WHAT IMPRESSIONS DO YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE OF LIBRARIANSHIP AS A CAREER?

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ABSTRACT

Background. The literature reveals a lack of young people currently working within libraries, in particular in professional roles, suggesting that a career in librarianship does not appeal to people under the age of 25.

Aims. This study aimed to find out young people’s impressions of librarianship as a career to find out if they would consider becoming librarians; if so, what is it that appeals to them, if not, why not.

Methods. The research was carried out using two online questionnaires, the first to a sample of young people aged between 18 and 25 years old, the second to current MA Librarianship students at the University of Sheffield. The questionnaire asked both groups their impressions of librarianship as a career and about perceived barriers to entering the profession.

Results. It was found that both a lack of understanding of what the role of a librarian entails and a lack of awareness of librarianship as a professional career choice resulted in young people not wanting to become librarians. The MA Librarianship students identified a number of barriers to young people entering the profession, which were supported by the literature.

Conclusion. The author concludes that, due to young people’s impressions of librarianship, it is not a career that appeals to them. The author believes that it is the individual responsibility of librarians to promote their roles more widely in order that misconceptions can be eradicated and that increased understanding will lead to young people finding it a more appealing career choice.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This research is borne out of the worrying data revealed by the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* (Employers Organisation, 2006) relating to the ages of library staff in 71 authorities in England and Wales. This national survey reveals that just 8.2% of the total library workforce (in 41.2% of England and Wales) is made up of under 25 year olds and a mere 0.9% of professionals are aged 24 or under. Over half of the total library workforce, 56.6%, is made up of staff aged between 40 and 59 years old, with a further 6.0% aged between 60 and 69 years old. These statistics indicate that over half of the people who work in libraries are soon to be reaching retirement age and not enough young professionals are coming up to take their places. The aim of this research is to ask why this is so and what can be done about it.

1.1 Aims & Objectives

The aim of this research is to find out young people’s impressions of librarianship as a career to determine if there is a lack of interest in the profession amongst young people. This will be fulfilled through the following three objectives:

- Literature Review
  
  Is there a staffing crisis? Why?
- Questionnaire to Young People
  
  What are their impressions of librarianship as a career?
- Questionnaire to MA Librarianship students
  
  What do they see as the barriers to young people entering the profession?
1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 Young People

In this study, the term ‘young people’ refers specifically to anyone aged between 18 and 24 years old. The research cannot involve people under the age of 18 for ethical reasons; however, this will not hinder the process or the results as 18 is an age at which young people are starting to think about their future careers and the age at which students could start to undertake university qualifications in order to become professional librarians. The upper age limit of 24 is set to align with the lowest age category used in the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* (that is, under 25 years old) in order that this research can be compared to it.

1.2.2 Librarianship

The tenth edition of *Harrod’s Librarians’ Glossary and Reference Book* defines librarianship simply as “The profession of the librarian” (Prytherch, 2005, p. 415). It is a profession that can be studied at university; indeed, in order to be termed as a professional, as opposed to a paraprofessional, a recognised postgraduate qualification is needed. Whilst the paraprofessional’s role is an important one within the library workforce, it is the professional status that is the concern of this research. Other postgraduate qualifications exist, that allow a person to become a qualified librarian, which do not use the term librarianship, for example Information Science. Such qualifications and alternative terms are not dismissed as meaning something different to librarianship, but the latter term is preferred and used throughout this study for its similarity to ‘librarian’ in order to assess young people’s impressions of the two simultaneously.

1.2.3 Librarian

The definition given in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Soanes, ed, 2002) of ‘librarian’ is problematic as it states that a librarian is “a person in charge of or assisting in a library” (p. 483). This is very broad and does not go into any detail about a librarian being a professionally qualified person and makes no clear
distinctions between the librarian and library assistants. This may reflect the problem of defining librarianship in society, as library users may assume that anyone working in a library is a librarian, yet the person they may come into contact with most often is the library assistant, whose role is quite different.

The *Harrod’s Librarians’ Glossary and Reference Book* (Prytherch, 2005) definition is better as it lists some of the roles undertaken, such as “selection of stock” and “the provision of a range of services in the best interests of all groups of users” (p. 415). And Chowdhury et al (2008) go further by listing six bullet points of the librarians’ main roles, which include selection, acquisition, organization and preservation of stock, both physical and digital, and management of staff and services. In addition, the authors go on to state that, whilst the essence of librarianship has not changed, technological developments are adding new roles. Bowden (1992) also states that information technology is bringing innovation to librarianship.

All of these roles add up to what is meant by the term ‘librarian’ throughout this study. However, it is not assumed that respondents to the questionnaires define the librarians’ role in the same way, which is a major part of the research question; how do young people define the role of a librarian?

### 1.3 Overview of Chapters

In fulfilling the first objective, chapter two reviews the current literature on young people’s impressions of librarianship as a career. Similar studies have been conducted in order to ascertain why people choose librarianship and other stories have been gathered from those already in the profession. The literature review also looks speculatively at the stereotypes surrounding librarianship and librarians and at the qualifications needed in order to qualify as a professional librarian, as these may be reasons for the low number of young people in the profession.

Chapter three outlines the methodological approach to this research, stating why questionnaires were selected as the best data collection method over other methods. The results from these two questionnaires are then analysed in chapter four.
and discussed in chapter five, with chapter six drawing together the conclusions made and suggesting recommendations for further research into this area.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Staffing Crisis

2.1.1 United Kingdom

The *Library Workforce Survey 2005* (Employers Organisation, 2006) shows that just 8.2% of the total library workforce (of those library authorities surveyed) is made up of under 25 year olds, with just 0.9% of under 25 year olds holding professional posts and 0.2% in management roles. 25-39 year olds, the next age category in the survey, account for 18.4% of the total library workforce and 19.8% of professionals, which is only slightly higher than those aged under 25 and not at all encouraging for the future of librarianship; there are not nearly enough people to fill the roles of those who will be retiring in the next few years: 41.2% of professional post holders in the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* are aged 50 and above. In 2005, the UK anticipated a shortage of nearly 11,000 library staff by the year 2010 (ALIA) and this threat has not been resolved today.

2.1.2 Worldwide

Ard et al (2006) note that, in the United States of America (based on 2002 reports), “In 2009 over 25 percent of librarians will reach or pass age 65, and nearly two out of three current librarians will retire by 2017” (p. 237). These authors go so far as to call this a “staffing crisis” (p. 237). The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) also report a “potential crisis” with 60% of librarians in Australia aged 45 or over (2005). This is very similar to the situation in the UK, with the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* showing that 67.4% of library professionals are aged 40 or over. These statistics all indicate that the profession is suffering worldwide with a problem in recruiting young people to join it.
2.2 Young Librarians

It seems from the literature that many people do not decide to pursue a career in librarianship from the start (Bello, 1996). Ard et al (2006) ask why this is the case, suggesting that librarianship simply does not appeal to young people:

“In the eyes of many youth, maybe librarians lack the glamour of...other disciplines, or perhaps people with more life experience have had more opportunities to develop a deeper appreciation of the nature of library work.” (p. 239)

2.2.1 Rewarding Youth

For those young people who do become librarians in their twenties, Love Libraries, a campaign to promote public libraries in England, held an award in 2006 for the “Top Ten Young Librarians of the Future” (Love Libraires, 2008c). The recipients were all aged between 26 and 28. One of the five ‘commended’ young librarians was 24 years old, making her the only one out of fifteen young librarians to fit into the youngest age category used in the Library Workforce Survey 2005 (under 25 years). And, in fact, this 24 year old is listed as a Senior Library Assistant, not a librarian, suggesting either that young librarians are not good enough to win this award or that there are none.

The same campaign also holds an annual award for the “Top Ten New Librarians” (Love Libraries, 2008b). The winners of the 2007 award included three under 25 year olds, though eight out of the ten were in their twenties. These library workers (whose job titles range from ‘Library Assistant’ to ‘Reader Development Officer’ to ‘Children’s Librarian’) were chosen because,

“They are challenging the traditional stereotypes of the types of people who work in libraries and as individuals are transforming public libraries with their fresh ideas, creativity, drive, passion and enthusiasm” (Love Libraries, 2008b).
This shows the importance of young people in the library workplace.

Awards such as these promote the fact that young people can become librarians, and good ones, but also serve to show that they are in the minority in the library workforce. Awards such as these are unlikely to persuade young people to become librarians who have not already considered it a career but may encourage those already studying for their librarianship qualifications.

### 2.2.2 Qualifications

Young librarians (aged under 25 years old) may seem in short supply due to the qualifications process; a degree and a postgraduate qualification, often following library work experience, are all required in order to become a professional librarian (CILIP, 2007). Unless librarianship has been decided upon from the outset of a person’s career, it is hard to complete this educational process and become a librarian before the age of 25.

