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The Social Justice Role Of School Librarians

Stephanie A. Burdic
University of Nebraska at Omaha

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THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

By

Stephanie A. Burdic

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College of the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Kay A. Keiser, Ed.D.

Omaha, NE

December 2017

Supervisory Committee

Rebecca J. Pasco, Ph.D.

Melissa A. Cast-Brede, Ph.D.

Jeanne L. Surface, Ed.D.

ProQuest Number: 10642543

ProQuest 10642543

Abstract

THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ROLE OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANS

Stephanie A. Burdic, Ed.D.

University of Nebraska, 2017

Advisor: Kay A. Keiser, Ed.D.

This study builds on Rioux's 2010 social justice metatheory in the library sciences as it looks at the practices of school librarians in the areas of collection development, policies, and instructional practices. The mixed methods study demonstrates that school librarians act as agents of social justice in the collection of materials based on diversity, inclusion, vantage points, and international viewpoints. The policies of unrestricted access to library materials, access to digital and print formats, critical reflection, school library as a safe haven, advocating for the freedom to read, and facilitating students to read a variety of materials were also examined. Additionally, the instructional practices of teaching all students, valuing democracy, challenging social inequities, and exploring global problems were surveyed.

Seventy-three public school librarians in a Midwestern U.S. city answered survey questions pertaining to their social justice agencies. In comparing the social justice responses of secondary and elementary librarians, the survey found secondary librarians had an overall higher social justice mean score than elementary librarians. Both secondary and elementary librarians ranked having the library as a safe haven for students as an area of strong agreement. Access to a materials in all formats, diversity,

and variety of materials were also in the top five for both instructional levels. Exploring global problems and international viewpoints were in the bottom four agreement categories for both educational levels.

This study affirms Rioux's assumption that providing information services is an inherently powerful activity. As the role of school librarians continues to shift due to educational advances and informational realities, a social justice framework is of value both in theory and practice. Social justice is the past, present, and future of school libraries.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply grateful to my family for their encouragement and support through the doctoral journey. Completing this dissertation would not have been possible without them. For as long as I can remember I have wanted to pursue my doctoral degree, and with your support, this dream has been realized.

To my wonderful husband Jeff, I profoundly thank you with all my heart. You are my amazing, talented, and thoughtful husband. You sacrificed untold hours of time to help me fulfill this dream. You stood beside me, helped me think through countless conundrums and kept me focused through the rough spots. Amanda, you've been terrific. Thank you so much for proofreading (yes, I am wordy), patience, understanding. To Andrew, and Chelsea, you are such a blessing to me. I promise now to be far more micro-managing in your lives with all the spare time I will now have.

I am deeply grateful to my parents, Avner and Alene Karnes as well. They've encouraged me every educational step of the way – from my first steps into kindergarten to now. My father was always a great cheerleader and believed in me. Even though he didn't live to see the end of this journey, he encouraged me to take it and knew I would make it.

I was blessed with a wise and knowledgeable committee. Dr. Keiser and Dr. Cast Brede, I thank you for your encouragement and insightful comments that have helped form this dissertation. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Pasco who challenged and wisely guided me through this process. You've been a wonderful mentor. I know this dissertation wouldn't have come to fruition without you. Your contribution and leadership in Nebraska for school librarians has had a deep impact on countless lives.

Thank you so, so much for all you've done and continue to do to impact school libraries for social justice.

I am enormously grateful for the experience of the NxtWave program and the opportunity to take courses from Drs. Church, Dickenson, and Howard. I thank you for your perspectives and the inspiration you've provided me to become more deeply involved in the national school library community. Having the opportunity to study with doctoral candidates from other universities gave a wonderful depth of experience. It is a privilege to know that the future of school libraries rests with such deeply committed scholars.

To my NxtWave cohorts, Stacy, Jo, Angela, Sara, Stephanie, and Kim it is a true honor to know you. Your support and friendship have made a profound impact on my life. We have studied together, laughed together, and supported each other in times of trial. I have special memories of each of you. What a journey we've had.

Also –to my longsuffering colleagues, Diana and Noelle - and to my fellow sojourners - especially my friends from Steinbach, let's keep striving toward all that makes our lives meaningful.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

School librarians play unique and powerful roles in the education of students. By combining the skills and roles of both professional librarians and teachers, they have the power to impact the education of students in a multiplicity of ways. School librarians enact powerful roles as curators, educators, and leaders. Strong, thoughtful collection development, insightful policy practices, and instructional expertise have placed today's school librarians at the educational heart of schools. School libraries serve all students by providing access to literature and information designed to build their personal understandings while expanding their worldviews. Diverse, inclusive, and accurate materials in a variety of accessible formats give students the educational tools they need to succeed. Thoughtful curation and positive discussions help students understand and appreciate local and global social inequities. School librarians promote freedom to read initiatives and open the intellectual discourse which is vital in a democracy. School libraries also provide a safe haven for students.

Looking Back to Look Forward

Social justice principles of fairness, equity, and respect for individual and corporate rights are at the foundation of school libraries. A glimpse into the history of school libraries helps inform the core ideals and evolution of the profession and can strengthen the way forward to a solid, dynamic future.

Establishment. After the founding of American Library Association (ALA) in 1876, a discussion of the correlation between public libraries and school success emerged. Public libraries extended services to schools, even going as far as establishing

branch libraries within school buildings. Schools were mandated to provide space and books for student reference and pleasure reading. In 1892, under the leadership of Melvil Dewey, New York passed a law that required the formal establishment of school libraries. Schools were mandated to provide space and books for student reference and pleasure reading. Other states followed suit. The emphasis on school libraries parallels the educational shift from formal teaching to student activity as a means of learning. Educators increasingly saw the importance of providing a convenient way for students to gain greater access to ancillary materials and literature (Wofford, 1940).

Advocacy for school libraries became a movement as strong leaders moved the school library from an adjunct part of the school to a vital, central force in the education of students. Chaired by C. Certain, the Library Committee of the Department of Secondary Education of the National Education Association (NEA) was formed in 1915 to investigate the actual conditions of school libraries throughout the country and make recommendations for standardization. This report captured the visionary importance of school libraries and cast the importance of a strong role for the school librarian. The *Standard Library Organization and Equipment of Secondary Schools of Different Sizes* (1920) document demonstrated to school administrators that the school library should be the heart of the high school. The *Certain Standards,* as they became to be known, articulated a meaningful path forward for libraries.

