

# **Exploring the Cultural Intelligence of Special Librarians**

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## **Abstract**

As the information profession shifts with new technologies, demands and globalization, special librarians (information professionals) need to adjust their way of doing business to stay competitive. The market is global and this impacts the service levels that information professionals provide. Librarians are now required to go beyond the traditional role in order to remain competitive and justify their position or library. With clientele and stakeholders being so diverse, special librarians must be culturally intelligent in order to work effectively to meet their users' needs. This article draws upon published research related to cultural intelligence, special libraries and special librarians, and results of a recent study that explores the cultural intelligence of special librarians.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to report on the research of the cultural intelligence in special librarians (information professionals) and special libraries from a survey conducted with Special Libraries Association (SLA) members. Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined as the capability of an individual to function effectively across various cultural settings including national, ethnic, organizational, generational, etc. (Ang and Van Dyne 2008). The study and research findings discuss the viewpoints of information professional's understanding of cultural intelligence and application within their organizations. There is limited empirical research on this topic applicable to special librarians. This was an opportunity to apply the framework of cultural intelligence to a specific segment not formerly studied and to extend the application within library and

information science. A survey was shared in March 2019 with Special Libraries Association membership to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. Future focus groups will take place at the 2019 Special Libraries Association annual conference and virtually afterwards to collect additional qualitative data from participants to expand the study beyond its current focus. The following provides a review of the literature applicable to this segment of librarianship and the cultural intelligence findings of the research study.

## Cultural Intelligence

As the information profession continually evolves and society becomes more diverse, information professionals must also incorporate cultural intelligence. Cultural intelligence is defined as the capability of an individual to function effectively across various cultural settings including national, ethnic, organizational, generational, etc. (Ang and Van Dyne 2008; Ang et al. 2007; Earley and Ang 2003). Earley and Ang (2003) examined CQ in order to understand why individuals can acclimate to some cultural situations more easily than others. With the official definition of the term coming out in 2002 by Earley, this concept is based upon work Sternberg's theory related to the multiple loci of intelligence.

Ang and Van Dyne (2008) point out that, "Sternberg's framework is noteworthy because it proposes that intelligence has different "loci" within the person, i.e., metacognition, cognition, and motivation are *mental* capabilities that reside within the "head" of the person, while over actions are *behavioral* capabilities" (4). Earley and Ang's (2003) model includes the four dimensions or factors of cultural intelligence: metacognitive, cognition, motivation and behavioral. It is a unique intelligence in that cultural intelligence:

- is a specific individual difference construct because it focuses on culturally relevant capabilities;
- relates to what a person can do to be effective in cultural situations;
- is distinct from other forms of intelligence such as emotional intelligence (EQ); and
- competency scales lack coherent theoretical foundations (Ang and Van Dyne 2008, 8-10).

"EQ differs from CQ because it focuses on the general ability to perceive and manage emotions without consideration of cultural context" (Ang and Van Dyne 2008, 9). Cultural intelligence goes beyond only one cultural context and can be applied to various cultural situations to predict ones effectiveness working across cultures. In more recent years, Cherinet (2018) and Yatim et al. (2019) note that cultural intelligence is an important skill to have for future information professionals.

## SPECIAL LIBRARIANS AND CQ

The benefits of cultural intelligence go beyond librarian and patron interaction but to the overall approach libraries take in every organizational aspect. This can be seen in Overall (2009) where a conceptual framework for library and information science professionals to develop cultural competence is presented through three domains: cognitive, interpersonal, and environmental. Overall (2009, 200) states "developing cultural competence for LIS professionals

in its fullest sense means developing the ability to seamlessly weave culture into the fiber of all LIS endeavors in order to provide service that will attract library users from a wider range of cultures and backgrounds currently underrepresented in library institutions.”

While cultural competence and cultural intelligence are two different terms, their intent is very similar. Often the construct of cultural intelligence gets mixed up with terms such as cultural competence, cross-cultural competence, intercultural competence, etc. Many of these terms are interrelated and focus on abilities to be effective within cross-cultural situations. Kwantes and Glazer (2017) focus specifically on cross-cultural competence and cultural intelligence. Currently within the literature there are limited, to no, empirical studies on the cultural intelligence of special librarians and special libraries. Therefore, the current study seeks to contribute to the literature and further the dialogue on the current state of cultural intelligence within special librarians.

## **Special Libraries**

### **DEFINING**

Outside the realm of academic, public, and school libraries exist a distinct group of libraries referred to as special libraries. According to Shumaker (2017, 4361), “special libraries are libraries that have one or more of the following attributes: a focus on specialized information resources, usually of a limited subject scope; a focus on a specialized and limited clientele; and the delivery of specialized services to that clientele.” Examples of major types of special libraries include medical libraries, law libraries, corporate libraries, etc. Special libraries can be independent, sponsored by an organization, or part of a larger library or library system with specialized collections that serve specific clientele (Murray 2013). Within academic institutions, you may have special librarians that support specific clientele or subject departments within their academic library.