The educational requirements may also be a barrier to young people taking it up in the first place; the length of time to qualify and the costs involved may be too much for some to consider. Regarding costs, the course fees for the postgraduate taught courses at the University of Sheffield for the academic year 2008-2009 are £3500 for one years full-time study for UK and EU students; part-time students pay £1167 per year and overseas students pay £11,710 (The University of Sheffield, 2008b). Funding can be applied for and an employer may sponsor some students, but these are costs that must be taken seriously.

Although the qualification is a requirement to becoming a professional librarian, the content of librarianship courses is subject to much scrutiny. In 1982, Cronin perceived a “lack of mutual understanding between the two arms of the profession” – the educators (who want to teach theory) and the practitioners (who want practical experience) (p. 9). This issue continues today, as the balance between theory and practice may not be balanced in a way that educators, practitioners and graduates all agree on. An argument played out in a recent issue of CILIP’s *Library and Information Update* magazine (Fallis, 2008) demonstrates this point well.
Previous work experience in a library is often a requirement of gaining access to the postgraduate courses in librarianship or information studies. The graduate, Fallis, sees this as “analogous to medical schools insisting their students have prior experience of treating patients” (p. 22). The CILIP representative, Muzzu, sees work experience as necessary in order to “weed out time-wasters” (p. 24) but acknowledges that a qualification does not guarantee employment at the end. And the library school representative, Corrall, from the University of Sheffield, states, “Reducing the theoretical content of our education programmes to concentrate on vocational training would not provide adequate preparation for professional work” (p. 24). The tensions between qualifications and employment, educators and employers, could, and likely will, go on forever. Whilst it is not unique to the library profession, it may still be a factor in some young people’s career decisions.

2.3 Perceptions

2.3.1 Lack of Awareness

The problem of the lack of new, young talent entering the library profession may be due to public perceptions of libraries and librarians; “Many a user is surprised at the requirement for a degree and a professional qualification in order to practice as a librarian” (Fong, 1992, p. 140) because they do not understand what the librarian’s role within the library entails. The Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals in the UK (CILIP) provides information on the work of librarians, stating that the job involves the use of information technology and customer service skills (CILIP, 2007), both of which may appeal to many young people.

The CILIP website also highlights the varying sectors that a librarian might work in, which may surprise some young people who have only ever encountered public and academic libraries. This points to the problem that lack of awareness of the profession may come from lack of use of (different) libraries and so a lack of appreciation of the librarian and their environment. Many initiatives in recent years have been used to promote libraries, such as the Love Libraries campaign, which promotes public libraries in England, and the current National Year of Reading,
which includes a library membership campaign (National Literacy Trust, 2008), so awareness may be increasing.

2.3.2 Careers Advice

Lack of awareness may also come from a lack of information. A study of how students view librarianship in the United States of America revealed that career counsellors or advisors at either the high school or college level do not commonly advocate the field of librarianship, with one student noting “librarians were not listed in a career directory he had consulted” (Stanley, 2007, p. 85).

Information about librarianship as a career is available from careers websites aimed at young people, such as Prospects and Connexions Direct. The Internet is considered to be the most useful information resource amongst school students (Madden et al, 2007) and so these websites, and others, may be a common place for young people to go to look for careers advice. The Prospects careers index lists two entries for ‘Librarian’ (2008b) – academic and public – which immediately shows a distinction between different sectors. It also lists ‘Library/information assistant’ as an option and three other job titles starting with the word ‘information’ (2008a), which may appeal more to young people due to the similarity with the term ‘information technology’ and disassociation with the term ‘library’ – this relates to the stereotypes, often negative, that libraries and librarians hold.

2.3.3 Stereotypes

Lack of awareness and understanding by young people of what librarianship work entails may also come from the common stereotypes of librarians as old women shushing, shelving and stamping (Sarkanen, 2005). Young people’s perceptions of librarians may link to their interest (or lack of) in taking up the role as a career. A paper by Welsby (1999) calls for awareness programmes to be established in areas where there is a clear lack of understanding and appreciation of what librarians really do, highlighting “the need for a much higher profile for this oft-unappreciated band of people” (p. 67). This is again linked to the high level of qualifications needed with a lack of understanding from the outside as to why they are necessary.
The stereotype of the librarian, and the problems it causes, are worldwide. At the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Pre-Session Seminar in 1992 (Bowden & Wijasuriya, 1994), countries from around the world gathered to discuss the image, status and reputation of the library and information profession. In the country reports, concerns about the future of the profession are raised, and the majority state that stereotypical images are holding the profession back. One example of the relationship between stereotypes and young people’s impressions of the profession is shown in Fiji:

“As a result of prevailing stereotyped attitudes towards the profession in Fiji, little opportunity has been offered by the government (the largest employer) to encourage professionals into the field of librarianship.” (Fong, 1992, pp. 140-141)

Luthmann (2007) looked further at the stereotypes and linked them to the reality of what professional librarians are like and what their roles really are. She found many examples of the traditional stereotypes in existence within the mass media but many more examples of positive images of librarians. In analysing Australian print media, for example, “the profession was praised for being innovative and future-focused…” (p. 775) and it was revealed that librarians are not all older and female but younger and male too. This points to the fact that positive images do exist but that perhaps they are not in wide enough circulation yet for the general public to believe them. The Love Libraries campaign is one way in which libraries and librarianship have been promoted in recent years and this exposure can only be good for encouraging young people to consider librarianship as a career. More could be done, though, on websites such as Love Libraries and CILIP to promote young people working there and also just young people enjoying using library services.

2.4 Similar Studies

Several studies have been conducted that are similar to the objectives of this study. Why people choose librarianship as a career seems to have interested researchers for as long as the profession has existed. This section will look at some recent studies related to student’s impressions of librarianship as a career.
2.4.1 Ard et al

“Listening to the testimonies of new librarians and LIS students provides for far more than passing entertainment or a reason to reminisce; their stories reveal why people enter librarianship and thereby furnish ideas of winning more recruits to the profession” (Ard et al, 2006, p. 237).

This study, conducted in America, correlates in many ways to the present study in that it aims to find out why new librarians chose this career path. When looking at young people’s impressions of librarianship as a career, it is helpful to also ask the impressions of the young people who have already chosen it as a career. Their thoughts and attitudes may help the profession to “devise new ways of marketing librarianship” (Ard et al, 2006, p. 246) to young people.

Ard et al recognised the importance of finding out the “career motivations” (p. 236) of MLIS students at the University of Alabama in helping the future of the profession. In answer to asking the students, “how they made their decision to enter the profession” (p. 236), the following reasons were given:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>“How long has library and information studies been a career goal?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 or more years after college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>First 5 years after college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Since college</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lifetime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Since High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Few months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1

Information based on Ard et al (2006), Figure 1, p. 240.
Ard et al have quantified respondents’ answers in order to produce quantitative data and produce graphs. The above question is an important one to ask with relation to attracting young people into the profession and shows that it is most common to choose librarianship as a career some years after college, thus meaning that many new professionals are not young people when they take up their first posts as librarians.

Ard et al supplied participants to their questionnaire with a list of reasons to mark as to why they chose to join the library profession. The most popular answer was “job functions” (p. 241), whilst the least popular answer was that salary expectations were a major influence. Although space was left for respondents to add their own reasons, the use of suggestions may influence their answers. The questionnaires reported on in chapter four do not list such suggestions to the MA Librarianship students, in order that respondents can report their own story in their own words, though similar answers may well be given to those in Ard et al’s study.

2.4.2 Bello

Similarly to Ard et al, a study conducted ten years previously asked ‘why do librarians become librarians?’ Bello (1996) asked librarians in Nigeria what had influenced their decision to join this profession based on hypotheses of three different influences: external, professional and extrinsic. The responses to the questionnaires revealed that “librarianship in Nigeria is still essentially an influence-orientated profession” (p. 19).

Several similarities can be drawn between Bello’s study and the current one; for example, certain assumptions have had to be made, such as the respondents would still remember the factors that influenced their choice of librarianship and that they still want to be librarians. It will be interesting to compare the results of this study, which questions students in England, to the results of Bello’s study, conducted in Nigeria over ten years ago. Although the methodologies differ, comparisons of the results will still be possible; Bello takes a quantitative approach whereas the present study will gather qualitative data, for reasons outlined in chapter three.
2.4.3 Stanley

Ard et al and Bello asked current librarianship students why they chose the profession. Stanley (2007) does the same, but additionally asks a group of non-librarianship undergraduates their thoughts on the profession. Using focus groups, she gained the student’s opinions on librarianship as a career. Their impressions of librarians were all stereotypical: “shy, organized, helpful, quiet, reserved” etc (p. 85) and their impressions of the role were also stereotypical, even for a group of people who use libraries as part of their studies, which shows that they do not come into contact with librarians and so do not see their real roles. A very interesting question asked of this group of young people was “what they thought could be done to make the field of library science more appealing to their peers or high school students” (p. 85), to which most replied that the profession should be made more visible and promoted more as a career choice.

