

Senior Management and the Provision of Libraries in Independent Schools in England and Wales

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This article is based on research carried out for an ongoing doctoral project at Liverpool John Moores University about the management of school libraries in independent schools in England and Wales. Findings are based on surveys conducted of school library managers and senior management in independent schools, as well as interviews with practitioners and anecdotal evidence from networks of school librarians. In countries such as Canada, the United States, and Australia, the importance of head teachers' support for the library has long been acknowledged, but in the United Kingdom, this is more recent. Current guidelines for best practice in school library management have recently started to emphasize the importance of the support of school senior management. The surveys separately sought the opinions of both librarians and senior management on a range of library-related issues, and these are analyzed in this article. The findings demonstrate that school library managers understand the importance of the role of senior management and that senior management is starting to appreciate the importance of the library for improving learning, teaching, and attainment.

Introduction

The importance of the support of senior management for the school library has long been acknowledged in many countries, where it is often referred to specifically as principal support. A decade or more ago, both Oberg (1995, 1997) in Canada and Henri and Hay (1997) in Australia conducted research to investigate this significant role, and their work in an international study led to the development of guidelines for research and practice published by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA, 2002; Henri, Hay, & Oberg, 2002).

In England and Wales, this relationship between the nature of school libraries and the role of the school's senior management has become apparent more recently. A report by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED, 2006) on what were the main factors influencing change in school libraries identified senior managers, external reviews, and specialist librarians. "Overwhelmingly, the most important factor leading to improvements in school libraries is the commitment and leadership of knowledgeable headteachers" (p. 4).

In this article, we discuss this wide acceptance of the importance of senior management in school library provision in the context of library management in independent schools in England and Wales. We draw on findings from the research literature review and on the results of questionnaire surveys sent separately to both the school library manager and the head teacher of a sample of schools affiliated to the Independent School Council (ISC). The findings were supplemented by additional comments from, and follow-up interviews with, respondents.

This research aimed to investigate school library managers' understanding of the role of senior management and whether senior management recognized the importance of the school library and its manager. It was part of a wider doctoral research project at Liverpool John Moores University that aims to investigate the management of libraries in independent school in England and Wales.

We use the term *library* throughout this article for consistency in referring to the school's central collection of learning resources, although we acknowledge that this collection may be known by other names such as learning resources center, library and resources center, and so forth. We also use the term *senior management* for consistency in referring to the head teacher, bursar, deputy head teacher, and director of studies (the term principal, familiar in many other countries, is not widespread in the UK).

Independent Schools in England and Wales

In England and Wales, schools are either state or independent. The OFSTED (2005) defines an independent school as "any school that provides full-time education for five or more pupils of compulsory school age ... and which is not a school maintained by a local education authority or a non-maintained special school."

Independent schools educate about 7% of children in England and Wales (Independent Schools Council, 2007). A board of governors or trustees is responsible for the efficient management of independent schools, and the senior management of the school has significant control of how the school is run and how each part of the school is resourced and supported. Hence independent schools provide a useful test case for the importance of senior management to school library provision because each case is unique.

School Libraries in England and Wales

There is no statutory requirement for any school in England and Wales to have a library. Most schools in England are funded by the state through local education authorities (BBC, 2005), although increasingly budgetary and management powers are being devolved to individual schools, which can then choose the priorities for their resources. However, in practice, many schools recognize the importance of a library for learning, teaching, and attainment. The result of a lack of legislative imperative for schools to have a library and the need for each school's library to meet the needs of the individual school has led to a huge range in the provision and management of libraries in both state and independent schools.

The interests of school librarians are represented by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), formerly the Library Association, specifically its School Libraries Group <http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/school/> and by the School Library Association (SLA) www.sla.org.uk. The SLA produces useful guidelines for school library staff on a range of topics, and CILIP produces a general guidelines handbook for school libraries (Barrett & Douglas, 2004). The CILIP guidelines are primarily about the management of the school library by the librarian because that is the group they represent, but they acknowledge the importance of senior management in school library provision "where the school's senior management actively supports and endorses the librarian's management of the school library, then the library is more effective in supporting key educational initiatives" (p. 11).

Government advice on best practice comes from a number of sources. The OFSTED (2006) has produced a number of reports relating to school libraries, culminating in the report on good school libraries that clearly highlights the role of senior management:

The most effective headteachers had a vision for the library's key role in raising standards of literacy and making a difference to learning. They talked about placing the library at the centre of the school—and meant it. They funded the library well and understood the importance of appointing well qualified staff. Headteachers gave them opportunities to enhance the role of the library and extend its impact on pupils' learning. (p. 4)

Tilke (2002) wrote a useful textbook on managing secondary school libraries. He also recognized the importance of the head teacher, albeit at a more basic level: "But perhaps the most important job that a head teacher has is in selecting and appointing a librarian to the school" (p. 2)

In addition, the *IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto* (IFLA/UNESCO 2002) and contacts via the International Association of School Librarianship <http://www.iasl-slo.org/> provide an international context for the management of school libraries and demonstrate that the role of senior management is widely accepted internationally. These resources are aimed at school librarians both in state and independent sectors.

As the instructional leader of the school and the key person in providing a framework and climate for implementing the curriculum, the principal should acknowledge the importance of an effective school library service and encourage the use of it. (p. 17)

The guidelines for best practice, professional organizations, and textbooks on school library management are aimed at all school libraries whether in state or independent schools. There are no specific guidelines for libraries in independent schools, and much of the professional advice is relevant to all school libraries in England and Wales.