Examples of different types of parent organizations that sponsor special libraries may include business and industrial firms, not-for-profit organizations, government agencies and professional associations. Since special libraries are very diverse and vary immensely in size, it can be seen in the literature that researchers throughout the years have defined special libraries in different ways (Murray 2011; Shumaker 2017). Different perceptions on special libraries can also be seen in the various names that organizations might refer to their special library as; such as information centers, competitive intelligence units, intranet departments, knowledge resource centers, and content management organizations (Vargha 2017, 531). Despite the varied ways special libraries might be defined or referred to, they all share common characteristics that will be discussed in the next section.

### **CHARACTERISTICS**

The clientele of special libraries are often more specific than libraries in traditional educational or public settings such as employees of a corporation. With a more specialized

clientele, special libraries often have a more specialized role in their clients' information requests. According to Ruan and Sykes (2018, 447), "special libraries ... are functional units typically tasked with activities such as content identification and licensing, literature searching and analysis, the monitoring of business and market trends, deploying content resources appropriate for specific knowledge worker teams, and advising colleagues on resources and search techniques." It is important to note that the existence of many special libraries are due in part to their parent organizations' recognized need for a special library (Black and Gabb 2016; Ruan and Sykes 2018; Shumaker 2017). Therefore, special libraries of many organizations strive to perfect their specialized services to meet the needs of their parent organizations.

As the Special Libraries Association (2019) states, "an information professional strategically use information in his/her job to advance the mission of the organization." However, the very reason that establishes many special libraries could also be the reason that organizations use to eliminate special libraries if they no longer view them as necessary. This is one reason why it is important for information professionals to utilize their cultural intelligence in order to ensure their organization recognizes their impact. The following section will discuss a main concern of many special libraries in their need to be able to justify their existence to their organization.

## **VALUE OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES**

When the parent organization has to make budget cuts, a special library is often affected by senior management decisions (Murray 2013; Ruan and Sykes 2018; Shumaker 2017). Therefore, it is very important for special libraries to be able to demonstrate their value in measurable ways to their organization. One way to measure value is to show how special libraries save the time of users (Chung 2007; Ruan & Sykes 2018). Chung (2007) did just that by conducting a case study where a new approach to cost-benefit analysis was used as a tool to determine whether the benefits of special libraries outweigh the cost incurred in providing the services. By using this approach, Chung (2007) found that the economic value of Korea Development Institute (KDI) School of Public Policy and Management special library exceeded the costs of the library services offered.

In a similar study, Murray and Vilches (2017, 462) conducted a return on investment (ROI) study for the libraries of Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control in the United States in order "to measure their contributions to the business unit and communicate those contributions to their managers and the managers of the departments they supported." Ultimately, their ROI study enabled them to learn more about the gaps in library services they provided and to utilize the data found to provide guidance in designing new services. Aside from the implementation of good analysis methods, Ruan and Sykes (2018) discuss the importance of developing a good strategic plan meant to guide special libraries on furthering the vision, mission, and goals of their parent organizations.

Interestingly, Black and Gabb (2016) findings on perceived values of corporate libraries conflict with other researchers' findings. In their study, they replicated a survey conducted on American corporate libraries in 1916 in order to learn more about the libraries' daily operations and corporate librarians' perceived value of their library. Based on the survey's responses, they

found that “the value of the library is understood and is largely unquestioned even though the bottom-line impact is intangible” (216). For example, one of their respondents in their survey commented, “[The library] is [over fifty years old]. Its value to the company has never really been questioned” (217). Perhaps there could be differences in the recognized value of special libraries dependent on how long the library has existed within the organization and the institutional knowledge of management and administration. Despite the differences in the literature, communicating and measuring value in special libraries has always been a prevalent topic of interest.

## **Special Librarians**

### **DEFINING**

Behind the operations of special libraries of organizations are special librarians or information professionals. According to DiMattia (2017, 4351), “special librarianship is that portion of the broad profession of librarianship serving the people, subjects, and collections of information resources in limited subject areas.” The Special Libraries Association uses the term information professional to encompass special librarians and other professionals that work with information. Examples of information professionals include a wide variety of titles including librarians, knowledge managers, chief information officers, web developers, analysts, information brokers and consultants. Just as how special libraries are defined by their parent organizations’ mission or purpose, special librarians are defined by their subject expertise. Their subject expertise is often supported with an advanced degree in the subject area, but not required of all positions.

There are professional associations or divisions within an association dedicated to bringing together special librarians of specific subject fields to network, share resources and to ultimately advance special librarianship of that subject (DiMattia 2017). For example, within SLA there are 20 different subject divisions along with sections within these divisions. Some examples of the diverse divisions include Engineering, Business & Finance, Food, Agriculture and Environmental Resources, etc. In addition to helping information professionals connect with each other, these professional associations also have core competencies in place to help information professionals accomplish their responsibilities, to use as a guide for moving into the profession and to help employers understand what these individuals bring to the table. The SLA Professional Competencies Task Force developed competencies for information professionals in general that they can use “as a resource for articulating their own skills and competencies to employers and as a checklist for professional development” (Special Libraries Association 2016).