Stanley’s aims were to address the problems of diversity in the library workplace with regards to ethnicity rather than age. This study, conducted in 2007 at the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, focused on the fact that African Americans and Hispanics are under-represented in the library workforce, which may discourage others of the same ethnic background from using the libraries or entering the library profession. Similarly, it may be said that young people may be discouraged from using and working in libraries if they perceive them to be places for old people. Stanley’s research concludes that, “It is vital that librarians be proactive in cultivating a professional identity as diverse as the users that they serve” (p. 87), which can be applied to age as well as ethnicity. This goes some way to suggesting that the image of the librarian as a white, middle-aged female is based on truth, even today.

Stanley’s study used focus groups, which are a good way of collecting information on organisational thoughts and practices and are commonly used in qualitative data collection in order that “a variety of perspectives and explanations” are obtained and participants can prompt each other in their ideas (Gorman & Clayton, 2005, p. 143). However, this is not an appropriate method to use in this research study for reasons outlined in chapter three.
2.4.4 LISTen

A similarity between the above past research studies is their interest in the stories of why librarians became librarians. Ard et al (2007) note the importance of these reflective stories: “[they] reveal why people enter librarianship and thereby furnish ideas for winning more recruits to the profession” (p. 237).

A call for librarians to contribute to the LISTen podcast (2008), by telling listeners why they chose librarianship, generated five responses, all from librarians in the United States of America. The first contributor said that he decided to become a librarian whilst working as a library clerk after finishing college; he observed the work of the reference librarians and thought “I could do that” (LISTen, 2008). This correlates to Gordon and Neisbitt’s findings from a survey of 391 librarians in 1999; Ard et al (2006) report that they “found that the interest arising from pre-professional library jobs provided the number one impetus for pursuing an MLIS” (p. 238). Another contributor to the LISTen podcast chose librarianship for another common reason: a love of reading. And, not unusually, he chose librarianship later on in life, at the age of 50. This highlights the problem that librarianship, although attracting new people to the profession, not enough are under the age of 25. Whilst this particular librarian took his qualification at the age of 50 and so would be considered a new professional with an up-to-date qualification (one of the Love Libraries’ Top Ten New Librarians is aged 55), this does not solve the problem that he, by his own admission, will be retired within 20 years (LISTen, 2008).
CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative piece of research that takes an inductive approach, as the conclusions are guided by research responses rather than a predefined theory. Qualitative research is appropriate to this study as it suits the reflective nature of the profession of librarianship and the questionnaires give respondents the opportunity to state their own memories and opinions in their own words. The data will be thematically analysed using open coding, as described below.

3.1 Why Questionnaires

Two different questionnaires were conducted in which young people’s impressions of the profession were gathered; these will be examined, compared and discussed in the following chapters. The first questionnaire was aimed at young people who have not chosen librarianship as a career or who have not yet decided upon a career path. The second questionnaire was aimed at students taking the MA Librarianship course at the University of Sheffield and so have already decided upon librarianship as a career. This is a major strength of this research: two groups are being questioned, both using specifically designed questionnaires, in order that different viewpoints can be considered and evaluated.

Questionnaires were favoured over other data collection methods after careful consideration; as Gorman and Clayton (2005) note, “the method must be chosen to suit the type of investigation being undertaken, not vice versa” (p. 95). Overall, it was felt that electronic questionnaires were best suited to the target groups and in fulfilling the aims of the study; young people and students would respond better to technology than face-to-face discussions and so this would produce the best results to be analysed. Other methods considered, however, were interviews and focus groups.
3.1.1 Interviews

The main advantage of interviews is that the involvement of personal interaction means that a discussion around a topic can take place, rather than just one question being asked, which will allow for exploration of meaning and eliminate ambiguities (Gorman & Clayton, 2005). Whilst this would be advantageous when speaking to both the young people and the MA Librarianship students, time constraints have ruled out this method of data collection. MA Librarianship students may not have felt able to spare the time required in order to be interviewed for this project and it would have been hard to reach as many young people as the electronic questionnaires have. Also, many young people may have been reluctant to talk one-on-one about their personal opinions in an interview, as they cannot be totally anonymous; considering the way in which participants were sourced (see section 3.2.5 on sampling), this may have meant that less honest answers were given than were in the questionnaires. The questionnaires were less intrusive because they could be carried out at a time and place suitable to the participants, yet still revealed more personal information and opinions than an interview may have done in this case.

3.1.2 Focus Groups

Although focus groups with each of the two groups would eliminate some of the problems of interviews, such as spending an amount of time with each individual (although practical issues of setting up the group still remain), it was still not felt the best approach for this research. Stanley (2007) used focus groups in her study to allow for in-depth discussions between minority-group members of the university. However, whilst it is true that group discussions generate a variety of perspectives from a single data-gathering session (Gorman & Clayton, 2005), this particular research is more interested in individual thought. A disadvantage of focus groups is that one or two people could dominate the discussion and others may just agree with them (Gorman & Clayton, 2005), which would not produce useful results for this research.
Focus groups may have been, if time allowed, an appropriate method to use as a follow-up technique to the questionnaires, where common themes arising from the answers could be discussed in more depth. This points to the fact that this research takes an inductive approach, starting with observations, then drawing out patterns and then building up theories (Trochim, 2006), as can be seen in the following chapters.

3.2 Questionnaire Design

Both of the questionnaires were designed using Survey Monkey, a website that enables questionnaires to be designed and administered electronically. This website allows the author to use different types of questions, including multiple-choice boxes for closed-end questions and comments boxes for open-end questions.

3.2.1 Open-end Questions

As this research calls for respondents’ personal opinions and encounters, many open-end questions were used in both questionnaires, with large text boxes in order to encourage detailed answers. Open-end questions avoid the risk of respondents being influenced by options offered in closed-end questions but run the risk of producing vague or misinterpreted answers (Peterson, 2000). This risk was recognised and so reduced as much as possible by wording questions simply to make them as clear as possible. Some questions are, in fact, a series of questions and some include examples of the type of answer expected, for example question two of the questionnaire for MA Librarianship students:

What perceptions did you have of librarianship before the start of this course?
For example, what did you think the job of a librarian would entail?
Have your perceptions changed now, at the end of this course?
The questions for the young people in the first questionnaire are shorter than this in order that they do not appear confusing or too involved and so to encourage respondents to give an answer, as open-end questions “generally have higher refusal rates” (Peterson, 2000, p. 32).

The analysis of the data in the open-end questions takes on an open coding approach; for each question, common themes are drawn out of respondents’ answers. These themes, or categories (Robson, 2002), are ranked in order of most popular, giving an ordered list of answers for each question, which can then be tabulated and analysed (Peterson, 2000).

3.2.2 Closed-end Questions

Closed-end questions, where a list of answers is given for participants to choose from, were appropriate in some instances in order that answers were meaningful and could be analysed. Where more than one answer could be chosen, if appropriate, the phrase “Please tick all that apply”, or similar, was added to ensure that no confusion arose (Peterson, 2002). This type of question was used more in the questionnaire for young people than in the questionnaire for MA Librarianship students as it was felt that a lengthy set of open-end questions would discourage the young people from responding; closed-end questions are quicker and simpler to answer “because they require less physical and mental effort” (Peterson, 2002, p. 38).

As this is very much a qualitative piece of research, the analysis of these answers uses descriptive statistics. Bar graphs and pie charts are used to visually represent the answers, which are then discussed.
3.2.3 Demographic Questions

Only demographic information necessary and relevant to this research topic was asked in each of the questionnaires. In the case of the young people this was age, gender and occupation and in the case of the MA Librarianship students this was age, gender and mode of study (that is, full time or part time). These questions were left until the last page of the survey, as suggested by Peterson (2000) and Clampitt (2000), so that respondents had already given full answers to the most important questions without feeling that they were revealing their identities. One MA Librarianship student did not answer these questions, perhaps “due to fatigue or the content of the questions” (Peterson, 2000, p. 84), but better these questions were missed than the substantive, open-ended questions at the beginning, on which the research relies most heavily.

The aim of this whole study is to gain impressions from young people, therefore the age question is a very important one. The age ranges in both questionnaires were chosen in order to correlate with those used in the Library Workforce Survey 2005 (Employers Organisation, 2006). Peterson (2000) states that, when designing a questionnaire in which an answer is to be compared with another study, the question “may be dictated by the wording of the question in the other study” (p. 84).

3.2.4 Testing

Both of the questionnaires were modified after initial testing was carried out.

Questions were worded with their target audience in mind, so whilst all questions were designed to be clear and simple, the questions for the MA Librarianship students were often longer, asking for more information, than the questions for the young people. It was revealed in the initial testing of the young people’s questionnaire that more clarity was needed in some of the questions and so they were modified as appropriate.
Most questions were given separate pages of the electronic survey so that respondents were not distracted by too much on the page and could focus on one question at a time; this is something that came out in the initial testing of the MA Librarianship questionnaire.