Research Methodology

The aim of this part of the wider doctoral research was to test the theoretical concept that the role of senior management is pivotal to the provision of good school libraries. Current literature and guidelines for best practice in school librarianship were identified. There is little published information specifically about the management of libraries in independent schools, but the literature about general school librarianship contains a great deal of relevant material to those managing libraries in independent schools. Literature on the role of senior management on school library provision in the international context was also accessed to provide a benchmark for analyzing the situation in England and Wales.

The population for this research study was drawn from schools that belong to organizations affiliated to the Independent Schools Council (ISC). All ISC schools are inspected in a framework approved by the government's OFSTED and the Department for Education and Skills (DFES).

Initially, a survey of library managers in independent schools sought answers to a wide range of questions. The survey was sent to a sample of 150 independent school library managers. Following this survey, interviews were conducted with school library managers where there was a need to clarify issues arising and to encourage further comment on specific themes that were mentioned by respondents.

A survey of senior school management was then conducted in order to investigate their opinions and practice regarding their school library. The survey was sent to the same 150 schools. This survey has only recently been completed, so findings are preliminary.

This article focuses on the sections in both surveys about the role of the library and librarian in the individual school and about the management skills used. As part of surveys to both school library managers and senior management, respondents were asked to read a list of 18 key management skills that were highlighted in the literature and guidelines for best practice (see Table 1). From this list, they were asked to choose five that they considered the most important for managing a school library. Respondents were also asked to read a number of statements about managing a school library and indicate their level of agreement (see Figures 4-16).

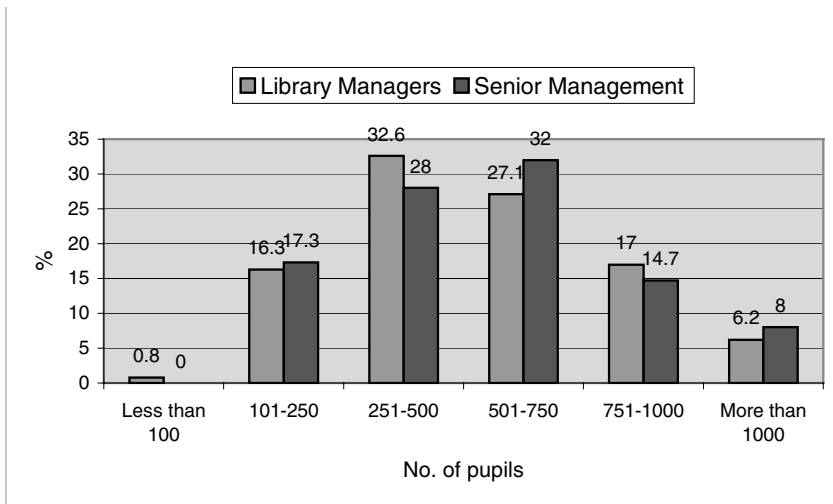


Figure 1. Number of pupils in the school.

Findings From the Surveys

Each survey was sent to 150 schools. The response rate for the school library managers’ survey was 68.7% and for the survey of senior management 50%. The demographics of the responding schools are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Analysis of each school’s information indicates that 50.8% of the ISC schools in the study were coeducational; 12.6% enrolled boys only; and 36.5% enrolled girls only.

Of the 75 respondents to the senior management survey, two had no library in their school. One respondent had made a conscious decision not to have a library and believed that the students could gain access to all their

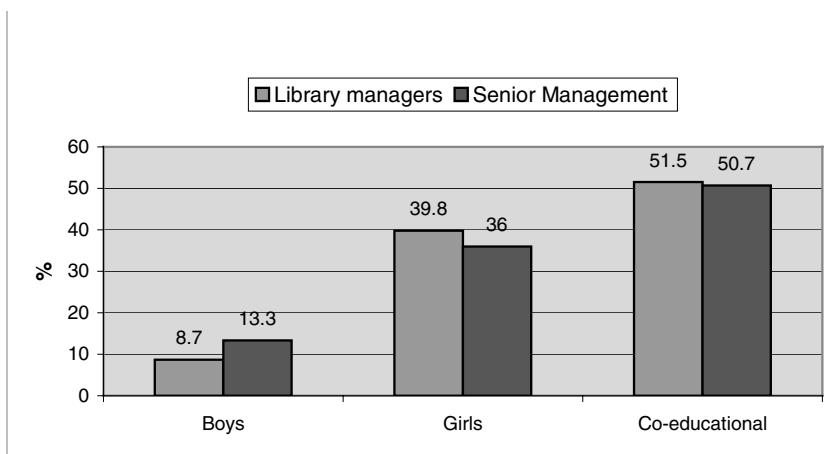


Figure 2. Gender of pupils.

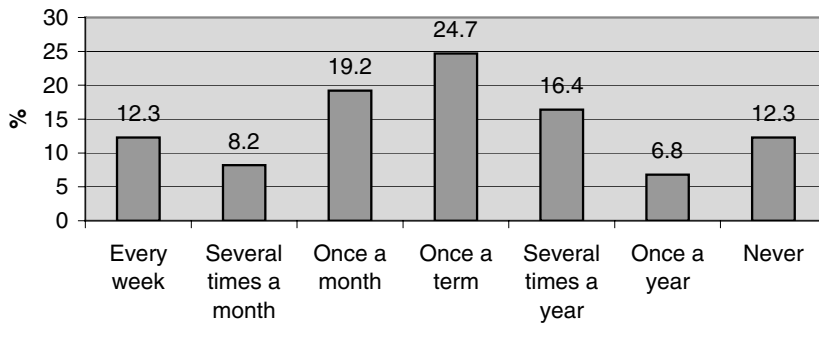


Figure 3. How often do senior management meet with the library manager?

necessary learning resources via the Internet, classroom collections, and public libraries. The other respondent was a recently appointed head teacher who was aghast that the school had no central library and was committed to changing this situation.