There are also specialized associations dedicated to a particular special library segment. For example, a competency unique to health science librarians from the Medical Library Association (MLA) current competencies full 2017 report is, “...A health information professional promotes the development of the health information professions and collaborates with other professionals to improve health care and access to health care information” (5). In another example, the newly passed Body of Knowledge replacing the Competencies of Law

Librarianship by the American Association of Law Libraries includes competencies which address knowledge, abilities core characteristics of law librarians, and specialize competencies depending upon ones specific practice area. These competencies are critical to our profession as employers may use these as a framework for hiring, newer librarians may rely on them for guidance in working within the profession and they may assist special librarians in general with their daily work tasks and own career attainment. With competencies unique to the subject field they specialize in, special librarians are advantageous to their institutions.

## **BENEFITS TO THEIR INSTITUTIONS**

Due to their specialized knowledge of diverse subject fields and the unique competencies they possess, the benefits of special librarians to their institutions are plentiful. For example, in Black and Gabb (2016) study on corporate libraries, one special librarian interviewee states, “the library helps scientists do their jobs faster and easier which improves product time-to-market. The library finds the right tools and training to help [the scientists] do their own searches” (218).

For health sciences librarians, the Medical Library Association state reasons why health library services are essential to improve clinic and patient care. Some reasons are that health sciences librarians “further their institution’s mission and goals through expert searches, teaching health professional literature searching skills, providing community outreach programs, supporting innovative research and disseminating the best medical and business practice information” as well as they “save health professionals’ time” according to the Medical Library Association (quoted in Crumpton and Porter-Fyke 2016, 162). These reasons are evident in Ahmadi (2019) report on a children’s hospital library in Florida in where the special librarian, library services associate, and a team of 15 volunteers “contribute to increasing patient health literacy, to patient and family satisfaction, and even to clinical outcomes through programs developed in collaboration with the clinical staff” (8).

Similarly, the American Association of Law Libraries listed values law librarians bring to their organizations such as “acquiring the best cost-effective information sources; staying abreast of technology; eliminating repetition in research; organization of internal records for easy access and preservation; delivering information to help achieve a competitive advantage, and training efficient researchers to save their organization both time and money” (quoted in Crumpton and Porter-Fyke 2016, 162). It can be seen just by these examples that special librarians are conducive to the success of their respective institutions.

## **CHANGING ROLE**

Special librarians as well as other types of librarians realize that societal information needs are changing and therefore they must continually evolve and expand on the types of services they provide in order to meet these needs. In the literature, special librarians are often described as flexible with the ability to adapt to new roles and responsibilities (DiMattia 2017;

Murray 2014). This in part is due to “two main drivers [that] have influenced the transformation of the special library: technological advances and a shift in the way organizations function” (Murray 2014, 328). Out of this change, emerged two trends in special library services that have SLA divisions dedicated to them, which include knowledge management and competitive intelligence.

Knowledge management (KM) can be defined as “the process of creating, sharing, using and managing the knowledge and information of an organization” (Girard and Girard 2015, 14). Networked access to digital information has become the way employees of organizations interact with information, which has expanded the role of special librarians in organizations (Shumaker 2017). Instead of focusing on traditional tasks such as the acquisition and maintenance of collections, special librarians have taken on these advanced tasks of synthesizing and analyzing digital information for better employee utilization (DiMattia 2017; Murray 2014; Shumaker 2017). Furthermore, Shumaker (2017, 4365) states:

Special libraries have become partners and leaders in KM for two fundamental reasons: they possess expertise in techniques of organizing and managing information that can be applied to internally generated as well as externally acquired information resources; and in many organizations they are one of the few entities that work on a substantive basis across a wide array of organizational units.

The latter reason stated above also depicts just how integral special librarians are to the facilitation of connecting all the units of an organization together to the organizations overall knowledge base.

Another important trend is competitive intelligence (CI), which is defined as “the process by which an organization systematically and legally collects, organizes, analyzes, and distributes information about its competitors or competitive environment in order to obtain or maintain its competitive advantage in the marketplace” (Jin 2011, 8). The practice of CI aligns well with the expertise of special librarians and enables special librarians the ability to directly contribute to the business development strategy of their organizations (Murray 2014; Shumaker 2017). In Murray (2014), there is discussion about how traditional librarianship can be applied to CI. For example, special librarians can use the skills they learned from the reference interview and apply it in a business setting such as “filtering the information and providing a synthesized result rather than a list of sources or daunting amount of data” for their clientele (Murray 2014, 333). With the unique application of traditional skills like this, special librarians have a lot to bring to their organizations as adaptable assets capable of expanding their roles to cater to their respective institutions. In the next section, the authors transition to focus on the current research study about the cultural intelligence of special librarians.

## **Methods & Analysis**

Cultural intelligence is the guiding model behind this research. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected via a web-based survey in spring 2019. The data included demographic questions to get a sense of participant demographics, open-ended questions to collect richer responses about cultural intelligence, and the incorporation of the cultural intelligence assessment scale (CQS). The CQS includes a 20-item four-factor scale which is used for academic research purposes through the Cultural Intelligence Center. With the approval of the Cultural Intelligence Center, the researcher was allowed to use the survey and incorporate it into a web-based version to disseminate. The assessment measures the four dimensions of cultural intelligence: cognitive, motivational, behavioral and metacognitive. The assessment is the only recognized valid tool for measuring cultural intelligence.

