Chapter 19
Law Library Consortium in Metro Manila:
A Proposed Model and the Management of Law Libraries

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ABSTRACT

This chapter gives an overview of special libraries, the management of special libraries, law libraries, and their management and administration. It discusses how the five managerial functions are exercised in law libraries in the Philippines based on the data in the study of the author. It also illustrates the need of the law libraries to collaborate, and discusses the model of a law library consortium proposed by Jaafar (2012). The views of the administrators of the parent institutions of the participant law libraries on their libraries and the propose consortium (based on the said study) are also discussed. At the end of the chapter, some of the recommendations in the aforementioned study were adopted and updated based on the emerging trends and other references for further studies.

INTRODUCTION

People who conduct research on a certain topic have a number of ways to obtain knowledge and facts regarding their query. Visiting libraries or information centers, and surfing the Internet are among the various techniques which the researchers employ to gather information. Doing these two information gathering activities are almost imperative for the researchers before resorting to other methods of obtaining information. But the information needs of the clients vary depending on a number of factors and/or purposes such as age, educational background, academic/scholastic requirements, occupational, and professional requirements. They obtain information from various sources, but some of what they need could only be found in specific sources.

There are different types of libraries or information centers which cater to specific groups of clients. To obtain information for academic/scholastic purposes, students and faculty members go to academic

or school libraries. To satisfy the need for general information and leisurely reading, people may go to public libraries. However, despite the diversity of the collections of the aforementioned types of libraries, these may not be able to suffice the information needs of library clients who look for information on specific areas of knowledge. Thus, another type of library—the special library—is formed.

Special libraries vary according to the objectives of the parent institutions which they support. The law library is a type of special library, which caters to the information needs of lawyers, judges, justices, law professors and students, and those who work in the legal field.

Likewise, the management of special libraries varies from one institution to another, depending on the requirements and policies of, and the type of institution which they support. The law library, for instance, is managed in accordance with the requirements of the legal field and of its parent institution. Law libraries also survive the different issues which presently confront the legal field, which include the complexity and diversity of sources of legal information, technological advances, and meager budget allocations for libraries, through various strategies, which include collaborative activities.

The objectives of this chapter are: (1) to provide an overview of special libraries, and law libraries in particular; (2) to give an overview of how special libraries, particularly the law libraries are managed; (3) to discuss the management and administration of law libraries in the Philippines using the data in the study conducted by the author in 2012, and by analyzing the said data based on several legal and administrative theories in the Philippines; (4) to illustrate how the managerial functions are exercised in the participating law libraries in the above referred study; (5) to illustrate the need of the law librarians to engage in collaborative activities; (6) to present the model of a law library consortium created by the author in the above-mentioned study, and; (7) to show the possible impacts of the management of the prospective member libraries to the management of the proposed consortium model.

BACKGROUND

Special Libraries: An Overview

As earlier mentioned, there are different types of libraries which cater to the different information needs of various client groups. Information needs, according to Reitz (2011), is defined as a gap in a person's knowledge which gives rise to search for an answer. A certain client may find general data on the topic that he is conducting research on in a public or academic library. But the complete and relevant information can only be found in certain institutions which focus on that particular topic. For example, a doctor or health professional may be able to obtain general facts about a certain disease from some medical dictionaries and encyclopedias in university and public libraries. But that researcher may obtain the materials providing an in-depth discussion of the disease and related literature in the libraries of medical institutions or research centers which were organized primarily to support a particular group whose objectives focus on the subject. It is for this reason that special libraries are established—to respond to the information needs of library clients in specialized fields.

Skinner (cited in Jackson, 1980) stated that the special library has been defined in 1966 as "a library maintained by a business firm, association, government agency, or other organized group whose collections are for the most part limited in scope to the subject area of interest to the sponsor". Over the years, there must have been slight modifications in this definition for the purposes of accommodating

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