3.2.5 Sampling

Email and electronic surveying were effective in support of the sampling methods used. The MA Librarianship questionnaire was simply sent to the email list of everyone registered on the course, ensuring that all 42 students, studying both full time and part time at the University of Sheffield, received the questionnaire. Sixteen responses were gathered, all though the electronic survey powered by Survey Monkey. For the young people, the survey was sent electronically via email to ten contacts, aged between 18 and 24, with the request that recipients forward it on to anyone else they knew within the specified age group that they felt may also be interested in completing it. This method of identifying appropriate participants is known as snowball sampling, where respondents may act as informants to identify other potential participants (Robson, 2002). This survey, through the use of existing contacts and snowball sampling, generated a total of 19 responses in the five weeks that it was open.

3.2.6 Administering

As both of the questionnaires were electronic, links were emailed to potential participants along with an accompanying email (see appendices 8.1 and 8.2) outlining the purpose of the questionnaire and an attached information sheet (see appendices 8.3 and 8.4), which gave further details about participation. Email was chosen as the method of administering both questionnaires for its ease and effectiveness; participants could read all of the information in their own time and make an informed decision about whether or not to respond, and then take as much time as necessary to complete the questionnaire.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESULTS

With the aim of this research being to gain insights into the impressions young people have of librarianship as a career, a questionnaire was designed and sent to people aged between 18 and 24 asking several questions around the issues of librarians, libraries and careers. This age range encapsulates people who are leaving school, college or university and are beginning to decide upon which career path to take. In addition, this age range was chosen in order to match the lowest age range used in the Library Workforce Survey 2005 (Employers Organisation, 2006).

A second questionnaire was designed for people who have already decided upon librarianship as a career – the members of the MA Librarianship course at The University of Sheffield – in order to assess their motivations for choosing this career path. Therefore the results from this questionnaire will be discussed in comparison to the young people’s questionnaire results. In the following chapter, themes emerging from both questionnaires will be discussed.

4.1 Results from the Young People

The purpose of this questionnaire was to gain an insight into the impressions 18-24 year olds have of librarianship as a career. See appendix 8.5 for a copy of the electronic questionnaire.

4.1.1 Question One

*In your view, what do librarians do? What does their job entail?*

The key answers to this question, as answered by all nineteen respondents, are listed below in Table 4.1, in order of most popular to least popular answer. The tally shows the number of mentions each answer received.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Answers</th>
<th>Tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Keep Libraries Organised</td>
<td>⬤⬤⬤⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Serve Customers</td>
<td>⬤⬤⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Advice in Teaching/Learning Environment</td>
<td>⬤⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Order New Books</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Use &amp; Search Databases</td>
<td>⬤⬤⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Knowledge of Books</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Managing Staff &amp; Resources</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Keep Track of Borrowed Books</td>
<td>⬤</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Displays</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Shout at People</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1

Answers to the effect of ‘keep libraries organised’ ranged from “Put books back on shelves when returned”, suggesting a library assistant’s role, to “managing staff and resources”, which can be interpreted as more in line with a librarian’s role. The next two most popular answers centre around users and their needs, a key role identified in the *International Encyclopaedia of Information and Library Science* entry for ‘Librarian’: “…a preoccupation with the user and the user’s needs” (Feather & Sturges, 2003, p. 370).

The five answers that received one mention each (ranking eighth) are mostly valid and important roles, such as “organising events for the library” and “researching”; however “shout at people” indicates that this respondent has a very stereotypical view of librarians. This response is from a twenty year old who does not use libraries since “i owe them all money” and therefore has a poor image of librarians and libraries due to personal experience. Other answers, such as “till
work” and “keep track of borrowed books” show a miscomprehension of the difference between the librarian and library assistants.

While answers that describe a library assistant rather than a librarian were expected, answers were wide-ranging and many showed an appreciation of the different roles librarians take on. However, it is hard to know through an anonymous, electronic questionnaire the true understanding respondents have; for example, “Keep libraries organised and structural” could indicate an understanding of the management responsibilities of librarians or could simply mean that they keep books organised in alphabetical order. Looking at who wrote this comment, using questions five to eight of this questionnaire, this 18 year old college student who doesn’t know any librarians may not have enough experience of using libraries to have meant the former. Also, her answer to question three, that she would not consider becoming a librarian because “I’d find it too repetitive”, may indicate that she sees librarians more as shelvers of books than managers of people. Although these are assumptions, they are based on all of the specific information asked for in this questionnaire.

4.1.2 Question Two

Did you know that librarians work in...? (Please tick all places that you are aware of a librarian working in)

![Figure 4.1](image-url)
Respondents were asked to tick the box next to any place that they were already aware of librarians working in from the list of nine suggestions. Figure 4.1 shows that every respondent knew that librarians work in public, school, college and university libraries, and this is not surprising since the young people are most likely to have had personal experiences of these libraries (for example, 73.7% of respondents have used public libraries; see question four on library use). Over half of respondents were aware of librarians working in prison libraries and eight out of nineteen knew that librarians could be found working in hospitals. Assuming that all respondents were honest in their answers to this question, it would be interesting to find out how many would have named Hospital, Government, Law Office and Business as places where librarians work had the options not been given. However, it was felt necessary to provide these options to give a better picture of young people’s awareness; had it been an open question, many may simply have put something to the effect of ‘librarians work in a library’, which would not have been helpful in this research.

4.1.3 Question Three

*Have you ever considered becoming a librarian?*

*If yes, can you explain why it appeals to you?*

*If no, can you explain why not?*

Three respondents in total replied positively to this question, all saying that the job might appeal to them due to their love of books. The sixteen negative responses to this question produced the following reasons, in order of most frequently occurring:

1. Boring/wouldn’t suit my interests
2. Lack of careers advice
3. Already decided on a different career

One of the fifteen respondents gave no reason to state why she would not consider the career.
The most common answer for librarianship not being appealing was that it was “Not appealing to my personality” or that “I don’t think it would be active enough”. One interesting response was that librarianship “Seems an unintellectally challenging job”, which displays an obvious lack of understanding about what the job entails; this is based on the respondent’s understanding that librarians “Keep the books sorted and in order Order more books Customer Service” (question one). These answers together make it very clear that a lack of understanding about the role of the librarian inevitably leads to a lack of interest in librarianship as a career. This links to the second most popular reason for not considering librarianship as a career: lack of careers advice.

Five of the nineteen young people admitted that they do not really understand what the job of a librarian entails. One respondent answered, “No, because not a lot of information seems to be given on the job at school or careers advice”. This questionnaire may have been the first time the respondent had been prompted to think of librarianship as a career because it is not a high profile job such as teaching, which was the most common profession that respondents had already decided upon (question seven).

Of those who did express an interest in the profession:

- All female
- Two aged 24, one aged 18
- One was already working as a teacher
- One working in administration
- One going to university

This information correlates with much of the literature on who librarians are; it shows that it appeals more to women than men, it is something thought of later in life than straight out of college and highlights the links between librarianship, teaching and university, all of which will be discussed further in this chapter and chapter five.
4.1.4 Question Four

*Have you ever or do you currently use any of the following libraries? (Please tick all that apply)*

This question was designed to ascertain whether use of different libraries makes any difference to knowledge of librarianship. Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of respondents who answered that they had used public libraries or libraries in the education sector.

![Figure 4.2](image_url)

Fourteen of the nineteen young people who answered this questionnaire said they had used a public library before and a slightly lower number, but still over half, said they had used their school libraries. Nine of the nineteen respondents to this questionnaire are currently students, either at college or university, with at least a further four (the teachers) having been to university. It is somewhat surprising, then, that only ten respondents have used college and university libraries; even more worrying is that this is only one less person than has used a school library. Libraries have clearly not been promoted, encouraged or available in some young people’s lives, which may explain the lack of understanding about librarianship many of the young people in this questionnaire have.
Three of the nineteen respondents to this question said they had never used any type of library and one selected the ‘Other’ option and commented “no i owe them all money”, which suggests that in fact he has used a library in the past but has had a negative experience. Negative experiences as a child in either a school or public library will do nothing to encourage young people to think about working in libraries in the future and is an area that is being addressed in chapter four.

4.1.5 Questions Five, Six & Seven

Age, Gender & Occupation

For this questionnaire, the first age group from the Library Workforce Survey 2005 (that is, 18-24) was broken down into its individual ages so that it was revealed exactly how old respondents were at the time of answering the questionnaire; this was important because it may indicate at what stage in their career development they are. There is a big difference in terms of amount of time spent in the workplace and the educational levels it is possible to achieve between 18 year olds and 24 year olds. Therefore the answers about thinking of becoming a librarian may differ for different reasons. Table 4.2 displays the ages, genders and occupations of each of the nineteen respondents to the young people’s questionnaire.

The highest percentage of respondents to the survey for young people were aged 18 years old (36.8%), the ideal candidate at which this survey was aimed, as they are college-aged who are in the first stages of thinking about a career. All seven of the 18 year olds are college or university students; this alone suggests that they may be suited to librarianship as a degree is a requirement for entry into the profession. It also indicates that they all have exposure to libraries.