Special Libraries Association was founded in 1909. There are currently 49 regional chapters with 7 international chapters outside of the United States that are part of SLA. The Special Libraries Association membership was used as the basis for inviting participants to take the survey. SLA members are innovative information professionals and includes segments such as corporate, government and other specialized settings from around the world. With over 6,000 members of SLA, the researcher felt this was the primary place to attract participants to the survey.

The data was collected anonymously through the Qualtrics website. The researcher prepared the raw data in respective tools for the quantitative data analysis and qualitative data coding. Descriptive statistics were determined from the quantitative data. The qualitative data was coded and themes were determined from the open-ended items. A part 2 will take place at the Special Libraries Association annual conference and virtually after for those participants that opted in to be a part of a focus group that will dive further into CQ. Further coding will take place after SLA and additional data will be captured to continue the examination of this important topic. These findings offer a starting point into the cultural intelligence of special librarians.

## **Findings**

The survey data was collected within the month of March 2019 from SLA members. 148 individuals responded to the initial survey with 51 providing survey responses. The findings include demographic, qualitative and quantitative results. Special librarians (information professionals) working throughout the world who currently work in a special library were the targeted population.

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

Figure 1 shows that of the 50 that responded to the type of library, 26% are currently working in an academic library setting of a specialty such as law, health or subject departments. An additional 26% represented the other category of various other types of libraries (tribal,

archives, non-profit, etc.). Corporate libraries were the third highest respondents (pharma, records, advertising, manufacturing) followed by law firm respondents at 14%.

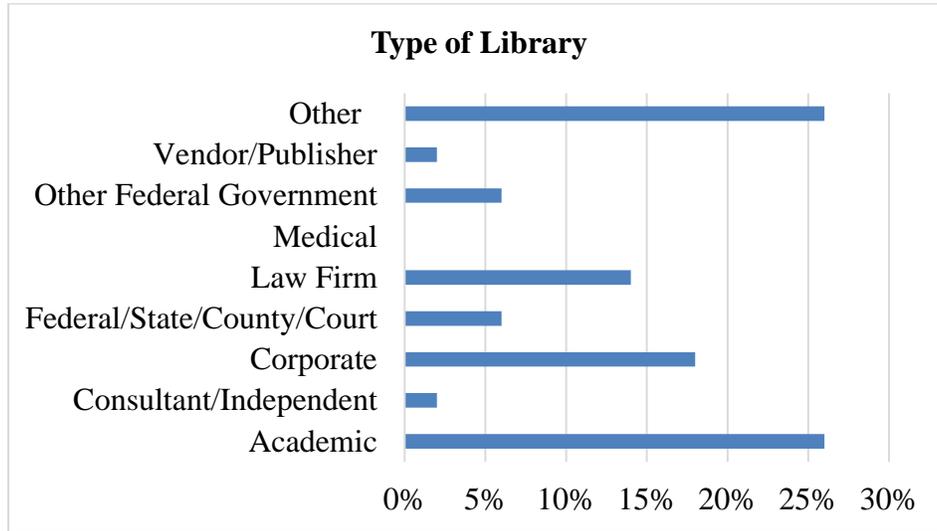


Figure 1: *Frequency distribution of type of library currently work in (N=50)*

Majority of respondents were female (73%) and all gender identities were represented within the study. Majority of the respondents did not identify with a minority group, however 16% identified as multi-racial. Asian, American Indian/Native American, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latina/o, and Other were also reported. Seventy-six percent have a master's degree and 12% reported a doctoral or professional degree. The remaining 12% indicated having a 4-year college degree. As shown in figure 2, the largest percentage of respondents have 20+ years of experience followed by 19% with less than 5 years of experience.

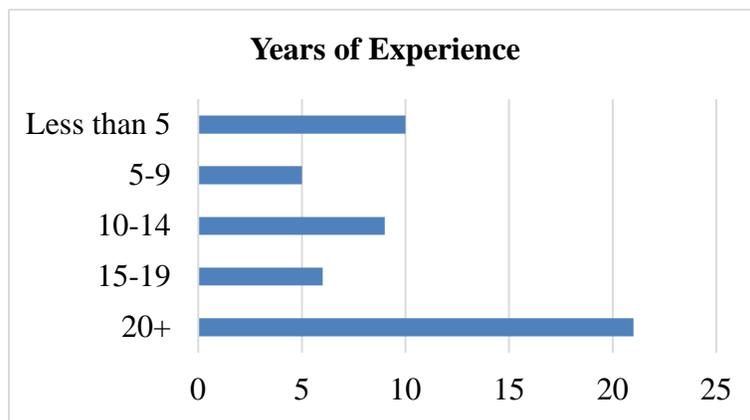


Figure 2: *Frequency distribution of years of experience (N=51)*

Majority (71%) were born within the United States. Seventy-two percent of respondents were geographically located within the United States. 28% were located outside of the United

States in Canada, Asia, Australia/new Zealand, Europe and Africa. Thirty-four percent spoke and/or wrote more than two languages and 39% spoke and/or wrote two languages as seen in figure 3.