Just 6.8% of senior management respondents stated that their school had a governor who represented the library's interests on the governing board.

Senior management were asked how often they met with the library manager (see Figure 3).

Whereas 97.3% of senior management respondents included the library in their whole school annual development plans, only 64.4% of respondents said that they received periodic reports on the library from the library manager.

Senior management respondents were asked to provide a maximum of three major issues that had affected the library in the last three years. In addition, with reference to future planning, respondents were asked to indicate what they considered would be up to three major issues in the next three years. The 10 most cited issues relating to the previous three years were (in order of most frequent citation):

- ICT development;
- stock development;
- automation of the library management system;
- encouraging use by pupils;
- refurbishment of the library;
- the amount of space in the library;
- staffing issues;
- study space;
- budgets and finance;
- new library built.

The 10 most cited issues from the respondents about what they considered would be major issues for the library in the forthcoming three years were (in order of most frequent citation):

- ICT development;
- space in the library;
- encouraging use by pupils;
- stock development;
- budgets and finance;
- curricular role for the library;
- development into a multimedia resources center;
- information literacy;
- new library;
- reader development.

Senior management respondents were also asked how they evaluated the effectiveness of the school library and its effect on learning in their school. Not all respondents answered this question, but of those respondents who did respond, the 10 most cited methods were:

- feedback from heads of department teaching staff;
- borrower statistics;
- no formal evaluation;
- user statistics;
- lessons booked in the library;
- meetings with the library manager;
- development plans;
- observation;
- pupil feedback and questionnaires;
- scrutiny of pupils' work.

Other methods that were mentioned by only one or two respondents were appraisal, displays and events in the library, reports from the librarian, self-evaluation, and the library committee.

The 18 management skills suggested to respondents are listed below first, in alphabetical order; second, in the order they were selected by school library managers; and finally, in the order in which they were selected by senior management (see Table 1).

A series of statements about the management of libraries in independent schools was presented to respondents in both surveys. Respondents indicated their level of agreement with each statement, and these are outlined and discussed below (see Figures 4-16).

Discussion

This article focuses on senior management and the provision of libraries in independent schools in England and Wales. It draws on surveys of both senior management and school library managers to understand perceptions and opinions about the school library service provided by the school. In addition to questions on both surveys, senior management were also

Table 1
Management Skills

<i>Management Skills (alphabetical order)</i>	<i>Library Managers Frequency Order of Skills Selected</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Senior Management Frequency Order of Skills Selected</i>	<i>%</i>
Advocacy	Communication	63.1	Communication	75.3
Behavior management	Information literacy	62.1	Information literacy	63
Collection management	Reader development	48.5	Reader development	46.6
Communication skills	ICT	47.6	Self motivation	42.5
CPD Training	Willingness to do routine tasks	46.6	ICT	41.1
Evaluation & monitoring	Self motivation	38.8	Willingness to do routine tasks	40
Financial	Collection management	30.1	Behavior management	28.8
Health and safety	Behavior management	25.2	Evaluation and monitoring	23.3
ICT	PR/marketing	21.4	Collection management	20.5
Information literacy	Time management	21.4	Advocacy	16.4
Policies and development plans	Financial	14.6	Staff management	16.4
Project management	CPD (Training)	13.6	Project management	15.1
PR/marketing	Evaluation and monitoring	13.6	Time management	15.1
Reader development	Staff management	13.6	Policies and development plans	13.7
Self motivation	Advocacy	9.7	Financial	11
Staff management	Project management	8.7	PR/marketing	8.2
Time management	Policies and development plans	6.8	Health and safety	6.8
Willingness to do routine tasks	Health and safety	3.9	CPD (Training)	4.1

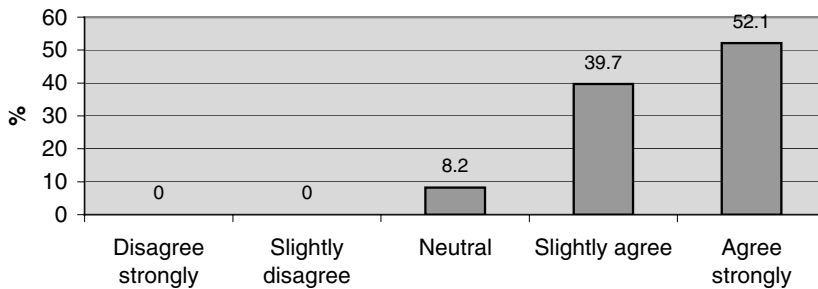


Figure 4. “My school library contributes to education, learning and attainment” – senior management responses.

asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement “My school library contributes to education, learning and attainment” (see Figure 4). No respondent disagreed with the statement, which indicates an understanding by senior management respondents of the pedagogical importance of the school library.

A number of senior management respondents added comments about how much they valued their school library and library manager as follows.

I have an extremely capable librarian who plays an enthusiastic and increasingly important role in our move towards independent learning.