High school libraries were seen as a force for students to augment classroom learning both for students' scholarly and personal use. Strong libraries in schools were seen as paths to building life-long learning. The school librarian was to play a pivotal role in ensuring success of the individual library. The school librarian needed to have the

same educational training as the teachers, with additional coursework in library management. Davidson (Addresses and Proceedings - National Education Association of the United States Proceedings, 1916) cast the role of the school librarian as such: "The school librarian must know, in general, what the classroom teacher knows in detail, and must possess a capacity for organization and special bibliographic knowledge, and a personality to interest pupils."

In a paper read before the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) in 1915, Breck expanded the role of the high school librarian. She envisioned the library as the hub of a school's culture, a place of refinement and inspiration. She believed that the role of the librarian was personality dependent, asserting:

> Moreover, she must have a strong, yet winning personality, be able to command respect and therefore keep the library a laboratory for work; at the same time she must attract students to her and what she has to offer by her sympathy, encouragement, and interest to power and inspire.

Understandably, the fortune and problems of school libraries have been tied to historical events and educational trends. Through the years the emerging strands of the school librarian role as a collection curator, educator, and literacy proponent were continuously refined. From the optimism of industrial/technological advances and despite the turbulence of two world wars and the Great Depression, school libraries found a foothold in the early part of the twentieth century. By mid-century they could be found through all grade levels and were considered an integral part of the services school should deliver.

School librarians as an educational participants. In the aftermath of World War II, the ALA published a series, *School Libraries for Today and Tomorrow,* which further defined professional standards. These publications foundationally placed the school library as an essential element in the school that worked within the entire curriculum. They made clear that regular budgetary allocations for materials should be at the expense of the Boards of Education. The role of the school librarian was concretely defined as separate from the scope of the public librarian. Francis Henne, who played a pivotal role in establishing the standards, advocated that the school librarian should work in collaboration with classroom teachers in the context of subject-based learning. Media specialists were to "play the role of helping students develop competence in listening, viewing, and reading skills" (Kester & Jones, 2004, p. 958). Henne postulated and demonstrated that planning with teachers could make the library experience more productive in the classroom situation. Her goals similarly encouraged participation with other teachers and administrators in programs for continuing professional and cultural growth of the school staff.

Several events in the 1950's paved the way forward for school libraries. The first was a change in educational philosophy which centered on individualized instruction. Reliance on many sources of information and enhancing instruction through small group projects elevated the role of the school library. Though many school librarians played a traditional role of providing books for students and consulting with students, librarians were becoming more active in instructional roles integrated with class work (Craver, 1986). Post-war technological advancements led to the introduction of audiovisual

materials into education and a rise in the idea of an instructional media center in contrast to the library study-hall model.

As early as 1956, the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) acknowledged that libraries go beyond books by issuing a statement that defined the role of the school library as a center for print and non-print instructional materials and that of school librarians as "coordinators, consultants, and supervisors of instructional materials on each level of school administration" (Gates, p. 235). This expanded role was made possible by increased educational government funding in reaction to the launching of Sputnik in 1957. Materials for school libraries were purchased to bring them from book repositories to educational centers. These materials included, "motion picture films, filmstrips, phono-records, tapes, pictures, maps, and charts in addition to traditional books, periodicals, and pamphlets" (Hartz & Samuelson, 1965, p. 33).

The rise of school librarians as colleagues. In the early Sixties, school libraries received a major boost from the Knapp Foundation which helped develop a model for ideal school libraries. Under this model, school libraries were physically centered in the school. Model libraries were promoted as valuable, vital learning spaces. Equal access to information was a key tenant. A continued emphasis on providing a diversity of materials and the equipment to use emerging technologies helped to enhance the vision of libraries as centralized learning spaces. Libraries innovated by using radio and television programs, creating language learning laboratories, and utilizing other teaching machines (Hartz & Samuelson, 1965). A greater emphasis on the school librarian as teacher-colleague came with the physical changes. The creation of successful demonstration

libraries engaged an atmosphere of excitement, accomplishment, and challenge that inspired the school library movement for decades to come (Sullivan, 2003).

As she looked to the future, Grazier saw the ideal role of the school librarian as one engaging in cooperative planning with teachers, thereby ensuring adequate available materials, and interpreting the materials as necessary. She envisioned school librarians working with teachers to orient them to library services, while using subject-area teacher expertise guide the selection process. By the end of the Sixties more school librarians, now called school library media specialists, were consulting and cooperatively working with faculty members to supply them with additional materials (Craver, 1986).

Toward partnership relationships. Even through the early Eighties, the concept of a traditional school librarian as one who independently encouraged literacy, taught library skills, and supervised classes when teachers needed planning periods predominated. Traditional school librarians were seen as professional "savers" and "organizers" with the foremost responsibility of facilitating the interaction of information and people (Likness & Thompson, 1979, p. 418). The librarian collected, curated, and distributed information that students needed in a thoughtful and orderly manner. Whether silent or merely quiet, the school library was the source of information-gathering and reading. Progressive school librarians worked toward a model of cooperative teaching, instructional design, and offering in-service programs (Craver, 1986).

Change beckons. In the 1980's, three events occurred that shook the librarian's traditional role forever. In 1988, *Information Power: Guidelines for School Media Programs* was published. This volume asserts that teachers, school librarians, and

principals must form a partnership and plan educational services. It placed the responsibility on the school librarian to initiate conversations and make certain the school library would provide the intellectual and physical access to information that students needed. Further, the library was to be seen an instructional area where students could both find and create information. The librarian was to provide leadership, instruction, and consulting assistance in the use of instructional technology using sound instructional design practices. These guidelines presuppose a full integration of the library media program into the curriculum with the librarian being a full educational partner while promoting the value of universal and unrestricted access to information and ideas.

The second change was the National Library Power Program (NLPP), which took the concepts of school librarianship into a new era. In partnership with the AASL, the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund worked with public, elementary, and middle school library programs to improve the teaching and learning process in schools. The goal of this program was to be a major catalyst in school reform. As of January 1995, the program had invested over $40 million in 20 cities throughout the U.S. NLPP grants were used to renovate library spaces, match state and local allocations for library materials, and support professional development for teachers, librarians, and administrators (Wolfe, 1995). The goal was to entrench the school library as the instructional center of the school by offering a variety of materials for students and teachers to find and create information independently. Active collaboration between the librarian and teacher, along with interdisciplinary learning became popularized (Dianis, 2000).