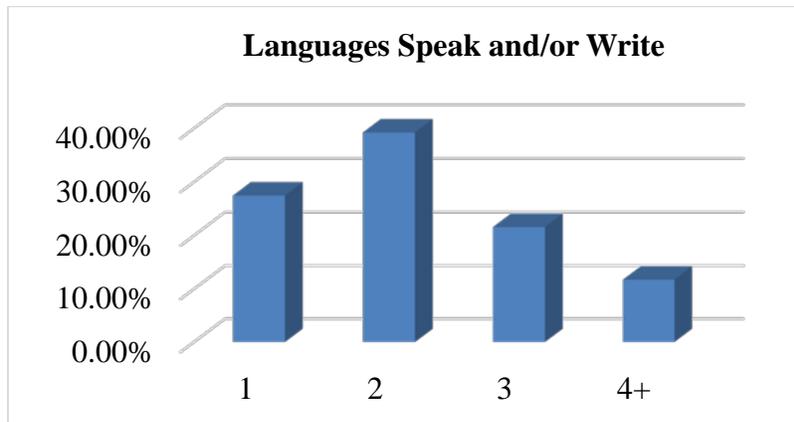


Figure 3: Frequency distribution of languages speak and/or write (N=51)

Forty-percent of respondents job titles included the word “supervisor,” “head,” “manager,” “principal,” or “director.” Job titles were grouped as either *supervisor, manager, principal, director roles* or *other* which represents a wide range of job titles reflecting the diverse nature of the work that special librarians do (Tables 1 to 2).

Table 1: Supervisor, Manager, Principal, Director Job Title Frequency Distribution

Current Job Title	Frequency
Associate Director	1
Director of Information Programs	1
Director	1
Head	3
Library Director	2
Library Information Services Manager	1
Library Manager	1
Manager	1
Manager of Library Services	1
Manager of Strategy and Insights	1
Managing Librarian	1
Principal	1
Product Manager	1
Research & Reference Supervisor	1
Retired, Library Director	2
Senior Manager	1
Total	20

Table 2: Other Job Title Frequency Distribution

<b>Current Job Title</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Adjunct Librarian	1
Admin Officer	1
Archivist	1
Assistant Librarian	2
Cybrarian	1
Professor	2
Educator	1
Information Researcher	1
Information Resource Center Assistant	1
Information Specialist	2
Librarian	8
Library and Records Coordinator	1
Library Assistant	1
Library Technologist	1
Public Health Informationist	1
Research Consultant	1
Senior Librarian	1
Senior Information Specialist	1
Web Services Librarian	1
Total	29

## **DISCUSSION**

### **CQ Level based on the Cultural Intelligence Scale**

The quantitative results from the CQS that were embedded within the web survey offered varying results among participants. The scale included twenty statements about the four factors of the cultural intelligence model (motivation/drive, cognitive/knowledge, metacognitive/strategy and behavioral/action). Each statement was ranked on a Likert scale based on agreement/disagreement of the statement with 7 being “strongly agree” and 1 being “strongly disagree.” Descriptive statistics were examined and the level of agreement per statement within each of the four factors of CQ.

#### **Motivation (Drive) CQ Scores**

Motivational cultural intelligence relates to use of your own drive and confidence to understand other cultures in diverse situations. Fifty-on subjects responded to the five items used to determine the motivational cultural intelligence score. The responses varied from 1 to 7, and the means were from 5.24 to 6.22. This is the only factor where there were no respondents for items #1 and #2 for “strongly disagree” (see figure 4). The fourth item had the highest standard deviation of 1.63 and the first item had the lower of 1.09. The largest variance was within item

#4 as seen in figure 4 below. 94.11% of subjects responded “somewhat agree,” “agree,” or “strongly agree” for item one. “I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me” had the highest “neither agree nor disagree” of all items.

#	Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	MOT1: I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	0.00% 0	1.96% 1	3.92% 2	0.00% 0	7.84% 4	37.25% 19	49.02% 25
2	MOT2: I am confident that I can socialize with locals in a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	0.00% 0	3.92% 2	5.88% 3	11.76% 6	39.22% 20	19.61% 10	19.61% 10
3	MOT3: I am sure I can deal with the stresses of adjusting to a culture that is new to me.	1.96% 1	3.92% 2	5.88% 3	11.76% 6	23.53% 12	31.37% 16	21.57% 11
4	MOT4: I enjoy living in cultures that are unfamiliar to me.	3.92% 2	5.88% 3	0.00% 0	21.57% 11	13.73% 7	27.45% 14	27.45% 14
5	MOT5: I am confident that I can get accustomed to the shopping conditions in a different culture.	3.92% 2	0.00% 0	1.96% 1	13.73% 7	25.49% 13	27.45% 14	27.45% 14

Figure 4: *Motivation CQ Level of Agreement*

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Note. Use of this scale granted to academic researchers for research purposes only.

For information on using the scale for purposes other than academic research, please send an email to [info@culturalq.com](mailto:info@culturalq.com)

### Cognitive (Knowledge) CQ Scores

Cognitive CQ relates to ones understanding of how cultures may be similar or different and how to engage in that new culture. Fifty-one respondents answered all six items asked for determining ones cognitive score. Responses ranged from minimum 1 “strongly disagree” to 7 “strongly agree.” The means varied from 3.75-4.86 which is much lower than motivational CQ. The largest mean was for item #3 at 4.86. All standard deviations were in the 1.61-1.69 range with the exception of item #3. The largest variance was in item #4 at 2.86. Overall, this factor had much more variation than any other factor as seen in the item analysis in figure 5. There were a significant number of subjects that responded “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” or “somewhat disagree” for each statement.

