

**Kathleen Lourdes B. Obille** currently teaches at the UP School of Library and Information Studies in both graduate and undergraduate programs. She teaches Critical Theory in LIS, Information Ethics, and Theories in Information Research among others. Her research interests include philosophy of information, information ethics, Philippine LIS Education, information behavior, and information practices among others. She has presented in various local and international conferences and has published in local and international publications as well. She is currently the Steering Committee Chair of the Asia Pacific Library and Information Education and Practice Conference.

Email: [kate@slis.upd.edu.ph](mailto:kate@slis.upd.edu.ph)

**Marina Lucas Giron** serves as a Master Teacher II at the Ilocos Norte College of Arts and Trades (INCAT). She holds a Master of Arts in Religious Education from Ateneo de Manila University and a Bachelor of Secondary Education from the College of the Holy Spirit, Mendiola. Prior to her stint at INCAT, she served as a Guidance Counselor at TESDA, Ilocos Norte, where she provided essential support and direction to students. Her career also includes roles as a Senior Education Program Specialist at the Schools Division of Ilocos Norte and as a Master Teacher I at both Ilocos Norte Agricultural College, Pasuquin, and Sarrat National High School.

Email: [marina.giron@deped.gov.ph](mailto:marina.giron@deped.gov.ph)

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# PLP Data Privacy Best Practices Toolkit for Libraries: A Guide for Managing and Protecting Patron Data

Gladys Joy G. Soretas  
College Librarian  
University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB)

## RESOURCE REVIEW

Pacific Library Partnership (2020). *Data privacy best practices toolkit for libraries: a guide for managing and protecting patron data*. <https://www.plpinfo.org/dataprivacytoolkit/>

Librarians have moral, professional, and legal obligations to secure and safeguard patron data (Cooper, 2016). In Article 4.2 of the Code of Ethics for Librarians in the Philippines (2006), it is stated that "Librarians shall keep in confidence, information acquired in the course of professional service. They shall protect the client's right to privacy with respect to information sought or received and materials consulted, borrowed, or acquired through the library" (p.2). The importance of data privacy in libraries has been given emphasis worldwide, and this is signified by the toolkit written and conceptualized by the member libraries of Pacific Library Partnership, a library cooperative system that aims to enhance the services of public and academic libraries serving various counties in the United States. This toolkit acts as a guide for librarians to protect patron information by providing detailed information on creating and maintaining patron privacy programs in the library.

The "Data Privacy Best Practices Toolkit for Libraries" contains both high-level and specific information about the development and maintenance of all areas of library privacy protection programs. It covers various topics, from the data lifecycle and managing vendor relationships to creating policies and procedures to protect patron privacy. It is also made available to other libraries who wish to develop or modify their data privacy programs.

The first section of this toolkit outlines why privacy is vital in libraries and underlines library clients' right to privacy. Moreover, the patron data lifecycle is

discussed thoroughly in Section 2 of this toolkit. The discussion begins by identifying where patron data is stored in the library, such as library systems, database backups, print management systems, server logs, and others. It recognizes and classifies library data into two categories: "data about a patron" and "data about a patron's activities in the library." This section also discusses the six stages of the patron data lifecycle, such as collection, storage, access, reporting, retention, and deletion, as well as the privacy risks and risk mitigation strategies for each stage. This section also introduces the idea of "privacy impact assessment," which provides a standardized method for identifying and assessing various types of patron privacy risks in data processing practices.

The next section of this toolkit covers how libraries may provide patrons with the tools and knowledge necessary to safeguard their privacy and stay informed about other privacy concerns. This section highlights library programs and services aimed to educate users about the importance of data privacy. Scenarios and situations are used to highlight that patron may have varied privacy concerns, emphasizing the importance of an open discussion with patrons, which has often been neglected. We tend to forget that each person is unique, and their demands differ. The toolkit includes information on how to speak with patrons regarding data privacy.