The third event that impacted the world of the school librarian in the 1980's was the advent of the personal computer as an educational tool. Though it was to play a minimal role at first, computer technology has been revolutionary for libraries. At first, stand-alone computers played a niche role, perhaps as a tool for games or individual, fun learning experiences (Harvie, 1981). As the capabilities of computers increased along with the strength of internet connectivity, school libraries in the 1990's automated their library catalogs and increasingly relied on the internet as an information source (Miller & Teriwillegar, 1982). As time has progressed, computer technology has created a quantum change, dramatically impacting the way information is researched and generated. As information is increasingly found with ease, the school librarian's "gatekeeper to information" model has been shattered. The wave of the digital revolution continues to create positive change and has made a profound impact on the school library profession. Digital innovations challenge the profession as change has become a constant.

Information Power. At the end of the millennium, *Information Power: Building Partnerships for Learning* was released. It moved school libraries away from quantitative evaluation (collection size and facility seating) to qualitative evaluation of school libraries (support of instruction). It advocated that school libraries be evaluated on the basis of what school librarians do, not on the basis of what the library owns. This document shifted the role of the school librarian from a service-oriented model to a leadership-driven profession. School librarians were encouraged to be proactive as they encouraged instructional reform, trained others in new concepts, led in the implementation of new technologies, and assessed the impact of those changes. This is the auspicious start to today's concept of seeing the school librarian as an advocate for

whole school change. As the profession progresses, administrators are using the expertise of school librarians to create libraries as innovation laboratories where educators and students can experiment with new educational ideas (Dickinson, 2015).

Looking Forward

Unfortunately, current political and financial forces have caused far-reaching and negative impacts on school libraries throughout North America. School libraries have closed and those that have remained have seen reductions in staffing and funding. In this context, library professionals are seeking to sharpen, refine, and blend the many roles school librarians fill. Dickinson (2015) envisions school libraries as innovation laboratories where educators and students can experiment with new ideas. Levitov (2016) encourages school librarians to define themselves as partners in education with their colleague teachers. Because of their historical understanding of the process in professional literature, standards, and resources, school librarians are equipped to take leadership roles.

Roots Lewis (2016), elected as the 2018–19 president of the AASL, sees school librarians as goal-oriented leaders that focus on teaching and learning. As leaders they are involved with knowledge creation, digital and physical curation, advocacy for reading and intellectual freedom, and information access. As teachers they actively co-teach and form partnerships with other educators. As proponents and models of student-centered education practices they utilize inquiry-based learning strategies. She contends that school librarians need to be vocal proponents for the profession by attractively and visually communicating successes.

In her review of the evolutionary growth of school libraries, Wine (2016) perceives the next a radical change in school librarian's role is a melding of traditional library teaching concepts within the realm of technology integration. She sees that school librarians and technology specialists alike fill school leadership roles as they collaboratively work with students, teachers, administrators, and their communities. Technology is a mutual interest and knowledge for both specialist areas as they seek to be on the cutting edge with emerging developments and integrate it into their work and teaching.

Respected author and leader in the field of school librarianship, Preddy (2016) also sees school librarians as technology leaders. She advocates that school librarians give instruction in digital citizenship issues. This includes educating students on previously explored areas such as plagiarism, copyright, and source evaluation in addition to new areas of concern, including cyberbullying, digital etiquette, security, safety, hacking, social networks, open source, knowledge/sharing communication, e-commerce, and technology balance.

The core of the matter. Like school libraries of the present, these future visions see school libraries as places of curation, learning, and innovation. School librarians serve their learning communities by building thoughtful and balanced print and digital collections. Especially the digital age, ensuring equitable access to information for all is vital. The role of the school librarian as collaborator and co-teacher continues to be strengthened. With the advent of digital technologies, school librarians teach literacy skills necessary for students to find, interpret, and use information in an ethical manner.

Because information can now be easily shared and regenerated, school libraries will strengthen their roles of laboratories of learning.

Where to go from here. Before school librarians can fully conceptualize the future, it is important to understand the social ideals on which libraries rest. Barbara Stripling, former president of the ALA, sees school librarians as agents of change in the world. This involves having a clear vision of librarians' collective future and a commitment to act on that vision. She sees that ensuring a just society for all is a responsibility and a moral obligation that comes with the library profession. Librarians can work to build a society that is based on social equity, diversity, and inclusion. "Through public and honest conversation and individual actions, we can build an equitable and just society for our members, for the field of librarianship, and for our communities" (Stripling, 2014, p. 5). School librarians find a depth and purpose in their work by acting as agents of social justice.

Social Justice and Libraries

According to the ALA, libraries are foundational for the communities they serve. "Free access to the books, ideas, resources, and information in America's libraries is imperative for education, employment, enjoyment, and self-government" (2012, p. 19). As proponents of equity and democratic values in their communities, libraries have worked to protect the right of individuals to be freely connected to ideas. They advocate for the democratic right for citizens to express themselves by supporting intellectual freedom and fighting censorship. Libraries support their communities by giving a platform to celebrate history and express diversity. They also engage in human rights advocacy by building public awareness through policies to aid the poor. Given these clear, strong stances, Jaeger, Shilton, and Koepfler (2016) have asserted that, "questions

of information and social justice—including civic participation, digital inclusion, social services, digital literacy, and other community needs—are the defining issues for the present and future of libraries and other cultural heritage institutions" (p. 5). By looking at informational and social justice as core issues within librarianship, school librarians can find solid footing for the future.

Social justice is a positive ideal that deals with the "fair" distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges in society. Social justice agents work to ensure that individuals have opportunities to contribute to the general welfare of society and receive full benefits of societal membership. In librarianship, social justice refers ensuring informational needs are met. Concepts of equal access, equity, diversity, inclusion, and serving the underserved underpin community library services (Morellion, 2015). In school libraries, social justice precepts ensure that all students are served with equitable access to materials that provide appreciation of fairness, equality, inclusion, and diversity.

A Nascent Metatheory Social Justice Approach to Library Services

Rioux (2010) developed a nascent metatheory social justice approach to library information science (LIS) to conceptualize, analyze, direct, and enhance theory building. This conceptual framework correlates five social justice typologies to build a list of five assumptions that drive LIS education, research, and practice. The aspects of social justice he included are: distributive, desert, fairness, utilitarianism, and egalitarianism/equity. These aspects involve a traditional understanding of social justice. This study also includes wider definitions of social justice as freedoms, societal structures, global perspectives, and education.