31.6% of respondents to this survey were aged 24, the oldest age at which this survey was aimed. Four of the six 24 year olds, all female, are teachers, an occupation that has many links to librarianship, as will be discussed in chapter four. Another 24 year old works in administration, as does one 22 year old, and the remaining 24 year old is a university student; in all over half of respondents listed their occupation as ‘student’, as would be reasonably expected of a group of 18-24
year olds. That the jobs listed do not vary greatly – only five different jobs are mentioned – may relate to the way in which the sample was selected.

The majority of respondents to the survey for young people were female (73.7%), three of whom expressed an interest in becoming a librarian. Of the five males (26.3%) who answered the survey, none thought that librarianship would appeal to them and most already had an idea about what career path they wanted to take. Less than half of the males (two) were students. All five were different ages: 18, 19, 20, 22 and 23. No 21 year olds answered the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (Trainee Teacher)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Ice-cream van driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>IT Operations Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sales Assistant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (college)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (college) &amp; shop work part-time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Student (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Student (university)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2
4.1.6 Question Eight

Do you know anyone who is, or has been, a librarian?

Or do you know anyone who works, or has worked, in a library?

If yes, please give details.

![Pie chart showing 58% Yes and 42% No for Do you know a librarian/library worker?](image)

Figure 4.3

After the three demographic questions were asked (age, gender and occupation), this final question was asked to determine whether the answers given in this questionnaire were influenced by knowing someone in the profession. The question was answered by selecting either ‘No’ or ‘Yes’, then, in the case of ‘Yes’, respondents were asked to ‘give details’. Many of the ‘Yes’ answers stated who they knew, for example “my mother” but did not state in what capacity that person worked in a library, that is librarian, library assistant, cleaner etc. Although the question did specify a difference between ‘librarian’ and ‘works in a library’, none of the respondents picked up on these distinctions, so whilst these responses are not helpful in the way they were planned to be, they show that even having a family member or friend who works in a library does not mean that young people understand or appreciate the different roles.
4.2 Results from the MA Librarianship Students

The purpose of this questionnaire was to assess the attitudes towards librarianship of young people who are interested in it as a career and to compare them to the young people’s impressions in the first questionnaire. See appendix 8.6 for a copy of the electronic questionnaire sent to MA Librarianship students.

4.2.1 Question One
Why do you want to become a librarian?
Did anything in particular influence your decision?

The sixteen respondents gave a range of answers to this question, with many similarities between them. Table 4.3 below shows the most popular answers with the tally showing how many respondents mentioned it as a reason for wanting to become a librarian.

The top reasons for the MA Librarianship students at the University of Sheffield wanting to become librarians was wanting to develop a career or progress within libraries and wanting to work with and help library users, be they the public, students or professionals. Many said that “I was influenced by people I met who were librarians”, showing that they may not have thought of librarianship as a career until they were exposed to librarians by working in libraries as assistants.

It is interesting that the third most popular answer was a passion for books and reading, as the three young people who thought that a career in librarianship would be interesting all mentioned this; a 24 year old teacher said, “I adore reading and books and think that a librarian is able to share their joy of books, as well as their knowledge, through their job”, which is similar to the 25-39 year old MA Librarianship student who said, “I think that reading and the notion of access to knowledge to all who want it are two very important things, and the opportunity to be involved in this seemed to good to pass up”. Although this was the only reason for the young people finding librarianship a potentially interesting career and the MA Librarianship students listed several each, it is interesting and encouraging to find a similarity.
There are many contrasts between the answers from this question and those of the young people when asked if they would consider librarianship as a career (question three). An eighteen year old college student, who had a fairly accurate though limited view of what librarianship involved (from her answer to question one), commented that librarianship would not interest her “because it seems to be a very quiet job that doesn’t vary greatly”. Yet three of the MA Librarianship students had chosen librarianship for its variety, mix of skills and interest, one clearly stating
that, “I wanted to become a librarian as I wanted a job that would be interesting and varied”. Similarly, a 23 year old IT Operations Assistant said, in question three, that librarianship “Seems an unintellectually challenging job”, whereas many reasons given by the MA Librarianship students would seem to contradict this, such as an interest in education, relevance to a bachelors degree and the research elements often involved. This is not to mention that a postgraduate qualification, such as the Masters in Librarianship, is required to become a professional librarian and that ICT plays an important part in modern librarianship, “for circulation systems, catalogues and access to remote bibliographical and other resources” (Feather & Sturges, 2003, pp 370-371), something this particular young person may have an interest in based on his job title.

*At what age or stage in your life did you make this decision?*

Of those who mentioned a stage at which they decided to become librarians, most said that it was after finishing their first degree at university. Ages, where stated, typically ranged from 22-34, however one respondent said, “I decided to become a librarian from quite a young age while still at secondary school”. Whilst others said they had considered it earlier in life, they didn’t take it seriously as a career until later, on the whole after university and/or after some work experience, either in a library or something else. The fact that more than half of the respondents didn’t decide until they were out of the 18-24 age bracket supports the statistic that less than 10% of respondents to the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* were aged under 25 years old.

4.2.2 Question Two

*What perceptions did you have of librarianship before the start of this course?*

*For example, what did you that the job of a librarian would entail?*

*Have your perceptions changed now, at the end of this course?*

Almost all of the respondents felt they had learned more about librarianship from taking the MA Librarianship course. Some of the most common answers are summarised in Table 4.4 below.
Many of the respondents mentioned their surprise at the lack of emphasis on cataloguing, stock selection and customer service skills (for example respondent number six in Table 4.4). This corresponds to the expectations of the young people in the first questionnaire that librarians “organise and sort libraries”; however the MA Librarianship course at the University of Sheffield places more importance on...
teaching “core competencies in IT, management and information handling” (The University of Sheffield, 2008a).

Increased awareness of and interest in different sectors was a popular answer, which is also shown in question five. This relates to question two in the young people’s questionnaire about awareness of where librarians work; only through completing a masters degree course in Librarianship do these students know about some of the different sectors so it is not surprising that other young people are not aware of them. This highlights the invisibility of the profession amongst young people, even those who are library users or who know librarians. Further, the answers to this question show that everyone can learn more about the field of librarianship.

4.2.3 Question Three

What perceptions did you have of librarians before the start of this course?

For example, what kind of people did you think were librarians?

Have your perceptions changed now, at the end of this course?

As with the previous question, most of the respondents said they have learned more about the type of people librarians are from taking the MA Librarianship course. Eight of the sixteen respondents explicitly said that it was their fellow course mates who have changed their perceptions of what librarians are like, or at least what future librarians will be like. An excellent quotation that illustrates this is from the respondent who declined to answer questions five to ten: “I think the course has shown me that a really diverse range of people want to be librarians and that the future of librarianship should be very positive with such enthusiastic people wanting to enter into it.”

Most respondents mentioned an awareness of the stereotypical image of librarians as “Boring people who wore cardigans” and some admitted to having met librarians like this in their work experience. However, these respondents felt that, “Although I had seen this stereotype, it didn’t deter me, so I must have known somehow that this wasn’t universal”. In the final stages of finishing this course (for the full time students at least), all respondents had positive perceptions of themselves
as the librarians of the future. Maybe these are the positive role models that can change young people’s perceptions of the image of the librarian and encourage more to take up librarianship as a profession.

4.4.4 Question Four
What barriers do you see facing young people wanting to enter the librarianship profession?
Please also use this box for any other comments you would like to make relating to young peoples’ impressions of librarianship as a career.

Responses to this question were, on the whole, very lengthy, showing a deep understanding of the various different barriers young people face when entering librarianship and the barriers of the profession in attracting young people. This seems to be a passionate subject for many of the respondents, perhaps because they have had to overcome some of the barriers themselves. The answers can be summarised as follows:

- Invisibility of the Profession

Invisibility of the profession, as discovered in the literature review, relates to “A misunderstanding of what the job of librarian actually entails” and has already been shown in the young people’s answers to question one. Many of the MA Librarianship student respondents to this questionnaire mentioned that people outside the profession do not understanding them “needing a qualification to stamp books”. This lack of understanding may be down to the stereotype of the librarian making sure the library remains a silent place and the limited careers advice given to young people, as mentioned by many of the young people in the first questionnaire and by the MA Librarianship students in this question.

- Stereotypes

Negative stereotypes came out in the first questionnaire, in which young people gave answers such as “charge obscene amounts of money in terms of fines for late books” to question one, and “it seems to be a very quiet job that doesn’t vary greatly” to question three. The old image of what a librarian’s job entails seems to still hold
true for young people today and many of the MA Librarianship students who responded to this questionnaire have had to deal with it first hand: “People assumed I was just going to learn how to put books on a shelf for a year when I started the course!” was an answer echoed throughout this question and relates to a lot of literature on this subject, as seen in the literature review in chapter two. However, although this does remain a real barrier to the profession, “the future of librarianship should be very positive with such enthusiastic people [from this course] wanting to enter into it” (answer to question three). Young people simply need to see for themselves that librarians and libraries have changed or, as one MA Librarianship student puts it, “The common perception that the library is dry and grey needs to be smashed”.