I am lucky to have a highly competent, forward-looking librarian who does an excellent job.

The school library is lively and well used.

We very much value the professionalism of our librarian.

Line Management Communication

An interesting finding was that in 6.8% of the schools in the study, the library’s interests were represented only by a specific governor on the board of governors. The importance of governors’ support is emphasized in the guidelines for best practice, which state that a representative of the governing body should be on the library committee (Barrett & Douglas, 2004), but the survey responses illustrate that in practice this does not often happen.

However, a high percentage of senior management respondents (97.3%) said that the library was included in their school annual development plans. Fewer than two thirds of senior management respondents (64.4%) stated that their school library manager provided them with periodic reports on library activities and management, indicating a possible problem with communication from library manager to senior school management in a number of schools.

Major Issues

Senior management respondents were asked what they considered had been the major three issues affecting the library in the last three years and what they considered would be the three major issues in the next three years. The responses highlighted in the Findings section illustrate a good understanding of school library management in that the development of ICT is mentioned as an issue affecting the library in the last three years. Also mentioned were development of stock, automation of the library management systems, use by pupils, new library being built and refurbishment, space and study areas, staffing, and budgets. It is encouraging that the curricular role of the library, information literacy, and readers’ development are seen as major issues for the future of the library service, although perhaps these might also have been expected to have been mentioned as issues of the last three years.

Evaluation of the Effect of the Library

Although it was an open question, when senior management were asked how they evaluated the effectiveness of the library and its effect on learning, 52 of the 73 respondents answered. Respondents were encouraged to mention as many evaluation tools as they wished. The two most common methods of assessing the effect of the library were feedback from heads of department and borrower statistics. The third most commonly stated response was that there was no formal evaluation. Statistics of use by students and the number of lessons booked in the library were the next most frequently mentioned assessment methods, followed by meetings with the library manager, development plans, personal observation, pupil questionnaires, and scrutiny of pupils' work. Many of these methods are passive, requiring the feedback of teaching staff or the quantitative statistics provided by the librarian or are relatively informal methods such as observation.

In England and Wales, the OFSTED inspection process has recently started to use a self-evaluation process whereby school library managers complete much of the information about their library before inspection (Department for Education and Skills, 2005). The Independent Schools Inspectorate (<http://www.isinspect.org.uk/>) will also adopt self-evaluation, so it is of interest that only one senior management respondent mentioned this self-evaluation process when asked about how they measured the effect of the school library.

Management Skills

To ascertain the management skills senior management and school library managers considered the most important for the management of the school library, respondents to both surveys were asked to read a list of 18 skills. This list was not comprehensive, but consisted of the major skills mentioned in the research literature and in guidelines for best practice. Respondents selected five skills they considered the most essential for the manager of their school library (see Table 1).

It was interesting to note that in both surveys, the three most commonly selected skills were the same. Communication skills, information literacy skill, and reader development were seen as the key skills essential for a school library manager. Similarly, ICT, willingness to do routine tasks, and self-motivation were the next most selected skills by both school library managers and senior management respondents. This indicates a strong similarity among school library managers and senior management about their understanding of the management skills required to manage a school library.

There were some substantial differences in other selections, reflecting the interests of both sets of respondents. Public relations or marketing of the library services was considered one of the top five management skills by 21.4% of library manager respondents, but by only 8.2% of senior management respondents. This may be because this is part of the day-to-day job

of running a library service, which would obviously be more relevant to the school librarian than to senior management. Similarly, the ability to continue with professional development through training is more personally relevant to a practitioner running the school library (13.6% selected continuing professional development as a top-five management skill as opposed to 4.1% of respondents from senior management for whom this was the least chosen skill).

On the other hand, 23.3% of senior management respondents selected evaluation and monitoring among their top-five skills, but only 13.6% of school library manager respondents did so, which is perhaps more surprising because school librarians increasingly need to monitor and evaluate their service both for internal management and for inspection. Advocacy was selected by 16.4% of senior management and by only 9.7% of library managers, although this may be because this is a relatively recent term in school librarianship in the UK so there may have been confusion over nomenclature. More senior management respondents selected policies and development planning, probably because this is a significant part of their own job (13.7% selected this compared with 6.8% of school library managers), and similarly with project management (15.1% selected this compared with 8.7% of school library managers).

We should mention that these are only the five most commonly selected skills. This does not mean that either respondent group considers the other skills unimportant, only that they are deemed less essential for the management of their particular school library. It is perhaps interesting to note that health and safety was the least selected skill by library manager respondents and the second least selected by senior management, especially as this is the skill that has the most legislative importance and necessity.

Opinions About School Library Management

To gauge opinions and perceptions of school library management, the surveys of school library managers and senior management included a series of statements about which respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement.

The survey asked whether respondents felt that a school library manager should have a librarianship qualification (see Figure 5): 65.7% of library managers and 67.1% of senior management either slightly or strongly agreed that he or she should. However, it was surprising to note that although only a small percentage of both respondent groups disagreed with the statement, more school library managers (18.6%) than senior management (9.5%) either slightly or strongly disagreed that school library manager should have a librarianship qualification. This may seem a strange finding, but it can be explained by the fact that there is no requirement in England and Wales for a school library manager to have either a librarianship or teaching qualification. Also, 18.4% of respondents to the survey of school library managers did not have a formal librarianship qualification.