Rioux makes five assumptions for LIS on the basis of social justice principles. Though this is an incomplete picture of the complexities of school librarianship, five areas of school librarianship with social justice and educational constructs can be developed within this framework.

School librarians meet educational and informational needs. Rioux's first assumption is that all human beings have an inherent worth and deserve information services that address their information needs.

School librarians meet the informational and educational needs of all their constituents. They serve teachers and students as a community of learners. Inclusive services that recognize the individual and corporate needs of library patrons reflect their inherent worth and human dignity. Since school libraries operate in an educational context, it is vital that school librarians don the role of instructors (American Association of School Libraries [AASL], 2016b; Moreillon, 2017). Because they serve all students, school libraries are intentional in creating safe, welcoming spaces for students (Shaper& Streatfield, 2012). School librarians are champions of intellectual freedom as they advocate for students' right to read.

School librarians as advocates for individual and corporate equality. Rioux's second assumption states that people perceive reality and information in different ways, often within the cultural or life role contexts.

School librarians recognize the ethnic, cultural, ability, and orientation backgrounds of students. They teach with multicultural precepts that recognize the importance of their students' cultural understandings. Accurate and diverse fiction and information collections are continuously evaluated to remain relevant (Arsenault &

Brown, 2007). School librarians can build fiction and information collections intentionally designed to educate and inspire students to be positive citizens of their communities, the nation, and the world (AASL, 2007). School libraries offer services that are inclusive of all students in the school. While school libraries reflect their immediate community, they also reflect broader community and global needs (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions [IFLA], 2015b).

School librarians ensure equitable access to information. Rioux's third assumption is that there are many different types of information and knowledge, and these are societal resources.

School libraries provide students equitable access to information resources. Inclusion provides physical and virtual access to information for students while giving the students the tools they need to interpret information in today's society (AASL, 2007). Strong democracies rely on a literate, well-informed citizenry (American Library Association [ALA], 2017). Students receive educational services through school libraries that enable them to be productive citizens in a democracy (AASL, 2010).

School librarians as advocates for local and global causes. Rioux's fourth assumption is that theory and research are pursued with the ultimate goal of bringing positive change to service constituencies.

School libraries are places for advocacy for school, community, and global causes. School librarians teach the critical meanings behind both fiction and informational books through formal and informal interactions with teachers and students (Bush, 2009). Through these vital discussions and critical reflection, school librarians can engage students toward a greater understanding of their local and global citizenship

They can broadly advocate for the community in which schools are located. In an increasingly inter-connected global world, school libraries have the responsibility to educate students regarding international causes and issues. This builds compassion and understanding. (IFLA, 2015b).

      School librarians make a powerful, positive impact. Rioux's fifth assumption is that the provision of information services is an inherently powerful activity.

      School librarians make a powerful, positive impact through advocating for the worth and care of each individual within the context of a fair and just society. As advocates for social justice school librarians take a strong stance toward building a positive future for all.

Definition of Terms

      Social justice. Though seen as a positive ideal, social justice is not an easy concept to define or enact. It is a diffuse concept that eludes a simplistic definition. At its core, social justice is involved with the "fair" distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges in society (Rawls, 1971). Social justice looks at the rights that individuals cede and receive to become members of society. Strong democratic societies can only exist when members have common understandings based on shared information and beliefs. Social justice agents work to ensure that individuals have opportunities to contribute to the general welfare of society and receive full benefits of societal membership. The goal of social justice is the full and equal participation of all groups within society. It engages differences while recognizing the elements of power and privilege. It embraces diversity that goes beyond racial lines to include subordinate groups that deal with gender, religion, and socioeconomics.

According to Adams, Bell, and Griffin (1997), social justice education is both a process and a goal. At its heart social justice education looks toward the full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. A just society is one in which resources are equitably distributed and all members are physically and psychologically secure.

Social justice and librarianship. In library information services (LIS) social justice refers to equal access, equity, diversity, inclusion, and serving the underserved. Informational justice in LIS refers to seekers, sources, and subjects. The concepts of librarianship and social justice have historically been intertwined. Indeed, intellectual freedom, equity of access, and the support of a democratic society are at the heart and mission of libraries (Dadlani & Todd, 2016). As professionals, librarians can be seen as leaders and agents of social change as they provide information and advocacy in an egalitarian manner to serve their constituents. The digital revolution continues to change the face of information management. Though print mediums have been traditionally important, now services that give access plus instruction to digital materials have become increasingly vital, especially to the most marginalized in society (Dadlani & Todd, 2015).

The importance of library services to provide information availability, access, and auxiliary services is vital to the greater good of the community. Equal access, equity, diversity, inclusion, and serving the underserved can be seen as informational justice (Mathiesen, 2015). According to Cocciolo (2015), libraries go beyond simply presenting materials, they make the patron positively and critically engaged through building greater understanding.

Social justice and school libraries. Mission central to the job of school libraries is ensuring that all children have equal access to information and resources (Dickinson, Gavigan & Pribesh, 2008). School librarians dig deeper into social justice precepts as they seek to provide thoughtful, directed informational materials designed for students to gain an appreciation of fairness, equality, inclusion, and diversity. School libraries seek to provide both fictional and nonfictional narratives that acquaint students with the importance of justice concepts within the fabric the school, the larger community, and ultimately, the world. As school librarians look to build programs of the future, it is important to understand how they currently operate as agents of social justice.

Purpose Statement

Social justice concepts are foundational to school libraries. It is important to understand how school librarians act as agents of social justice from their perspectives. Therefore, the purpose of this cross-sectional survey is to explore the social justice dispositions of public school librarians in collection development, library policies, and instructional practices. It also studies the impact that professional experiences have on the social justice dispositions of public school librarians.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study of the overarching research question: How do public school librarians in act as agents of social justice?

Research question 1. How do public school librarians act as agents of social justice in collection development?

Research question 2. How do public school librarians act as agents of social justice in library policies?

Research question 3. How do public school librarians act as agents of social justice in instructional practices?

Research question 4. How do public school librarians' perceptions of social justice differ based on professional experiences?