#	Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	COG1: I know the legal and economic systems of other cultures.	5.88% 3	15.69% 8	17.65% 9	23.53% 12	15.69% 8	15.69% 8	5.88% 3
2	COG2: I know the rules (e.g., vocabulary, grammar) of other languages.	5.88% 3	19.61% 10	17.65% 9	5.88% 3	33.33% 17	11.76% 6	5.88% 3
3	COG3: I know the cultural values and religious beliefs of other cultures.	1.96% 1	5.88% 3	9.80% 5	13.73% 7	35.29% 18	21.57% 11	11.76% 6
4	COG4: I know the marriage systems of other cultures.	5.88% 3	19.61% 10	13.73% 7	13.73% 7	25.49% 13	15.69% 8	5.88% 3
5	COG5: I know the arts and crafts of other cultures.	1.96% 1	13.73% 7	11.76% 6	15.69% 8	19.61% 10	29.41% 15	7.84% 4
6	COG6: I know the rules for expressing non-verbal behaviors in other cultures.	11.76% 6	11.76% 6	17.65% 9	31.37% 16	9.80% 5	11.76% 6	5.88% 3

Figure 5: *Cognitive CQ Level of Agreement*

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### Metacognitive (Strategy) CQ Scores

Metacognitive CQ is the degree to which one is aware and successfully managing this awareness in a cross-cultural situation. All fifty-one respondents answered this item used to decide ones metacognitive score. The responses ranges from 1 “strongly disagree” to 7 “strongly agree.” The means ranged from 4.94 to 5.37 and the standard deviations were from 1.22 to 1.39. The lowest variance was for item #2 at 1.48. Item #4, “I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures,” 27% responded “neither agree nor disagree” which was the highest in this category for all items (see figure 6).

#	Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	MC1: I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I use when interacting with people with different cultural backgrounds.	1.96% 1	1.96% 1	5.88% 3	13.73% 7	21.57% 11	33.33% 17	21.57% 11
2	MC2: I adjust my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from a culture that is unfamiliar to me.	1.96% 1	1.96% 1	1.96% 1	9.80% 5	37.25% 19	31.37% 16	15.69% 8
3	MC3: I am conscious of the cultural knowledge I apply to cross-cultural interactions.	1.96% 1	0.00% 0	7.84% 4	21.57% 11	27.45% 14	23.53% 12	17.65% 9
4	MC4: I check the accuracy of my cultural knowledge as I interact with people from different cultures.	1.96% 1	3.92% 2	3.92% 2	27.45% 14	29.41% 15	17.65% 9	15.69% 8

Figure 6: *Metacognitive CQ Level of Agreement*

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### Behavioral (Action) CQ Scores

The behavioral CQ is one's ability to adapt when encountering a cross-cultural situation. Behavioral includes five statements with responses across all levels of agreement. The means varied from 4.65 to 5.59 with item #3 having the largest mean. Standard deviation was from 1.36 to 1.70. The variance ranged from 1.85 to 2.90. Item #5 had the largest variance. On the item analysis as seen in figure 7, 88% of respondents agreed at some level to item #3. At least 25% disagreed at some level to item #5 ("I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it").

#	Field	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	BEH1: I change my verbal behavior (e.g., accent, tone) when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	1.96% 1	1.96% 1	5.88% 3	13.73% 7	27.45% 14	29.41% 15	19.61% 10
2	BEH2: I use pause and silence differently to suit different cross-cultural situations.	3.92% 2	3.92% 2	7.84% 4	19.61% 10	17.65% 9	33.33% 17	13.73% 7
3	BEH3: I vary the rate of my speaking when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	1.96% 1	3.92% 2	3.92% 2	1.96% 1	27.45% 14	33.33% 17	27.45% 14
4	BEH4: I change my non-verbal behavior when a cross-cultural situation requires it.	1.96% 1	3.92% 2	7.84% 4	19.61% 10	23.53% 12	21.57% 11	21.57% 11
5	BEH5: I alter my facial expressions when a cross-cultural interaction requires it.	5.88% 3	3.92% 2	15.69% 8	21.57% 11	17.65% 9	17.65% 9	17.65% 9

Figure 7: *Behavioral CQ Level of Agreement*

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## Qualitative Open-Ended Items

There were eight open-ended questions asked within the survey to promote rich narrative responses from respondents. All eight questions received 51 complete responses. Of these open-ended items, four were directly related to the four factors of the cultural intelligence model (drive, knowledge, strategy and action) and are examined further below:

1. Do you have the drive and motivation to work through challenges that come with cross-cultural situations you encounter?
2. Do you have the cultural understanding needed to be effective culturally within your organization?
3. Share an example of a time when you were aware of a multicultural situation at work and how you managed the situation effectively.
4. Share an experience in which you modified your actions and adapted to different cultural norms within your organization.

All responses were analyzed and coded. Table 3 shows the resulting key major themes from the qualitative items.