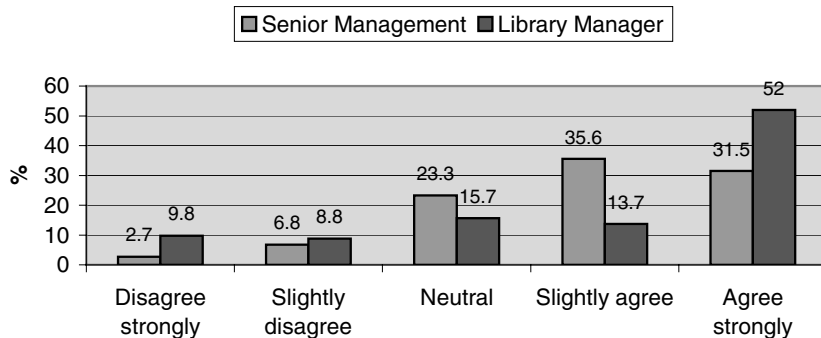


Figure 5. “A school library manager should have a librarianship qualification.”

In England and Wales, it has historically been unusual for a school library manager to be qualified for both teaching and librarianship as has been more common in other countries such as Australia (Australian School Library Association, 2004) and the US, where “State certification regulations in most states require school librarians in the United States to hold dual certification as a teacher and as a school librarian” (Knuth, 1995, p. 273).

Both CILIP (formerly the Library Association) and the School Library Association have urged that school library staff be either chartered (a qualified librarian who is a chartered member of CILIP) or have library qualifications. The findings from the survey demonstrated that school library managers were more supportive of having a teaching qualification than senior management. This was unexpected because we thought that senior management might have wanted dual qualified librarians whereas library managers would be supportive of their sole library qualification status (see Figure 6).

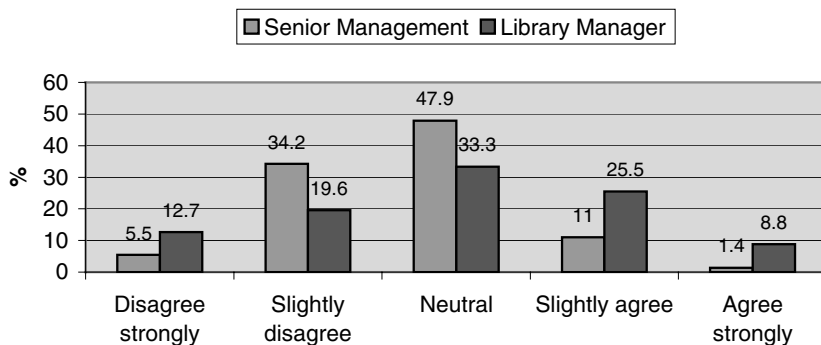


Figure 6. “A school library manager should have a teaching qualification.”

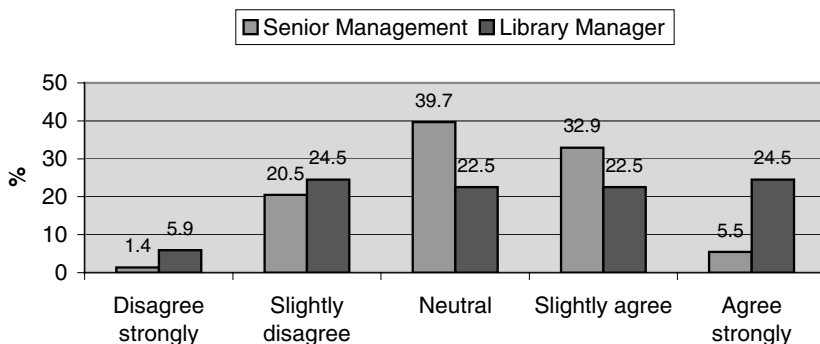


Figure 7. "Experience is more important than qualifications for a school librarian."

Similarly, agreement that experience was more important than qualifications was higher among library managers (46.9% agreeing slightly or strongly) than among senior management, with 38.4% of respondents slightly or strongly agreeing (see Figure 7). However, 30.4% of library managers disagreed to some extent with this statement, against 21.9% of senior management. Figure 7 shows that decisive opinion on the subject of experience being more important than qualifications is more polarized and strongly felt by school library managers. Again, this is a reflection of the current status of the respondents to the school library managers' survey, with those library managers who did not have qualifications believing that experience was more important and those with qualifications disagreeing. Senior management respondents had no strong opinions, 93.1% either neutral about the issue or slightly agreeing or disagreeing.

On the question of whether all teachers understood the role of the school library, again, senior management opinion was not strong, with 86.3% either neutral or slightly agreeing or disagreeing (see Figure 8). However, school library managers' opinions were stronger as more than half (53%) strongly or slightly disagreed that teachers understood the role of the library in their school. As school library managers need the support of teaching staff to provide a relevant, well-used information service to students, this is perhaps an understandable figure. However, more than a third (36.2%) of school library managers agreed that teachers understood the role of the library, which indicates that the relationship between teaching and library staff is satisfactory in at least some schools, although senior management did not appear fully aware when this relationship was flawed, suggesting a need for increased advocacy.