Significance of the Study

Many foundational precepts of ALA and AASL address social justice issues, however, little research exists on the social justice dispositions of school librarians. This study is important because it measures the social justice attitudes and actions of public school librarians in the areas of collection development, library policies, and instructional practices. The survey instrument can serve as the basis for future studies. It can be replicated in other locales with different sample populations for comparison. This research gives a glimpse into the important social and information justice roles that school librarians play in collection development, policies, and instructional practices. It is not exhaustive in examining the other ways that public school librarians act as agents of social justice.

The results of this study can be used to inform pre-service education sessions as well as in-service learning programs on the social justice foundations of school librarianship. As school librarians understand and articulate the importance of their social justice roles, advocacy for the profession is strengthened. School librarians with strong social justice understandings impact students by teaching them to celebrate our common humanity while embracing our differences. As school librarians clearly articulate social justice precepts through collection development, library policies, and instructional practices, all students can be included in a safe library environment. By

understanding and practicing social justice principles, school librarians help build citizens

of the future who value democracy and informational truth in an increasingly connected

world.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many social justice constructs are derived from theories developed within politics, law, philosophy, religion, and economics. Though by its diffuse nature social justice is difficult to precisely define, Rioux maintains that, "At its heart, socially-just society is generally understood to be one in which individuals and groups are treated fairly and enjoy an equal share in that society's benefits" (2010, p. 11). A just society ensures the fair distribution of not only wealth, but opportunities and privileges within society. Social justice agents work to ensure that individuals have opportunities to contribute to the general welfare of society while they receive full benefits of societal membership. Social justice looks at the interaction between the individual and society to create a collective agenda for good. This includes common purposes, rights, and rules of conduct that benefit of all involved (Dadlani & Todd, 2016). In this worldview, social justice benefits all members of society without regard to economic or social privilege.

The underlying presupposition behind social justice theories is that human dignity is to be respected. This respect commands rights and protections by society to protect the individual. The underpinning of individual worth comes from traditional Catholic social justice teachings and also modern philosophies that explore the interactions between individuals and societies. "Social justice can be seen as a matter of social institutions and an ethic of solidarity, care, and respect for individual persons and communities within these institutions" (Mathiesen, 2015, p. 201).

"Most conceptions of social justice refer to an egalitarian society based on the principles of equality and solidarity that understands and values human rights, and that

recognizes the dignity of every human being" (Zajda, Majhanovich, Rust, & Martín Sabina, 2006, p. 38) . The values of liberty, equality, and fraternity are embraced. A key factor in acknowledging social justice is that society is working in a fair way where individuals are allowed as much freedom as possible, given the roles they have in society. True social justice is attained when citizens accept the current norms of morality as the price of membership in the community. Social justice as a social policy is the natural aspiration of all democratic societies and the only long-term guarantee for developing peace, and sustaining tolerance and harmony in the world (Zajda, et al. 2006).

Though the concept of justice has historically been the subject of much consideration, conceptualizing social justice is relatively new. The modern ideas of social justice emerged in tandem with the development of the modern nation-states. The state was conceived as having the capacity and the moral obligation to implement policies that benefitted the least prosperous in society. In the late 18th century writers such as Thomas Paine and Nicolas de Condorcet argued that the alleviation of poverty and the reduction in inequality was a matter of justice and an obligation of the state (Edgeworth, 2012). Social justice ideology in the 19th and 20th centuries comprised two basic elements: the concept of justice applies not just to individuals, but to society as a whole and that justice, not charity, is the basis for alleviating poverty and reducing inequality (Edgeworth, 2012).

Eight Views of Social Justice

Distributive Justice. Often used synonymously with social justice is the economically-driven concept of distributive justice which looks how wealth is diffused within societies. Distributive justice deals with the concept that in a just society everyone

is supplied with a certain level of material means. Some share of society's goods is part of the rights and protections that everyone deserves. It is the state, not private organizations or individuals that guarantee this distribution. After the basic rights and needs of all people are met, it is permissible to have an unequal distribution of goods (Fleischacker, 2004).

Justice as Desert. What an individual actually "deserves" is a matter of philosophic disagreement. Classical theorists argue that people deserve the economic rewards they receive as a fair exchange for their contributions to labor and society (Moriarty, 2002). Under this scenario, talented and hard-working people should enjoy more prosperity and goods than those who have less personal resources or who choose to work less. From his empirical studies, Miller (1992) came to the conclusion that desert comes from both the individual's contribution or achievement and the effort involved in the performance. A person's talents, abilities, and willingness to work hard work impact desert, even when integral or contingency luck is a factor. Desert can also be seen as a moral imperative according to Feinberg (1970), not tied to institutions, practices or rules. He sees the morality of desert as pre-institutional, not to be confused with the entitlements placed within societal structures.

Justice as Fairness. Social justice as fairness relies on the concept that the state has the right and can distribute primary social goods in a reasonable manner. Rawls (1971) argues that desert is a fallacious constraint because the more advantaged persons likely have not had control over the natural and created abilities that allow them to succeed over others. Logically then, since no one is responsible for having his/her original character traits, no one deserves to have the rewards that flow from them.

Because desert is capricious and morally arbitrary, it lacks basic fairness. Rawls does not argue for a totally equal society with no economic difference between persons. He advocates a system of benefits and burdens so that the least advantaged may share in the resources of those more fortunate (Logar, 2013).

While Rawls (1971) defines justice as a set of general principles to assign rights and duties in the basic institutions of society, he also argues for the redistribution of the benefits and burdens of social cooperation. Rawls identifies the social contract with an impartial, disinterested original position that asks its participants what kind of society they would design. The hypothetical citizen, located behind a veil of ignorance would rather have a fair distribution of primary goods which would allow individuals to have rights, liberties, and opportunities for income and wealth.

Within the ideal of fairness is the concept of responsibility and cooperation between collective members of society. The equality and freedom of participants needs to last over a period of time, with the constraint that individuals do not overly burden one another with unreasonably costly decisions (Risse, 2012). Though the rhetoric surrounding social justice as state means to economically equalize society has declined somewhat, it still holds importance as an ideal as evidenced by a broad measure of popular support to alleviate poverty as a matter of legal obligation.