Table 3: *Key Theme Results*

<b>Theme</b>
Adapting
Aware
Challenges
Change/Changing
Communication
Emotions
Environment
Experience
Global
Identity
Language
Norms
Organizational/Workplace Culture
Personal/Individual Culture

This discussion presents a piece of the analysis as further qualitative narrative will be collected and analyzed after the focus groups.

### **Drive and Motivation**

Thirty-nine participants (76%) directly stated that they believed they had the drive and motivation to work through challenges that come with cross-cultural situations that they encounter. Over seventy text passages were coded to subjects reporting they do use drive. Three passages were coded that drive was not used. There were some subjects that expressed the challenges involved with this and how this “can feel exhausting to some people.” One subject stated, “It’s not easy, but we all need to be aware of cultural differences and make an effort to understand others.” Another subject stated similar comments in that, “it takes time and effort but it is possible to shift thinking and habits,” with another stating, “sometimes it’s really difficult.”

Learning from experience (171 passages) and being aware (68 passages) were also two identified themes. One subject stated that, “this comes with the experience of doing it. Changing jobs regularly helps to develop the cultural intelligence needed to accept and adapt to new cultures and situations.” Another expressed, “I love change. I can hardly wait for the next change to come around.” One subject interestingly said that it often comes naturally with work experience due to “the environment being so diverse and mixed.” One has to be aware in information environments. It is a “necessity for any organization,” “you have to have awareness.” Other comments supporting this item included, “negotiating a new environment, meeting new people and adapting my way of working enable me to keep learning and challenge my ways of working,” Additionally, “while challenging, it is also very rewarding when trusts, partnerships, and collaborations grow” by use of your drive and motivation.

## Knowledge

Fifty-one subjects responded to the question of “Do you have the cultural understanding needed to be effective culturally within your organization?” This question focuses on ones understanding of the impact of culture and both similarities and differences of cultures. Key themes that resulted related to knowledge (cognitive) within passages included “Adapting,” “Organizational/Workplace Culture,” and “Personal/Individual Culture.”

Coded text passages throughout included elements of organization/workplace culture versus individual/personal culture. One subject comments, “I can tell when adjustments are needed or would be appreciated, and I read up about how to approach the issue.” Another individual agrees in that they take “any advanced knowledge that can be readily imparted that would help me anticipate their needs.” Another comments the opposite in that “I try to accept how each person is and roll with what is smoothest” while another subject explains that in understanding and adapting, their cultural understanding has helped with “adopting new and better ways to serve my library users... also respecting the ways that they prefer to have information delivered to them.”

In a specific example, a subject hopes “international experience, several languages and habits...help in understanding colleagues in other regions.” An additional individual agrees that “my cultural understanding is better than my peers due to extensive world travel and coming from a very culturally diverse family.” While yes, international travel has greater potential to increase CQ, it is an association not a causation. Livermore (2013) explains, “how you travel, where you spend time, the nature of your interactions, and the way you make meaning from the experiences makes all the difference in whether international experience improves your CQ or not. In fact, international experience can actually decrease CQ and perpetuate ethnocentrism if not done well.” Meaning international travel should include active engagement and thoughtful reflection in order to improve your cultural intelligence.

“Training” also came up within passages as a subtheme with one individual commenting “I have basic understanding, but don’t feel that I have enough of an understanding and/or training to be effective in my organization.” Another expressed similar comments in that “I’m learning... I know there is room to improve in others.” One subject explained that “I have or am still gaining the cultural understanding I need even though there are parts I object to or do not relate to within my workplace.” Another subject indicated that there is not always cultural understanding and it is critical to be “tolerant toward *difference* and try to understand, but also not forget your cultural heritage.” It does require continuous effort. As one subject puts it, “it does require a constant effort to reevaluate my ideas and approach to my work, a lot of time listening actively and understanding perspectives.” Challenges that come with this are also present in special libraries as illustrated in one example. “Understanding the culture of my organization was one of the strengths of my career and I employed it successfully to develop a

library in an environment that was often... indifferent and sometimes hostile to the concept of a special library.”

## **Strategy**

Strategy includes the magnitude to which one is aware and how we manage that awareness when in multicultural situations. Coded passages resulted in the following themes related to strategy: “communication,” “language,” “norms,” and “identity.” An overwhelming number of passages were coded to communication including listening, verbal, non-verbal, and written. One subject expressed leaving words off of an invitation as they would be problematic if included. While another expressed “being careful not to use American idioms when communicating with European colleagues as they would not understand.” Another expressed “misunderstanding of instructions between colleagues of different nationalities” and another subject expressing how global interactions lead to misunderstandings due to “heavy accents that are not really understood.” One subject stated that “sometimes there is a misunderstanding of vocabulary” among different groups within the organization. This subject has taken more time to complete a reference interview and assess their needs to ensure there is understanding. Additionally, being able to “adapt your style of presenting information to different cultures.”