Findings are similar for whether senior management understood how the school library was managed (see Figure 9), although this time, only 2.7% of senior management disagreed, which is a good indication that they

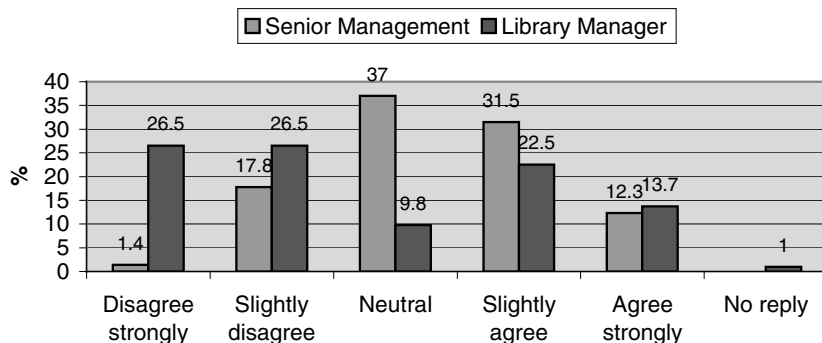


Figure 8. "All teachers understand the role of the library in my school."

believed they understood the management of libraries in independent schools. Although more than half (50.9%) of school library managers accepted that senior management understood how the school library was managed, a significant minority of 27.5% either slightly or strongly disagreed. This indicates a feeling among these respondents that their role and the function of the library are not understood by senior management, a failure of communication in some cases, again suggesting a need for increased advocacy.

Both senior management and library manager respondents mostly slightly or strongly agreed that their school library was well used by pupils (see Figure 10). This positive response was tempered only by the fact that for the small percentage of school library managers who disagreed with the statement, this appeared to be a big concern and an indication of problems

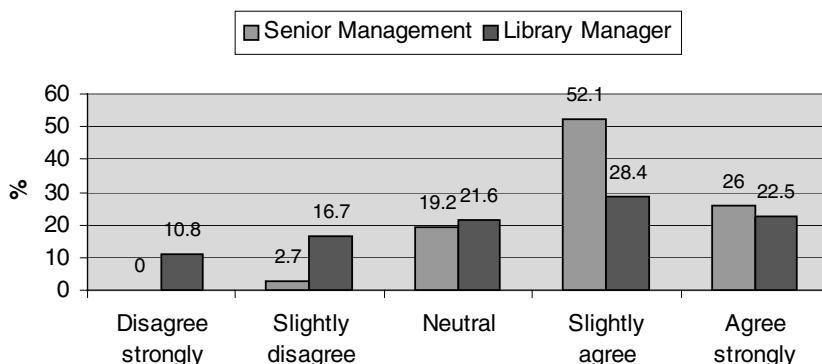


Figure 9. "Senior management understand the way my school library is managed."

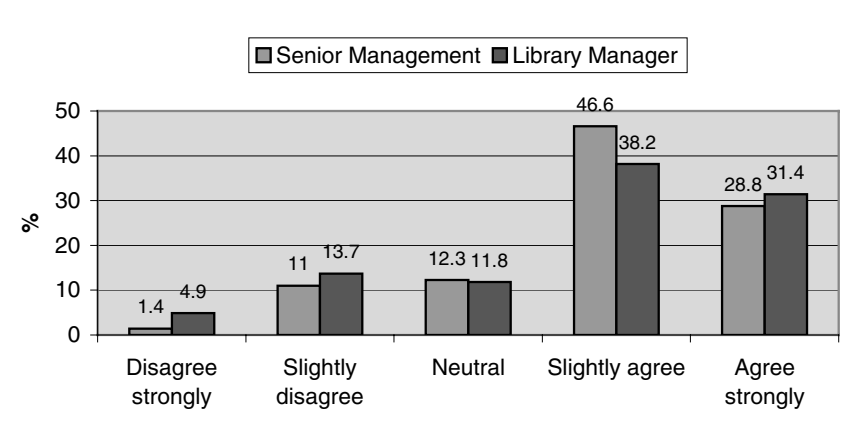


Figure 10. "My school library is well used by pupils."

with access to the library for students, to teaching staff encouraging students to use the library, to relevance of stock, and/or to failings by the library manager to encourage use.

When asked whether the school library manager was able to attend relevant training courses, only 4.1% of senior management respondents either slightly or strongly disagreed (see Figure 11). However, 21.6% of school library managers showed a similar level of agreement, which indicates that this was an issue for more than a fifth of school library practitioners, but that senior management were less aware of the problem.

It is encouraging to find that most senior management respondents disagreed that running the school library was largely a clerical job (see Figure 12). Perhaps more surprising was that 14.7% of school library managers either strongly or slightly agreed with the statement as opposed to only

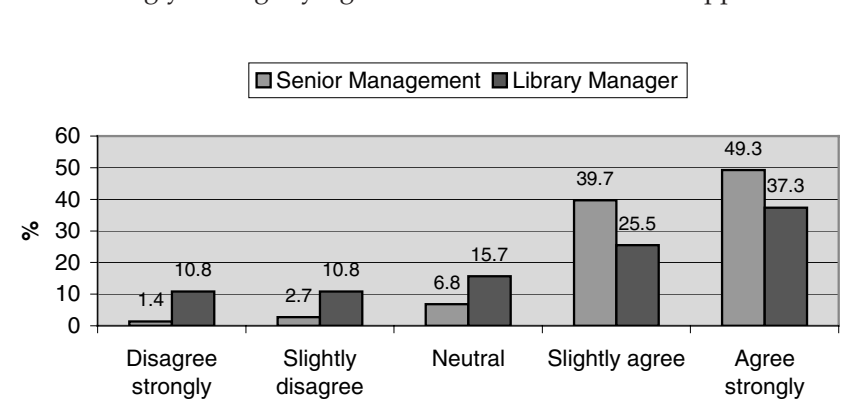


Figure 11. "The school library manager is able to attend relevant training courses."