Justice as Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism refers to the theory that individuals are in the best position to determine their own needs and goals. When people make free choices, it will result in the greatest satisfaction for the greatest number. Adam Smith wrote both moral and ethical positions as well as economic theory. In his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Smith, 2012), he postulated that an inner man within all of us is an

impartial spectator who can judge others and ourselves. This spectator evaluates 'right' and 'wrong' behavior. Beyond this, actions are led by passions and sentiments. We try to please and impress people by acting honorably and maintaining a good reputation. It is in our self-interest to have others value us. Those who serve us do so from their own self-interest. Charity should not be expected. Smith's commercial-industrial theories have formed a crucial basis for modern economic thought. He postulated that self-interest is the best choice for society because individuals are better judges of their own interests than lawgivers.

Smith's thoughts were later radicalized into the concept of utilitarianism by Bentham and Mill. Considered the father of utilitarianism, Bentham, proposed that the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people is the measure of right and wrong (Stein, 2003). This definition of happiness looks for a preponderance of pleasure versus pain. At its heart, utilitarianism views individuals as equals because it takes the entity of all persons and essentially conflates them into one.

J.S. Mill refined the work of his mentor Bentham by refining the definition of happiness beyond the notion of pleasure and pain (Yale Courses, 2013). His standards of happiness take into account the elevated human desires, such as imagination and morality. In his view it is not the quantity of happiness that is important, rather the quality. Within the bounds of liberty and freedom, people must act with virtue as the ideal. Liberty without bounds should be practiced, except when it violates the mores of society. As rational actors, people are self-interested and make good individual choices. The rights and expressions of individuals must be defended; no one can make a decision for another. He saw people as being motivated by internal sanctions, such as self-esteem,

guilt, and conscience. As a staunch advocate for free speech and expression, Mill holds the ultimate standard of British individualism.

Justice as Egalitarianism/Equity. Egalitarianism refers to the distribution of societies' resources equally. The purpose of egalitarianism is to eliminate voluntary economic disadvantage. In this scenario, the sufferer cannot be held responsible since privation does not appropriately reflect choices that he has made, is or making, or will make. Cohen's political philosophy distinguishes between those with poor life circumstances who were unlucky versus those who made unwise choices. People should be given equal access to advantage (Cohen, 2011). Equity expands the notion of the equal distribution of goods by taking into account political, economic, social, and cultural aspects of society. Historical or individual contexts may have resulted in unfairness and injustice (Rioux, 2010; O'Neill, 2003). Many definitions of social justice now embrace fairness, diversity and inclusion, human rights, and global justice.

Justice as Freedoms. In *Development as Freedom* (2000), Amartya Sen postulates citizen freedoms are of more value than statistical economic improvements for those in developing countries. Measuring a country's wealth by GDP or per-capita income does not give an accurate metric of development. Raising incomes by productivity is of little use to those who are in need of health care and education. Personal freedom in all aspects of life is the important way to guarantee economic development. Sen broke freedom down into five areas: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. Sen argues that the increase in real freedoms should be both the ends and the means of development. Sen has worked extensively with gender equity issues, noting that society

has placed barriers in front of women that have kept them at a second-class stature. Sen holds equality as a core political value. He believes societies should value the equality of persons as a social goal. He also stresses the importance of public discussion and universal human rights. (UCtelevision, 2008).

      Justice as Society Structures. Young (1990) takes justice beyond issues of economic distribution to evaluating the social and institutional conditions necessary for all members of society to flourish. She sees social justice beyond issues of economic distribution, taking the definition into the realm of domination and oppression. Justice needs to be examined as it bears on decision-making, division of labor, and culture. Young conceptualized a community of communities where oppression is diffused and marginalized, with equal social thriving for others. In the motif of the city, Young sees social differentiation without exclusion, variety which encourages knowledge and security, the attraction of articulated divergence, and a voice to heterogeneity. Young sees the entire social system as the subject of social justice, requiring us to ask larger questions about the existence of injustices in the economic, political, and cultural spheres (Mathiesen, 2015).

      Justice as a Global Promise. With increasing globalization, it is imperative that societies look beyond the nation-state model to advocate social justice issues. Human rights theory and norms need to be incorporated in relationship to economic, political and social rights so far as international and domestic law are concerned (Edgeworth, 2012). Britz (2008) sees the lines between nation-state and global justice blurring, partially due to present increased global nature of information. This brings social justice into focus as a universally held value that helps promote cultural diversity, human dignity, and

freedom. Social justice demands that affordable or free distribution of essential

information to those who are poor and marginalized. This must be balanced, however,

with the economic needs of those who create and protect the information.

Justice through Education

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire (2014) linked education to social

change, looking for a world that is less ugly, more beautiful, less discriminatory, more

democratic, less dehumanizing, and more humane. Freire advocated that true knowledge

and expertise already exists with people, looking for dialogue, respect, love for humanity,

and action to change the world. He saw education as a practice of freedom through

dialogue between teachers and students. In problem-posing education, students become

co-investigators with teachers to create knowledge and constantly unveil reality. As

students are challenged in their beliefs, they become critical thinkers and begin to think

creatively on how to impact their realities. True education gives people the drive for

transformation and inquiry, leading them to be able to control their life situations. The

process of education is corporate as people join with their peers to reflect on life

conditions, imagine a better world, and take action to create it. Through conscientização

(consciousness raising or critical conscience), the learning and perceiving of social,

political, and economic contradictions, people can take positive action against the

oppressive elements of reality. This is not to make the oppressed into oppressors, but to

ensure freedom and social justice for all (Friere, 2014).

Social Justice Education. Though often vague in theory and practice, education

for social justice recognizes the differences in educational opportunities, resources,

achievement, and long-term outcomes between minority and low-income students and

their white middle- or upper class peers. One of the roles of educators can be seen as activists who seek to highlight and reduce the inequalities in American society. In social justice education, the primary consideration is promoting pupils' formal academic and social learning structures to enhance their chances for living full and successful lives in American society. Teaching for social justice presumes that teachers are committed to larger social movements as they work as advocates and activists for their pupils (Ludlow, Enterline, & Cochran-Smith, 2008).

 One of the fundamental tasks of educators is to ensure a more socially just world in the future. This can be accomplished when students learn to critique what is, balanced with what can be, with the values of reason, freedom, and equality. Students can find new ways to think and act independently (Giroux, 2010). Critical pedagogy seeks to bring about positive personal and social change. The first step in overcoming social injustice is to understand that the barriers of race, class, and gender exist and can be overcome. It is incumbent on educators to teach that information and knowledge are not static, but are to be questioned. Identifying the negative or non-existent images that the dominant society uses as cultural portraits is imperative. This helps empower students to be self-reflective learners that function within society. As teachers, including multiple perspectives of an event becomes key in building true understandings. Positive cultural identities can be built through bridging gaps between home and school. Giving spaces for students to work toward personal and social transformation leads to further empowerment (Chen, 2005).

