How Do We Collect?

Experiences and Perceptions of Metro Manila Public Libraries in Collecting Local Cultural Heritage

By:

April R. Manabat, De La Salle University
Rafael Joseph C. del Mundo, House of Representatives
Public libraries have found its place in preserving the cultural heritage of the community.

“The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition to lifelong learning, independent decision-making, and cultural development to individual and social groups”.
As pinpointed by Benedict Anderson, the nation is but an “imagined political community”, a socially constructed group wherein people considered themselves as members of a community or nation which deserved to be recognized by the rest of the world.

This recognition can only be attained through preserved heritage, whether tangible or intangible in nature, which is usually found in cultural institutions like public libraries.
The same is true in the Philippine setting. The government has realized public libraries’ role in the preservation of cultural heritage and nation-building.

Republic Act 7743, “an act providing for the establishment of congressional, city, municipal libraries and barangay reading centers throughout the Philippines”. 
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify public libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for collecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits of collecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues and challenges encountered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies in collecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways of overcoming the issues and challenges</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study is primarily focused on sixteen (16) public city libraries in Metro Manila recognized by the Public Library Division of the National Library of the Philippines (NLP). These are located in the following cities:

- Caloocan City
- Las Piñas City
- Makati City
- Malabon City
- City of Manila
- Marikina City
- Muntinlupa City
- Navotas City
- Parañaque City
- Pasay City
- Pateros
- Quezon City
- San Juan City
- Taguig City
- Valenzuela City
• Employs the qualitative descriptive method.
• Distributed Print and Online questionnaire.
• Purposive sampling was used in this study.
Out of 16 respondents, only nine (9) questionnaires or 56.25% were accomplished and returned to the researchers. These include the following cities: Las Pinas City, Makati City, Malabon City, City of Manila, Marikina City, Muntinlupa City, Navotas City, Quezon City, and Valenzuela City.

Six of them were in operation for more than 50 years while the three others were established in the last 20 years.
RESULTS
Profile of the Respondents

- 5 were designated as Officer-in-Charge or Librarian-in-Charge (OIC).
- 3 held librarian positions but were not designated as heads of the city library.
- 1 has a research specialist designation.
- Most of them have completed bachelors’ degree and taken units in masters’ or pursue a doctoral degree but not necessarily in library science or library management.
RESULTS

Public Libraries collecting cultural heritage

- 7 Public Libraries are collecting cultural heritage.
- 2 Public Libraries does not have a cultural heritage collection.
RESULTS
Public Libraries collecting cultural heritage
Navotas City Library
Manila City Library
Makati City Library

and

Marikina City Library
Valenzuela City Library
Malabon City Library
Las Piñas City Library
Muntinlupa City Public Library
RESULTS
Types of collected cultural heritage materials

Physical/Tangible cultural heritage materials

- BOOKS/MANUSCRIPTS
- PHOTOGRAPHS
- ART WORKS
- MONUMENTS OR SITES
- ARTIFACTS/OBJECTS
- ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS
- AUDIO RECORDINGS/MUSIC
- CLOTHING (TEXTILE)
- TRADITIONAL SKILLS & TECHNOLOGIES
- RECORDING OF EVENTS
- OTHERS
Specific materials collected:

- In **Quezon City Public Library**, they have materials on the history of the barangays (*smallest administrative district in the Philippines*).

- **Valenzuela Public Library** has a city cultural heritage and history collection.

- **Manila Public Library** have materials on the different landmarks, streets and churches of the city.

- Other libraries also collect posters, clippings and souvenir items.
RESULTS
Types of collected cultural heritage materials

Intangible cultural heritage materials

- Oral Traditions
- Performing Arts (i.e. Dance, Plays)
- Social Practices
- Festive Events
- Intellectual Norms
- Proverbs
- Rituals
- Others
RESULTS
Reasons for collecting cultural heritage materials

- For the library to be storehouse of information.
- To entice or encourage the community to make use of the library.
- As per instruction of the City Mayor or city government.
- In response to the community’s request to collect these kinds of materials.
- To promote the local tourism of their community.
RESULTS
Reasons for NOT collecting cultural heritage materials

- Lack of available space in the library or a facility to preserve the collection.
- Due to the difficulty in sourcing out materials.
- Lack of qualified librarians or staff to handle such collection.
RESULTS
Methods of Acquisition

- Majority of the respondents acquired their local cultural heritage collection through donations.
- One responded that they got some of their materials through different library activities, including contests while the other one obtained their collection in partnership projects with their local university students through their history classes.
- A lone respondent said that some of their materials were acquired through purchase.
RESULTS
Perceived benefits of collecting cultural heritage materials

- Attract more users/clients
- Provide additional materials
- Preserve history of city
- Additional revenue
- Enrich lives of residents
- Preservation of nat’l identity
- Promotes tourism
- For recognition
- Others
RESULTS
Issues and challenges in collecting cultural heritage

- Lack of budget
- Lack of staff to handle coll.
- No training of staff
- Unavailability of equipment
- Difficulty in transporting materials
- Expensive maintenance
- Lack of available space
- Lack of support from Gov’t
- Others
RESULTS

Strategies to overcome the issues and challenges in collecting cultural heritage

• Coordinating with the city council to support the advocacy of the library.
• Crowdsourcing or gathering information from the members of the community.
• Meeting key people in the area to discuss the plan of collecting cultural materials.
• Encouraging constituents to take part in various activities of collecting local cultural heritage.
RESULTS
Strategies to overcome the issues and challenges in collecting cultural heritage

- Sharing resources with other stakeholders such as museums and record centers as well as coordinating with other government agencies like National Library of the Philippines (NLP), National Archives of the Philippines (NAP) and National Museum (NM) as well as with NGOs to support the library’s initiative especially in the aspects of collecting, managing and preserving the collection.
• Based from the respondents of this study, majority of the public city libraries in Metro Manila collect local cultural heritage resources.

• Public libraries collect tangible materials like books, manuscripts and photographs and intangible materials such as social practices and festive events with their common reason to house such collection and to preserve and keep information for the future.
• The common reasons of collecting are to house such collection and to preserve and keep information for the future.
• Benefits of collecting such resources include encouraging library users, preserving the city’s history and promoting local tourism.
Challenges such as lack of knowledgeable and skilled staff was one of the primary issues they faced.

The respondents believed that they can overcome this through coordination and collaboration with the city government and the active participation of the community living in the particular city.
• The authors of this study suggests a similar or follow-up study that will cover all public libraries in Metro Manila.

• Furthermore, a study that specifically focuses on the collection management practices such as acquisition, organization and preservation on these type of collection is also recommended.
RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study also proposed that city libraries continue to explore ways of preserving (i.e. digitization) these kind of resources for posterity.

- Lastly, allocating a portion of the library budget for the acquisition and maintenance of such collection will also help public libraries in their quest to gather and make available materials of cultural value.
Public city libraries, through its collection, play a vital role in preserving cultural heritage, in supporting nation-building and in safeguarding the identity of its people.
REFERENCES


- Republic Act No. 10066 (2010). Retrieved from the Official Gazette of the Philippines


- https://manilacitylibrary.files.wordpress.com/2011/04/dsc034061.jpg

- https://sites.google.com/site/librariesinthemetro/

- Quezon City Public Affairs Office
Maraming Salamat! (Thank you very much!)