The stereotype of the librarian relates not only to the job description but also the image of the individual. This stereotype of a librarian wearing “thick-rimmed glasses and [with] an aversion to any noise louder than the beating of a butterfly's wings” “possibly discourages young people to associate themselves with the profession”, as image and status are often important amongst young people and their peers. This may explain why people often come to the profession later on in life, as shown by the results from question two of this questionnaire. One respondent gives a lengthy answer to this question, saying that the biggest barrier for librarianship attracting young people is its image; this 25-39 year old male student says, “When you’re younger… you want to do a sexy job… It’s hard to sell librarianship on these grounds.” The same student said, in question three, that the usual stereotypes don’t apply to anyone on this course but “It would be interesting to see people in 10 years though - and see if any 'mousy-ness' has crept in”. This is in contrast the ‘positive future’ comment, quoted above, but at this stage it is obviously impossible to say which one will turn out to be correct.

- Qualifications

Some of the students who responded to this questionnaire felt that needing to do the masters course might be a barrier to some young people entering the profession, particularly if they don’t understand what the role of librarian really involves and therefore why a qualification is necessary. “Taking this course is a big commitment” and “would put off some young people because of the financial costs and amount of
time involved”. The University of Sheffield website states that on the MA in Librarianship course, “students can be sure that they will be exposed to the latest ideas and concepts in librarianship today” (2008a), which explains why the students who answered this questionnaire feel they have gained a much better understanding of librarianship than they had before.

- Careers Advice

Many MA Librarianship students feel that careers advisors are doing nothing to help dispel the negative stereotypes or lack of understanding of librarianship. Young people need good advice when trying to choose the right career for them, whether this be from friends and family, careers advisors at school, college and university or the dedicated careers websites available, such as Prospects and Connexions Direct. But one MA Librarianship student noted “it’s not a career that’s generally advertised to you when making career choices”. And the young people in the first questionnaire tended to agree, with statements such as “Never really considered being a librarian, probably because i don’t know enough about what is involved in the job” and “i never really thought of it as a career” being common answers to the question ‘Have you ever considered becoming a librarian?’ (question three). Librarianship may appeal to some of the young people who answered the first questionnaire, particularly those who are teachers, work in IT and those who enjoy books, reading and working with people, but it seems that it is not something that has crossed their minds or been suggested to any of them. “Young people who are interested in management or technology, for example, are unlikely to be looking in the direction of librarianship despite the above areas being prominent”, therefore librarianship needs to be promoted a lot more to young people who have these passions and other qualities.

- Job Opportunities

Despite the need for a postgraduate qualification for professional librarianship posts, a lack of job opportunities available once qualified was mentioned as a barrier by some of the student respondents to this questionnaire. “I think young people want a profession that allows them to progress quickly once they are qualified, and in my view this is quite difficult to achieve in the library profession”. One reason some
respondents offered for this is that they felt many librarians stay in the same job for long periods of time, or even throughout their whole careers, which does not allow new librarians in. This may also explain the findings of the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* with regard to the percentages of older people working in libraries compared to younger people.

However, many of the skills gained from a course such as the MA in Librarianship are transferable and taking this course does not limit a person to being a librarian. The information on becoming a librarian on the careers pages of the Connexions Direct website states, “opportunities to diversify into an information management role may be available” (2008). This is recognised by one of the course members from the University of Sheffield who answered this questionnaire; in his answer to question one he explains,

“I wouldn’t say i want to become a ‘librarian’ (in the traditional sense) – my plan was always to work in the information profession, as an information professional or specialist, maybe as a freelance information worker, perhaps even as a lecturer in information science”.

This answer shows the diversity of roles that this qualification could lead to.

- Money

Although two respondents mentioned money as a reason why they are entering the profession, many more MA Librarianship students felt that “the pay on offer after qualifying may not seem enough to some”. If money is a motivating factor in young people choosing a career, librarianship may not appeal; the salary guidelines offered by Connexions Direct, a site that young people may turn to for careers advice, are: “newly qualified librarians should earn between £18,000 and £22,000 a year… Some employers might pay new librarians less than this” (2008). These guidelines are slightly lower than the CILIP Salary Guidelines (2008), which state that a newly qualified public librarian may expect £19,145 to £23,300 and those in the law sector should earn between £21,500 and £26,650 with 0-2 years experience.
One respondent echoes this belief that low pay “is what prevents young people from choosing librarianship as a career” by comparing it to teaching, a job he did before starting this course: “Both teaching and librarianship are professional jobs, but in terms of the economic totem pole of professionals, both seem to come at the bottom”. Money is obviously not a factor for this particular respondent, however he says that he was in his late twenties when he decided upon librarianship, so money may be a valid reason for younger people not considering this profession.

4.2.5 Question Five

*What sector did you hope to work in before the start of this course?*

*What sector do you hope to work in now/on completion of this course?*

Table 4.5, below, shows the responses of all fifteen respondents to this question of their career ambitions a year ago and their hopes for the future on completion of the MA Librarianship course.

These responses show that, in all but two cases, the course has opened up students’ options or changed their minds about the best sector for them. In six cases, respondents have changed their preferred sectors completely. In many cases, respondents haven’t made up their minds yet, with one response being “The library world is my oyster. I’ll see what grabs me.” This shows that having options is a positive experience and that there is a wide range of options open to qualified librarians.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Health or Public “determined by my prior experience”</td>
<td>School “I think that the content of the course has played a factor in influencing my decision to apply for it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Legal, Health or Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Any sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Charity or School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Public or School</td>
<td>Public or National</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>“The library world is my oyster.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Public or School</td>
<td>Academic “simply because their appears to be greater scope for a career”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Archive or Music</td>
<td>Public “ideally I would like to lead early-years pre-reading activities”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Health or Academic “either managing a health/medicine collection at a prestigious academic institution or working in a hospital library”</td>
<td>Health, Business or Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic, Government or Special Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Public or Academic</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>Academic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Public or Health</td>
<td>Public, Health or Prison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>“don’t know”</td>
<td>“don’t know (yet)”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5
4.2.6 Question Six

Did you use your school library?

MA Librarianship students were asked about their use of school libraries as children and young people to determine whether this may have affected their choice to become librarians. 46.7% had used the libraries at both primary and secondary school, with just one never having used their school libraries and one not answering this question.

These results show an increased use of school libraries when comparing the 18-49 year olds and the 18-24 year olds.
4.2.7 Question Seven

*Did you use public libraries...? (Please tick all that apply)*

![Public Library Use Chart](image)

Both questionnaires also asked about use of public libraries. 100% of the MA Librarianship students used public libraries as a child, aged 0-11 years, and all still use them now. This compares to 73.7% of respondents to the questionnaire for young people have in the past or currently use public libraries. This shows a correlation between library use and an interest in working in libraries, which will be explored further in chapter five.

4.2.8 Question Eight

*Age*

The MA Librarianship students were asked to select an age group; the groups matched those used in the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* in order that true comparisons can be made. Therefore the age groups were: 18-24 (the same as the young people’s questionnaire), 25-39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 and 70+.
As shown in the above pie chart (Figure 4.6), 26.7%, just four of the fifteen respondents who answered this question, were aged between 18 and 24 years old. The majority of respondents, 66.7%, were aged between 25 and 39, with one respondent aged 40-49.

Although only asked of MA Librarianship students at one university in the UK, this indicates that the majority of people choose to become librarians at a later stage in life, not from leaving school, college or, necessarily, university, but after having worked for a while, either in a library environment or in something else entirely (as has been shown by the results of question one).

However, this is not all discouraging news as, compared with the Library Workforce Survey 2005, the average age does seem to be lowering. In 2005, the majority of professionals in the library workforce were aged 50-59 (37.6%), with 51.0% of all library staff in England and Wales being aged 40 and above. So if the respondents from the University of Sheffield, all aged 18-49, all go into professional posts on completion of the MA Librarianship course, and this also occurs at other universities and over a continued number of years, then the average age of professionals will start to lower.
4.2.9 Question Nine

Gender

The table below (Table 4.6) shows the percentage of males and females who responded to the MA Librarianship questionnaire compared to the percentage of males and females listed as professionals in the *Library Workforce Survey 2005*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005*</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008~</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6

*2005 figures taken from the *Library Workforce Survey 2005* (Employers Organisation, 2006) and based on the number of professionals in the library workforce in England and Wales.

~2008 figures taken from the survey administered to MA Librarianship students at the University of Sheffield for the purposes of this research.

These figures show that the number of men in professional posts in libraries is increasing. This information, if publicly known, may encourage young males to consider librarianship as a career. Much of the literature shows that young people generally see librarianship as a female career, although none of the young males mentioned this as a barrier to them in the first questionnaire.