 Democratic Education. One of the functions of the school library is to teach students to share knowledge in an ethical and productive way as a pathway to

understanding how to participate in a democracy (AASL, 2007). Democratic education

emphasizes the civic functions of schooling, including self-governance, community

engagement and experiential education (Dover, 2013). This view of education has its

roots in Dewey's educational philosophies. He argued that it was the job of education to

encourage individuals to develop their full potential as human beings. Dewey believed

that children learn best by experience through hands-on projects. He further advocated

that students develop the skills, habits, and attitudes necessary for problem solving.

Dewey believed that active learning was the key to help students think critically for

themselves. When students are engaged in meaningful and relevant activities, they learn

to apply concepts. Dewey linked education and politics, believing an active citizenry is

key to sustaining a democratic form of government.

According to Dewey's philosophy of education, we educate for various purposes -

for business and vocation, problem solving and entrepreneurship, private and public

success, even happiness and peace – but education for democracy both in individual and

social life should permeate these purposes (Višňovský & Zolcer, 2016).

Democratic education teaches skills that to promote civic and social participation.

According to Westheimer (2008), schools are essential to support the development of

democratic citizens. For democracies to remain vibrant, educators convey that both

critical thinking and action are important components of democratic civil life. All

students need to learn that they have important contributions to make because democracy

is participatory. Social responsibility takes place in the personal realm when students

understand the importance of good character, honesty, responsibility and obeying laws.

Participatory responsibility requires citizens to take leadership roles to solve social

problems and improve society. When students who have socially just ideals mature, they become citizens who practically work to change the systemic structures that foster injustice.

Toward a Social Justice Metatheory for Libraries

The social justice theories of distributive justice, justice as fairness, justice as utilitarianism, justice as egalitarianism/equity, justice as freedoms, justice as society structures, and justice as global promise provide background constructs for Rioux's (2010) social justice approach to library and informational science. Five key assumptions are made in beginning formalized social justice discourse in the library sciences. They are:

- All human beings deserve to have their informational needs met through library services;

- Due to cultural and life roles, information can be perceived in different ways. When providing information services, thoughtful, socially relevant materials should be provided;

- Information and knowledge are societal resources. Widely available access to information and knowledge is a common good that should be maintained and promoted;

- The place of the library and the librarian is to constructively help the community;

- The provision of information services is an inherently powerful activity.

These assumptions form the framework on which the social justice agency of school librarians can be understood. School libraries serve a social justice mission by ensuring informational justice for all students. Inclusive and diverse collection

development provides students with materials that accurately reflect history and current happenings in the school both locally globally. Egalitarian access of materials in all formats ensures that students have the tools students need to succeed. Informationally-just school libraries champion the freedom to read. As a professional educators, school librarians work with students of all abilities. Teaching students to analyze information for accuracy is key for the future success of democracy. Critical literacy enables students to understand social inequities and helps them work toward a more just world.

School Library Practices in Social Justice

School librarians practically work toward social justice ideals in a number of ways. For the purposes of this study, the social justice role of school librarians in collection development, library policies, and instructional practices will be examined.

Collection Development

Collection development is the ongoing process of identifying the informational needs of the school community and then selecting, managing, and evaluating the materials to meet those needs. It is responsive to the mission of the school and the learners that will be utilizing those materials. Collection development requires a plan to ensure that high quality resources are kept up-to-date, accessible, and relevant (Kimmel, 2014). Collection development embodies distributive, fairness, utilitarianism, equity/egalitarianism, freedoms, society structures, and global promises definitions of social justice.

School library collections are developed to meet the informational, instructional, and recreational needs of students. Purposeful and inclusive curation helps students clearly see and understand themselves. School library materials echo the diversity within

schools and the larger world beyond them. Collections go beyond reflecting the constituencies they serve and provide students insights into lives that are different from theirs. "Extending the concept of books as mirrors, our collections should not only represent but also broaden the horizon of those we serve, providing a window into the lives of those who are different from us and doors that connect us and foster understanding" (Church, 2017, p. 4). Socially-just library collections encourage students toward positive actions as part of their role in the world.

School library collections are ideally for the benefit of all students. They actively support the curriculum and meet student interests. School librarians develop collections of learning resources that benefit all students. While the school library reflects the mores and ideals of the community in which the school is located, it also gives access to the viewpoints of the larger global community. A comprehensive school library is essential to provide equitable access to the diverse learning resources needed to achieve learning outcomes (Doiron, 2002).

School libraries play a vital role in encouraging literacy by providing a wide variety of reading materials to readers of all levels of proficiency. With input from classroom teachers, colleagues, students, and families, school librarians build a collections that reflect the language, social class, gender, race, sexual orientation, and religious beliefs represented in the school. By integrating multicultural and international literature into classroom instruction, students are affirmed and challenged to work in a global society (Moreillon, 2009).

Diversity and Inclusion in Collection Development. School libraries offer services that are inclusive of all students in the school. School librarians build collections

that are considerate of identity constructs and consider deep social meanings. Literature for children, and particularly young adults, reflects trends within a dynamically changing demographic, so current and relevant collections are important. Quality books that feature diverse characters help foster cross-cultural understandings for both educators and students. While accounts of fitting in, finding oneself, and dealing with major life changes have wide-spread appeal, culturally-specific books help build deeper understandings between others (Doll & Garrison, 2013). Though the preponderance of currently published book in the YA market feature fictional accounts of white European-Americans, librarians and educators can intentionally purchase and teach with diverse quality books to deepen students' literacy experiences (Koss & Teale, 2009).

Core values. Diversity deals with recognizing ethnic, cultural, ability, and orientation backgrounds of students. Recognizing diversity and providing appropriate resources to patrons is a core principle of the ALA (*Core Values*, 2004). School libraries allow students to encounter a diversity of perspectives with differing voices. Thoughtful collection building allows students to reflect on their own experiences as they gain insight into lives far different from theirs. Strong collections help students build insightful personal and collective identities through materials that feature diverse ethnic, cultural, ability, and preferences. School libraries help students discover that individuals, local communities, and the world are interconnected (Olshewsky, 2016).