In managing situations, one subject expressed “repeating everything that was said to help diagnose” what was needed. While others expressed use of “empathy” and “listening.” “Admitting when I didn’t know enough. Apologizing. Listening” have worked for one subject. Similarly, another subject thinks, “there is a lot of value in being open about your own lack of knowledge, being receptive to different experiences and perspectives, and verbally checking in on people’s expectations for work.” Speaking and learning multiple languages has helped with communication needs for another respondent. “Use of stories” has helped when demonstrating perspectives. In another example, a subject expressed “continually modifying behavior and downplaying any cultural differences so as to avoid intrusive questions, misunderstandings, and discrimination against myself.” Differing norms came up in many coded passages (26) and the remark that, “we have to bridge across our differences all the time.”

## **Behavior**

Action relates to if, how, and when to adapt behaviors when encountering a multicultural situation. “Change,” “adapting,” “language,” “norms,” and “communication” were the major themes that came out of the coded passages related to behavior. “Communication” is a common theme that came across many code passages and across majority of questions. For example, one subject expressed in written communication, “A German colleague was insulted when I started writing an email without a salutation. I now start my emails with “Dear\_\_\_\_\_.” Another expresses that, “I have had to make an effort to adapt my greeting style to keep with the culture.” Another subject also indicated “writing with shorter sentences and using bullets” to adapt their written communication. Non-verbal communication was also significant within the passages. “I am a handshaker but I have found that persons from Middle Eastern and Asian countries do not

readily shake hands. I have learned to hold back until their hand is offered.” Another subject expresses “in my culture, it is ok not to directly look someone in the eyes when you talk, but where I am working with foreigners, some Western cultures prefer exactly the same. So I adapt.” The comments related to “communication” also related to modifying attitudes and learning styles in order to better communicate with colleagues and stakeholders. Several respondents discussed modifying their verbal language or even holding back communications (or keeping their mouth shut) in order to listen and observe before speaking. “I have really had to work on sitting back and listening better – not interrupting people.”

With “norms,” passages were coded to this theme when addressing a trait or characteristic that is typical in the behavior of a specific group or a usual practice or custom of the group. In one example, a subject expressed how their organization is very traditional and largely religious. There are times where group prayer takes place before meals. With these religious norms, the subject stated, “I don’t bow my own head, but I stand by and am witness to it. It doesn’t offend me, but I also don’t opt in.” In another example related to religious differences, a subject has “agreed not to take off culturally-specific holidays when my absence would be inconvenient to my colleagues so that I won’t be perceived as entitled or lazy, despite the fact that I know my employer is legally obligated to respect religious difference.” Another subject also expressed similar comments with patrons, “Respecting the religious traditions of patrons” is where the subject has had to adapt. While all factors of cultural intelligence are important and most critical when working in conjunction with one another, ultimately, individuals will judge one based upon their behavior. Being cognizant and able to adapt to different cultural norms within the organization is application of CQ action.

Other norms present within the passages related to food and dress. One subject observed how their country is “very much conscious of food quality, and very proud of its cuisine” that “I started to be more appreciative of it among colleagues.” Six passages were coded for dress with subjects expressing changing the way they dress to apply to the situation or type of organization. “Coming from a conservative government environment to a liberal academic environment” was an adjustment in reworking of values and norms. One subject states, “I have learned that appropriate attire, language, and preparedness that smoothly communicates legitimacy, accuracy, and veracity.” Identity was also identified within several passages in context of sexual identity, gender identity and generational identity. One subject notes that “I am overly cautious and nervous because I haven’t worked within openly gay coworkers before. I struggle with the possibility of saying something offensive or taken out of context.” On the other hand, another subject comments how they have had to “dial back” or “closet” some level in order “to fit into a straight environment.” One subject observes how generational identity is present within their organization where a company with long-standing history set in its ways prefers “non-technical, face-to-face and very low key” while “younger staff prefer hi-tech and digital provision.” In a specific example, a respondent discussed the cultural norms of the organization versus the library. “When shifts in organizational structure changes resulted in the library being placed in a disadvantaged position, I searched for arrangements that would place the library in a more advantageous position. I chose to adapt to the organization to the library’s needs.” All of these

signify modifications of behaviors and flexibility in adapting when necessary to different cultural norms. It is important to consider if one should modify or adapt their behavior because there may be times when a change isn't necessary or makes a situation worse. Consider if the change will be beneficial to the library, organization and not cause one to compromise ones true self and values.

## Conclusion

The findings discussed in the literature are an overview on special libraries and special librarianship. Particularly discussed are some of the current trends among special librarians and the changing value proposition of special libraries. An initial 148 individuals responded to the request to take the web based survey, and 51 provided survey responses. The findings of the research study offer a number of conclusions based upon this part 1 research. Information professionals have varying levels of cultural intelligence within each of the four factors of CQ and a variety of experiences. These are seen within the CQS responses and within the discussion of the four qualitative questions addressed above. This is important as we consider the role of the special librarian and the global network that these professionals support. Ongoing training, dialogue and connecting it with performance reviews are opportunities to embed CQ within the organization. According to Cherinet (2018, 11), “cultural intelligence is an asset that admits librarians to value diversity of users and appreciate multiple realities, which in turn enable them to provide cultural sensitive and inclusive information services for the wider users.” Therefore, this has benefits beyond internal and can directly impact external stakeholders. It is hoped that the findings of the current study can potentially aid in further study on how cultural intelligence connects with all the different aspects of special librarianship discussed as well as how cultural intelligence influences the future of information professionals.

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