4.2.10 Question Ten

Mode of Study

This question asked respondents to confirm that they were studying MA Librarianship at the University of Sheffield and their mode of study – either full time (one year) or part time (three years) – simply to assess how much of the course the respondents had completed. Figure 4.7, below, shows the mode of study of each respondent.
Ten of the fifteen respondents stated they were studying full time, two part time and three did not state the mode of study. The two part time students were both female and aged between 25 and 39 years old; they may be studying part time due to work or family commitments and this indicates that they may wish to work part time in their professional roles on completion of the course, showing the profession appeals to people looking for flexibility in the workplace. With the majority of respondents close to completing the course, they have answered this questionnaire with the breadth and depth of knowledge of newly qualified librarians.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

Some interesting themes emerged from the questionnaire results, many which relate to the literature review and some new issues. This chapter will draw out similarities and differences between the two questionnaires and with the literature under a number of themed headings.

5.1 Library Use

5.1.1 Positive Experiences

Three of the MA Librarianship students who responded to the second questionnaire said that positive experiences of using libraries as children and/or young people had influenced their decisions to become librarians. In addition, the main reason for joining the profession was based on experience of working in libraries, which includes the sub-categories of enjoying the work, being influenced by librarians they know or have met and wanting to progress up the library career ladder. This correlates with Ard et al’s findings in 2006, which they report as not surprising that “31 percent felt that prior library work had ‘strongly’ shaped their decision to enrol in a library and information science program” (p. 239). However, only 55% of respondents to Ard et al’s questionnaire had had library work experience prior to starting the MLIS course at the University of Alabama. This question was not asked of the MA Librarianship students at the University of Sheffield as it is a requirement of enrolling on the course that students have “one to two years practical work experience within the library and information sector” (The University of Sheffield, 2008a). So it seems that library use, whether as a customer or staff, is very closely linked to an appreciation of what the role of a librarian entails, and positive library use may lead to a desire to join the profession.

5.1.2 Negative Experiences

If the above positive experiences of library use encourage young people to consider librarianship as a career, then negative experiences will have a negative
effect. One young person commented that he no longer used libraries because “i owe them all money”, which suggests that he has had a negative experience in the past, possibly at a public library. Negative experiences in either a public or school library will do nothing to encourage young people to think about working in libraries in the future and is an area that has been noted by some librarians. In the latest edition of CILIP’s *Library & Information Update*, one letter addresses this very issue by calling for public librarians to “Abolish fines!” (Towsey, 2008, p. 30). Towsey comments that overdue fines “may lead in certain cases to people stopping using public libraries” (p. 30) and this is certainly true in the case of this young person, who may never benefit from using a library again, let alone consider working in one as a career.

5.1.3 Public Libraries

73.7 % of respondents to the young people’s questionnaire have used public libraries, compared to 100% of MA Librarianship student respondents. Library use may indicate a love of books and reading, which was cited as a reason for becoming a librarian by seven of the MA Librarianship students and all three of the young people who showed an interest in the career. Many similar studies of why people enrol on librarianship courses have also revealed this as an influencing factor; a respondent to Bello’s (1996) study commented “Reading becomes part of you [as a librarian]” (p. 18), showing that an enjoyment of reading is important as well as common. Muzzu (Fallis, 2008), however, sees that joining the profession due to a love of books is an ill-considered decision as there is obviously a lot more involved, as one MA Librarianship student found: “My perceptions of librarianship? – get to read loads, now realise that you never have time to read the collections!”.

There are a number of national public library promotions currently in place. As mentioned in chapter two, “Love Libraries is a campaign to make England’s public libraries even better” (2008a). 2008 is also the National Year of Reading, which includes a “Library Membership Campaign” for public libraries in England (National Literacy Trust, 2008). These current campaigns, and similar previous ones such as the MLA’s marketing project for public libraries in 2005 (Meeson, 2005), all show much effort being put into marketing public library use, which may help attract
young people to librarianship as library use has been linked to an interest in the
career. However, there are no promotions or campaigns in place in the UK
specifically for the promotion of librarianship. In the United States of America, First
Lady Laura Bush has “enacted a new student grant program” (Ard et al, 2006, p.
237) to provide initiatives for students to join the profession of librarianship. Many
writers advocate the need for such a campaign to be introduced in the UK.

5.1.2 School Libraries

School libraries were used by 57.9% of respondents to the young people’s
questionnaire and 93.4% of the MA Librarianship students, which again suggests that
there is a link between library use as a child and an interest in working in libraries as
an adult. Based on this data, school libraries may have had less of an impact than
public libraries; this is an area that could and should be improved upon.

Although CILIP recommend that all schools have a library and that a chartered librarian is placed in charge of it, it is not a legal requirement in England and Wales (Turner, 2008). Turner’s study, reported on this year, looked at the staffing of independent school libraries, in which 33% had a chartered librarian (p. 6) and 35.9% strongly agreed that the school library should be staffed by a chartered librarian (p. 8); further, over half (51.5%) strongly agreed that the library should be staffed by a qualified librarian but 9.7% strongly disagreed with this (p. 8). This illustrates the lack of understanding, even within the education sector, of the value a qualified librarian can add. This may be specific to England and Wales, however. In Scotland it is most common to find a chartered librarian in a school library, whereas in Australia, the USA and Canada “the most common staffing is by a dual qualified teacher librarian” (Turner, 2008, p. 2).

School librarians can, and should, be seen as important as teachers in the
education of students; in improving reading ability and information literacy
(Brabazon, 2008). Despite librarians’ “uphill battle, both at school and college level,
for a realistic recognition of the immense contribution they make” (Totterdell, 2005,
p. xii), they play an increasingly important part in this digital age and should be at
the centre of the school. A recent article in the Times Higher Education states that,
“In the information age, librarians are pivotal…” and that librarians should be allowed to take a more active approach by being involved in teaching, making the link between the library and the classroom stronger (Brabazon, 2008). This link between librarianship and teaching did emerge from the results in chapter four. One respondent to the MA Librarianship questionnaire moved to the librarianship course from teaching, with five of the students stating that an interest in education influenced their decisions to become librarians. Four of the respondents to the young people’s questionnaire listed their occupation as ‘teacher’, one of whom expressed an interest in librarianship.

Despite school libraries only being used by just over half of respondents to the young people’s questionnaire, acknowledgement of the advisory role librarians have in the teaching/learning environment ranked third in young people’s perceptions of what librarians do. These results indicate that librarians in school, college and university environments have an influence over young people’s impressions of the profession. If school librarians can become even more visible to students, students will not only benefit from increased information skills but also awareness of the importance of the library and the role of the librarian. This should benefit the library profession by attracting more young people to it, as the top reason for becoming a librarian is the influence of existing librarians.

5.2 An Invisible Profession

Lack of awareness of a librarian’s role, as shown in the answers the young people gave to question one of the questionnaire, shows an invisibility of the profession. Many young people reported that they did not realise it was a career choice and the literature in chapter two reported the public’s surprise at requiring a postgraduate qualification in order to become a librarian. Invisibility relating to not being visible on the front desks leads to confusion over the difference between librarians and assistants, which again was shown in some of the answers to question one of the young people’s questionnaire. This invisibility has also been linked to the personality of librarians as “shrinking violets”, which relates to the stereotypical librarian as being “quiet, passive or introverted” (Bowden, 1993, p. 109).
5.2.1 Stereotypes

In the two questionnaires discussed in chapter four, no one said that the stereotype of the librarian could encourage young people to join the profession; therefore the librarianship stereotype is a negative one. Indeed, many of the young people made reference to inaccurate stereotypes when stating why they would not consider becoming librarians. This correlates to literature on the inaccurate portrayals of librarians discussed in chapter two. Linked with a lack of awareness of librarianship as a professional career choice, this is the biggest barrier to attracting young people into the profession.

Stereotypes were mentioned by all of the MA Librarianship students in response to the question on barriers (question four). Comments such as “It’s hard to sell librarianship on these grounds [of it being] a sexy job that pays a fortune and gets you respect on the street” show that librarianship simply does not appeal to young people. Although many of the MA Librarianship students had impressions of librarians as dull, older people prior to starting the course, these impressions were proved inaccurate with exposure to real librarians and particularly to their peers on the course. This shows that the biggest change in impressions comes from meeting young librarians who do not fit the stereotypes.

5.2.2 Lack of Careers Advice

Lack of awareness comes not only from a lack of young librarians who are not stereotypical librarians but also from careers advisors. One comment from an MA Librarianship student, which was echoed by others, was, “I’m not sure that careers advisors at schools are aware of the nature of modern librarianship”. Five of the nineteen young people questioned admitted that they do not really understand what the job of a librarian entails. One respondent answered, “not a lot of information seems to be given on the job at school or careers advice”. This correlates to a barrier identified by many of the MA Librarianship students and is obviously a huge problem in addressing the recruitment crisis already identified. Although information about librarianship is available on careers websites aimed at the people who answered this questionnaire, for example Prospects and Connexions
Direct, young people seem to want personal interaction with advisors or personal recommendations. Careers advisors are failing these people and, ultimately, are failing the profession, by not promoting it accurately or frequently.

5.3 Age

Age is one of the big barriers in attracting more young people to become librarians, and this links to stereotypes, as shown by this quotation from an MA Librarianship student:

“I think the stereotypical image of librarians as women in their 40’s and 50’s would put off young people and particularly young men from entering the profession”.