The toolkit's fourth section focuses on operationalizing privacy at the library. This section discusses how to approach privacy in all aspects of library operations and emphasizes the significance of privacy policies and notices. It discusses how to create data privacy policies and notices, policy standards, and best practices and emphasizes that privacy policies and notices must be aligned. Additionally, it includes instructions for developing an effective

library staff training program. As noted in the toolkit, “your library’s privacy policies and procedures are only as effective as the person with the least amount of knowledge and experience with them,” (Pacific Library Partnership, 2020, p. 26) thus, developing a library staff training program relating to data privacy matters is essential.

The “Vendor Relationship Lifecycle”, which includes selection, onboarding, maintenance, and separation, can assist in identifying and mitigating privacy issues in the library while working with the vendor, was comprehensively studied in Section 5 of this toolkit. Furthermore, presented at the end of this toolkit are the library privacy scholarship, professional standards, regulations, and some templates and examples that libraries can use to design their contract addendums, privacy policies, and privacy workshops.

Libraries obtain patron data as they provide the client’s information and research needs. Technological advancements and this pandemic have had a profound impact on the services provided by libraries in the Philippines, particularly on how libraries manage patron data. If patron data is mishandled and misused, data breaches may occur. As stated in Article VII of the American Library Association’s (ALA) Library Bill of Rights (2019), “All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people’s privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information” (para. 8). While this ALA provision is not within the specific context of the Philippines, it is nevertheless imperative to be aware of and uphold data privacy practices in our local libraries.

While we strive to accommodate our clients’ information needs, we should also secure and safeguard their data. Developing and implementing patron privacy programs and privacy policies in Philippine libraries are good strategies to protect and secure patron information. Some would express, “Easy to say, difficult to do!” So, how can Philippine libraries design and administer a patron privacy program if they are unsure of where and how to begin?

This toolkit could be one of the answers. With the increasing number of data breaches and privacy intrusions recorded globally, this toolkit is of great help to libraries in protecting patrons’ data privacy rights. We can use this toolkit as a guide as we

continue to create or write a data privacy toolkit fully that is applicable to the social and professional contexts of Philippine libraries and librarianship, and compliant with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

The toolkit is informative and concise. Concepts and ideas were discussed systematically. Moreover, this toolkit is visually engaging, with easy-to-read text and illustrations that capture the reader’s attention and allow them to comprehend the context completely. Overall, this toolkit is an excellent resource and a great help to librarians who are developing or modifying their data privacy programs and seeking practical guidance on protecting patron privacy in their everyday work. It provides a comprehensive and extensive explanation about the development and maintenance of the Library Patron Privacy Program. Additionally, this toolkit included links to the examples of data privacy notices and policies, which librarians can use as a guide in drafting their own. The toolkit provides readers with an in-depth understanding of library data privacy.

Thus, this toolkit is true to its claim that it can be of great assistance in helping libraries located in different geographic areas in safeguarding patron data privacy by providing comprehensive information on developing and maintaining a patron privacy program for libraries.

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### AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Ms. **Gladys Joy G. Soretet** is a dedicated professional librarian. She earned her degree in Bachelor of Library and Information Science from the Adventist University of the Philippines in 2017 and successfully passed the Librarian's Licensure Examination in the same year. Currently, she is advancing her expertise by pursuing a Master of Library and Information Science degree at the University of the Philippines - Diliman. Since she started her career at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) in 2018, Ms. Soretet has been serving as a College Librarian with a specialization as a Librarian Cataloger. Her role extends beyond cataloging duties; she is an integral part of the university library community. Ms. Soretet frequently steps into roles such as host, emcee, and moderator for various university events, showcasing her vibrant presence and engagement within the community. She also serves as a lecturer in the library's InfoSkilled Program and Library Instruction Service.

Email: [ggsoretet@gmail.com](mailto:ggsoretet@gmail.com)

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