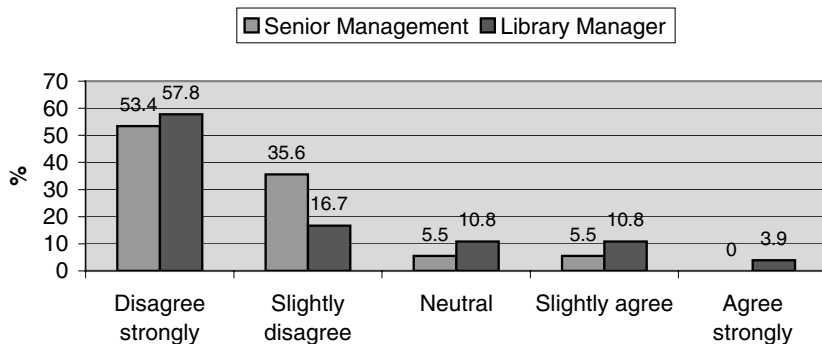


Figure 12. "Running the school library is largely a clerical job."

5.5% of senior management who slightly agreed. This may be because school library managers often have no clerical assistance.

One argument for parents choosing to send their children to independent schools is that discipline is deemed to be less of a problem (MORI, 2001). Although there are obviously exceptions, the surveys show that only 6.9% of senior management respondents believed slightly or strongly that discipline was a problem for their school library, and 17.6% of school library managers responded in the same way (see Figure13). We expected that the practitioners who dealt with students in the library would have a slightly higher agreement that discipline was a problem, but the fact that 70.5% slightly or strongly disagreed with this demonstrates that the school libraries were strongly managed and/or that the pupils were well behaved.

A further perception of independent schools is that they have more money than state schools (MORI, 2001). Although this is certainly not always the case, in any eventuality, senior management have the power to

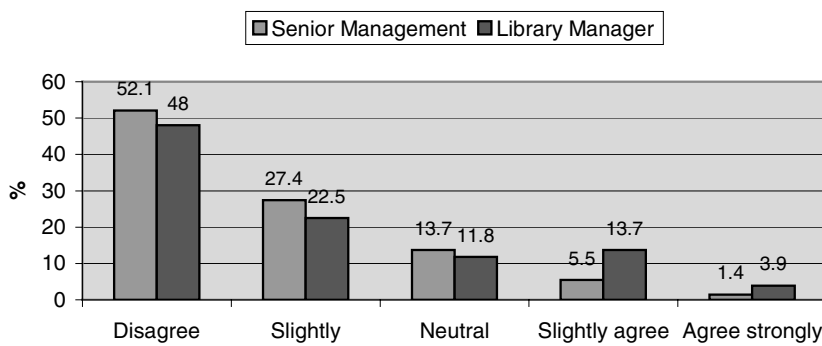


Figure 13. "Discipline is a problem in my school library."

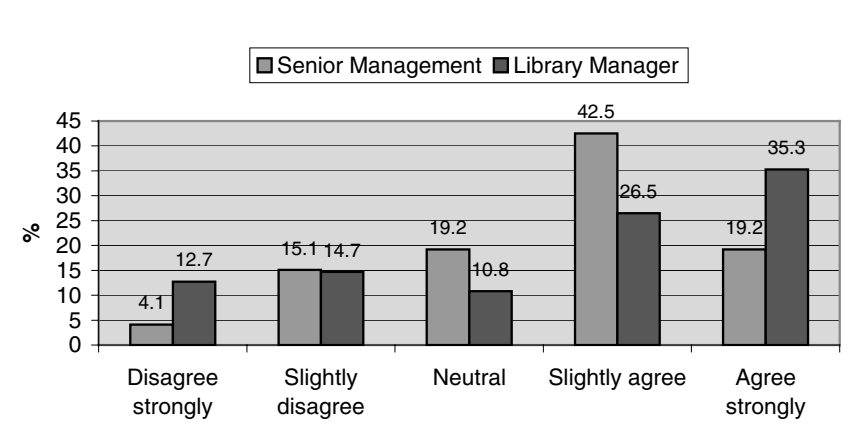


Figure 14. "My school library is adequately resourced."

use whatever finances they are allocated as they deem will most benefit the school. Interestingly, similar percentages of respondents in both senior management (61.7%) and library manager (61.8%) groups either slightly or strongly agreed that their school library was adequately resourced (see Figure 14). However, a sizeable minority of school library managers (27.4%) disagreed. This might be because most services could always use more resources, or it could be a genuine complaint about underresourcing by the school.

A more surprising finding was that whereas 98.7% of respondents to the senior management survey said that they were neutral or agreed slightly or strongly that promoting the library was a major part of the school library manager's job, 22.6% of respondents to the school library managers' survey slightly or strongly disagreed (see Figure 15). The guidelines for best practice emphasize the importance of promoting the library to encourage use: "services need to be promoted to users and potential users" (Tilke, 2002, p. 179). That a fifth of the library manager respondents disagreed is striking, but perhaps can be explained by these respondents either believing that all promotion is done by the school's marketing team or by a lack of understanding that encouraging use of the library constitutes promotion.