Many of the MA Librarianship students surveyed did not consider librarianship as a career until later in life (after the age of 24) and a number of the responses from the MA Librarianship students reflect the thought that librarians are older, for example: “I assumed it was something people decided to do later in life” and “I thought on the course people would be a little older”.

There are numerous statistics and studies supporting this, such as those in the Library Workforce Survey 2005 (Employers Organisation, 2006), which relate to age in the public library workforce. With regards school libraries, none of the 103 library managers who responded to Turner’s (2008) study of independent school libraries were aged under 25 years old. Just 4.9% were 26-35, with the majority, 43.7%, aged between 46-55. A contributor to Brabazon’s article on school librarians said, “a recent survey discovered that the average age of school librarians was 50” and a comment made by school librarian Anne-Marie tarter reveals a worrying fact: “fewer young professional librarians are seeking employment in the schools sector” (Brabazon, 2008). Only two of the fifteen respondents to question five of the MA Librarianship questionnaire explicitly mentioned that they are looking to work in a school library on completion of this course.
However, despite all of the figures relating to the age of the current library workforce, new librarians coming into the profession may help to change the situation. The students enrolled on the MA Librarianship course at the University of Sheffield in 2008 who responded to the questionnaire were all (but one) in their twenties and thirties, with 26.7% aged under 25. If this trend can continue and improve, librarianship has a brighter future.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

6.1 Concluding Remarks

This research aimed to find out what young people’s impressions of librarianship as a career are and why apparently so few are becoming librarians when the profession urgently needs them. Through questionnaires, nineteen responses were gained from people aged between 18 and 24 and it was revealed that they had a limited view of what the role of the librarian entailed and that most would not consider it as a career. In addition, responses were gained from some of the students currently studying for an MA in Librarianship at the University of Sheffield, 26.7% of whom were aged between 18 and 24. These students had gained their positive impressions of librarianship through library use, working in a library environment and the influence of librarians but most still felt that they had learned a lot more about the profession through taking the postgraduate course.

At the proceedings of the IFLA pre-session seminar in 1992, it was stated,

“there is ‘Little understanding amongst the general public of what library and information (LIS) workers do and what responsibilities they undertake’… It was then suggested that this might be the responsibility of the profession itself to put right” (Bowden, 1993, p. 109).

This responsibility has been echoed in more recent literature, such as Welsby’s call for librarians to market librarianship as well as libraries (1999) and Totterdell’s statement that, “it is becoming increasingly clear that library staff need to add the skills of self-publicizing and political astuteness to their professional expertise and dedication” (2005, p. xii). And the MA Librarianship students who contributed to this study seem willing to rise to this call; one respondent commented, “the future of librarianship should be very positive with such enthusiastic people wanting to enter into it”, whilst another remained more cautious:
“Whether this is a new generation coming through that will make the
difference to libraries and remove the stereotype, I don’t know, but it
would be good to think that is the case”

This is not a new issue; in 1939, Sayers commented, “I quite agree that older
town (if they but know it) need the views and criticism (usually forthcoming) of the
younger town” (p. 166). Almost seventy years on and the profession still needs and
still lacks young people, as shown by studies such as the Library Workforce Survey
2005 (Employers Organisation, 2006) and others. Although this has been a small,
localised study, the issues arising from it are felt throughout the world. Some
initiatives are beginning to deal with attracting young people into librarianship but
much more action needs to be taken, and each individual librarian can take it.

6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

This research was designed to find out young people’s impressions of
librarianship and so purposely did not define librarianship at the beginning of the
questionnaire, which revealed that most people could not distinguish between
librarians and library assistants. A study could be carried out on the same age group
that explains exactly what the role involves and then asks if they would find it
interesting and why or why not. This study could be further developed through the
use of focus groups in order to generate discussions amongst young people to gain a
deeper insight into their impressions of librarianship.

It would also be interesting to carry out a similar research project to this in a
few years time to see whether or not perceptions of librarianship as a career have
changed in young people and also to follow up on the MA Librarianship students
completing the course now to see whether expectations have changed and if they are
the ones to have changed it.
CHAPTER SEVEN
BIBLIOGRAPHY


8.1 Accompanying Email to Questionnaire for Young People

To help me with my MA Librarianship dissertation looking at young peoples' impressions of librarianship as a career, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about what you think a career as a librarian would entail and whether or not it interests you.

The questionnaire consists of eight questions and will take around five to ten minutes to complete. It will ask for some personal information – please try to give as much detail as possible but remember that you can leave any question you don’t want to answer. Please be assured that all responses will remain confidential.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part and you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The attached information sheet provides further details but please don't hesitate to contact me if necessary on lip07sn@sheffield.ac.uk. This questionnaire has received ethical approval from the Information Studies department at the University of Sheffield.

If you would like to take part, please click on the link below, or copy and paste it into your web browser:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=R_2bqW4V8RbJrcZzDCEOKX3g_3d_3d

This is a questionnaire for 18-24 year olds; if you know of anyone within that age group who might be willing to take part, please forward them this email with link and attached information sheet. Please only take the questionnaire once.

Many thanks,
Sarah Newbutt
8.2 Accompanying Email to Questionnaire for MA Librarianship Students

Hi,

To help me with my MA Librarianship dissertation looking at young peoples' impressions of librarianship as a career, I would be very grateful if you could complete a questionnaire about why you want to become a librarian and any barriers you see to becoming a librarian.

The questionnaire consists of ten questions and will take around fifteen to twenty minutes to complete. It will ask for some personal information - please try to give as much detail as possible but remember that you can leave any question you don’t want to answer. Please be assured that all responses will remain confidential.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part and you can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. The attached information sheet provides further details but please don't hesitate to contact me if necessary on lip07sn@sheffield.ac.uk. This questionnaire has received ethical approval from the Information Studies department at the University of Sheffield.

Copy and paste this link into the address bar of an internet page to take part:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=dt5qR1rhVTn6gSAfbDmOIA_3d_3d

Many thanks,
Sarah Newbutt
8.3 Information Sheet for Young People

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project Title
What impressions do young people have of librarianship as a career?

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the project’s purpose?

My aim in this research is to find out young peoples’ impressions of librarianship as a career. This research is being carried out to enable the completion of my dissertation project for a Masters degree in Librarianship at the University of Sheffield, which will be completed by 1st September 2008.

Why have I been chosen?

You are being asked to complete this questionnaire to gain an insight into your impressions of the role of librarians and whether you have or would consider librarianship as a career.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. You can still withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You are asked to complete a short questionnaire, which will take about 10 minutes to complete. It will ask your views and opinions on the role of librarians and information about your thoughts of your future career, if you have any.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

Yes, all the information you provide, including your name and email address, will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the research will be used to enable me to complete my MA Librarianship dissertation.
Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the Information Studies department’s ethics review procedure. The University’s Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University’s Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

Contact for further information

For further information, please feel free to contact:

Sarah Newbutt (Researcher)
lip07sn@sheffield.ac.uk

Barbara Sen (Research Supervisor)
b.a.sen@sheffield.ac.uk
8.4 Information Sheet for MA Librarianship Students

INFORMATION SHEET

Research Project Title

What impressions do young people have of librarianship as a career?

Invitation

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the project’s purpose?

My aim in this research is to find out young peoples’ impressions of librarianship as a career. This research is being carried out to enable the completion of my dissertation project for a Masters degree in Librarianship at the University of Sheffield, which will be completed by 1st September 2008.

Why have I been chosen?

All MA Librarianship students at University of Sheffield in 2008 are being asked to complete this questionnaire in order that I can gain some ideas of why people choose to become librarians.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. You have this information sheet to keep. You can still withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You are asked to complete a short online questionnaire, which will take around 15-20 minutes to complete. It will ask for personal information, such as why you want to become a librarian, as well as your views and opinions on the barriers facing young people in entering the profession.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

Please be assured that all responses will remain confidential. You will not be identified in any reports or publications.
What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the research will be used to enable me to complete my MA Librarianship dissertation.

Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the Information Studies department’s ethics review procedure. The University’s Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University’s Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

Contact for further information

For further information, please feel free to contact:

Sarah Newbutt (Researcher)
lip07sn@sheffield.ac.uk

Barbara Sen (Research Supervisor)
b.a.sen@sheffield.ac.uk

This information sheet is for you to keep for future reference.
Thank you for your participation in this research project.
8.5 Questionnaire for Young People

Screen shots from [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)
5. About You

4. Have you ever or do you currently use any of the following libraries?
(Please tick all that apply)
- Public library
- School library
- College library
- University library
- None
- Other

6. About You

5. Your Age
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23
- 24

6. Your Sex
- Male
- Female

7. About You

6. Do you know anyone who is, or has been, a librarian?
Or do you know anyone who works, or has worked, in a library?
If you, please give details (for example, mother)
- No
- Yes

8. Thank You

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Please click 'Done' to submit your answers.
8.6 Questionnaire for MA Librarianship Students

Screen shots from www.surveymonkey.com
Thank you for completing this questionnaire.
Please click 'Done' to submit.