One issue that regularly appears on networks of school librarians such as the School Librarians Network (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sln/>) is lack of space for the school library. Space can be an additional problem for independent schools because they are frequently housed in older buildings that are hot in summer and cold in winter, have high ceilings that do not suppress noise, and are often listed (heritage) buildings, which makes structural refurbishment difficult. This could explain why 19.6% of respondents to the school library manager survey strongly disagreed and a further 26% slightly disagreed that space in the library was adequate for its func-

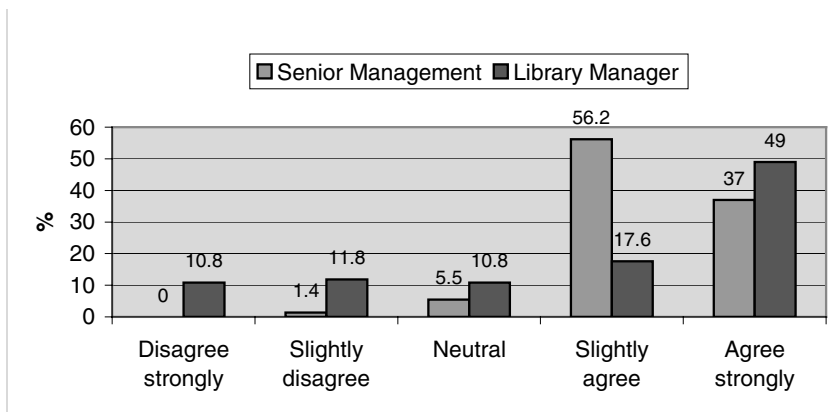


Figure 15. "Promoting the library is a major part of the school library manager's job."

tions (see Figure 16). Almost a third (30.1%) of senior management stated that the space in their library was not adequate for its functions. Again, this indicates the variety of opinions and of school libraries in independent schools, because more than half of respondents to the senior management survey (56.1%) and school library managers' survey (51%) slightly or strongly agreed that space was adequate for the library's functions.

Conclusion

The results of the surveys show that there is a broad range of school library service provision in independent schools in England and Wales and also that there is a broad range of opinions about the management of school libraries by both senior management and school library managers. This variation in school library provision in independent schools is largely influenced by the absence of statutory requirements for any school in any sector to have a school library, the need for each school library to reflect the wider

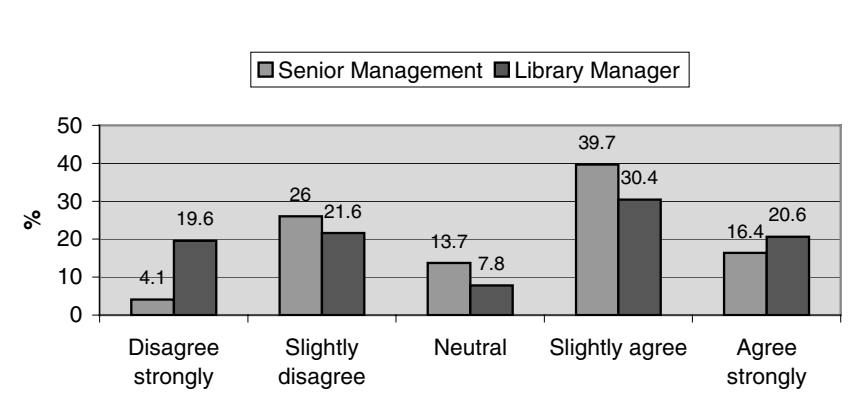


Figure 16. "The space in my school library is adequate for its functions."

school's educational culture and philosophy, the performance of the school library manager, and the fact that each independent school's senior management can choose how to allocate the sometimes limited resources.

The research highlights some concerns about the relationship of senior management and school library managers. A third of senior management did not receive periodic reports on library activity. Few schools had a governor who represented the library on the governing body. And there was little awareness of recent self-evaluation methods for measuring the effect of the school library.

However, senior management respondents in independent schools in England and Wales agreed that their school library contributed to education, learning, and attainment, and few believed that running the school library was largely a clerical job.

Senior management had a generally sound understanding of the major issues affecting school library management and were aware of the developing themes of independent learning, information literacy, reader development, and the curricular role of the library. There was remarkable agreement between senior management and school librarians in choosing communication skills, information literacy skills, and reader development as the most important skills required to manage a school library effectively. Differences of emphasis between library practitioners and the school's senior management accounted for variations in the respondents who selected other skills.

Senior management respondents were generally supportive of the notion that their library manager should have a library qualification, but were less concerned about their having a teaching qualification, and there was little strong feeling either way about experience being more important than qualifications. However, on the questions about qualifications and experience, the school library managers held stronger opinions that were often in line with their own personal status and qualifications.

Although senior management was often more satisfied with the various issues about school libraries, the negative comments by a significant minority of school library practitioners provide evidence of variation in the standard of school library provision, in the support of the wider school community, and in cases where senior management was not aware of problems. For the minority of school library managers who appeared to be experiencing difficulties and lack of senior management support, this is obviously a major issue for them and their school library. Many responses about perceptions of school library management also appear to be a reflection of the current status of the school library and its manager.

Hence the results of the research give the impression that senior management respondents are generally satisfied with their school library and are content to leave its running to the school library manager. However, in some cases, senior management respondents are not fully aware of some problems faced by their school library manager, and there is no totally con-

sistent approach by senior management to school library management. Along with the specific skills and experience of the school library manager and the guidelines for best practice, the support of senior management does appear to be a significant element in school library service provision in independent schools in England and Wales.

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