Literature can open the world and open students' lives to ideas and insights that they would normally not have encountered. Unfamiliar cultures can be far more understandable when seen through the lens of a peer. Literature can serve as a bridge of awareness and help students make cross-cultural connections (Cai, 2002). As students

read about diverse cultures, they can look beyond differences and learn to appreciate human similarities and connectedness. Students need to be presented with literature that is carefully chosen and culturally authentic. This authenticity can spring from the author's genuine experience within the diverse culture or through meticulously researched work. Accurate multicultural literature portrays authentic relationships and interactions between the unique characters involved. The problems presented are realistic and avoid oversimplification of complex social issues. When multicultural literature is taught within the curriculum, it expands the way students see themselves and the world (Landt, 2006).

Multicultural education needs. The concept for multicultural education emerged during the 1960's civil rights moment when African Americans demanded that their histories, struggles, contributions, and possibilities be reflected in school texts and curriculum. Subsequently other ethnic and racial groups who have been excluded or marginalized have made similar demands for inclusion within the educational dialogue. What began as a curriculum addendum on heroes and holidays has evolved through the years to centralized discussions that include recognition for critical and diverse perspectives (Banks, 2013). Even though multicultural literature for children began to emerge in the 1970's, still only a small portion of books published by the mainstream press tackle issues of diversity (Gilton, 2012). It is imperative that books focusing on diverse issues have literary merit to ensure interest and longevity. Well written diverse literature features characters and situations that are portrayed with authenticity.

Thoughtful and complete multicultural education includes recognition and respect of the local school and community culture. Studies by cultural difference theorists prove

empirically that the academic achievement of minority students is positively advanced when teachers use culturally responsive pedagogies. Multicultural education continues to evolve in scope and now takes into account gender, exceptionality, religion, and social class. Understanding global perspectives has become the field's most notable recent focus (Banks, 2013).

   Cultural understanding. Traditionally, inclusive school library collections have been measured by titles that include characters, themes, topics, and settings that portray and relate to people of color. For some, this definition is expanded to specify that the authors and illustrators be members of the non-white cultures portrayed. Additionally, books that represent religious minorities, those in poverty, people with disabilities, and a range of gender identities are be included in today's modern collection (Yockey & Donovan, 2016). School librarians can help build cultural understanding of immigrant students by purchasing books and materials translated from native languages into English. Culturally responsive teachers rely on texts that accurately reflect who their students are and how they experience the world. Building a collection with personally relevant literature helps students build interests in reading.

   Regular collection analysis allows school librarians to dispassionately analyze their collections and verify that available materials reflect their student populations. Developing a mechanism for diversity analysis helps create a structure for purchasing and retaining books with cross-cultural relevance. This includes making sure that current titles resonate with students and discarding titles that have outlived their usefulness. Diversity gaps can be bridged by strategically highlighting authors and illustrators who produce accurately depicted domestic cross-cultural and international books. Each title

can be considered an investment in their students' future ability to work across cultures and the world (Yockey & Donovan, 2016).

As has been noted, books with relatable multi- and cross-cultural characters can enhance the reading experiences of all students (Agosto, 2007; Banks, 2013; Gilton, 2012). Students from diverse backgrounds can be encouraged to find deeper personal understandings and build empathy by relating to characters with similar life-experiences. Students in dominant cultures can build understandings of privilege as they come to a greater understanding of those who have been marginalized. Since teaching multicultural titles in classrooms may be limited, due to curricular constraints, school librarians can take the role as advocates for diverse literature. School librarians play a strong role in supporting the curriculum through literary experiences as they advocate for titles that reflect diversity (Brunelle, 2014). Even so, Lafferty (2014) found that students are not checking out racially diverse literature from their school libraries. Some reasons for this could be that students are using school libraries simply to check out supplementary curricular readings or that students prefer books that are featured in popular movies. Additionally, it could be that students of non-dominant backgrounds just are not using school libraries, whether this be due to a lack of current diverse materials or the perception that these materials are not available. School librarians can promote and encourage students to check out a wide range of materials. The school library is a resource to address issues of diversity, literacy, and student success.

School librarians can ensure that diverse books find an audience through strategic promotional activities. By encouraging open discussions, librarians and teachers can

deepen students' learning experiences. Students can become aware that though people have differences, they share many commonalities. Literature is a powerful tool to broaden the experiences of students as they understand the worldviews of others (Burrows & Morrisey, 2015).

Authentic and contemporary voices. Though purchasing literature with diverse characters is a worthy goal, finding authentic and appropriate literature can be challenging. In a recent survey, researchers found that many painful stereotypes permeate children's literature for African Americans (Yoo-Lee, Fowler, Adkins, Kim, & David, 2014). A large number of books depict African Americans during slavery, reconstruction, and the civil rights era. Although these events are seminal to the African American experience, children need to find literature that goes beyond history. It is important for readers to find characters whose experiences and appearance mirror their current realities. Approximately one-third of the books in this study perpetuated stereotypes of African Americans, mostly through illustrations, but also in the language presented. The researchers found authentic representations of Asian American cultures in their selections. The predominant Asian American groups in this study were Chinese, followed by Korean, and Japanese. Themes of cultural adaption along with the importance of family values were strongly present. Like Asian cultures, Hispanic cultures are not monolithic. This is generally recognized in recent literature for children. In Hispanic culture, the values of hard work and respect for family were emphasized correctly. In addition, many of the works featured the value of respect for elders. Bilingual books, featuring both Spanish and English, were more likely to put emphasis on the English text. No one book can adequately reflect any culture or set of

cultures. Because cultures are growing and changing, the depictions of these cultures

cannot remain stagnant. Diverse literature is of great importance in building inter- and

intra-cultural understandings (Yoo-Lee, Fowler, Adkins, Kim, & David, 2014).

   Positive self-identification. School libraries serve LGBTQ students by

purchasing materials that accurately reflect their needs and community. It is vital to

provide positive self-identification for students who are forming personal and sexual

identities. Strong, relevant narratives allow LGBTQ students to find integration and

acceptance within the queer community and as individuals within the larger social fabric

(Barak, 2014). LGBTQ resources allow all patrons to learn about the history, culture,

and other aspects of LGBTQ life. The struggles and confusions of adolescents strike a

universal note, which lends to greater understandings and bridges between people. In a

two-state study of school libraries, Oltmann (2015) found that school locale, political

affiliation of the community, existence of a fairness ordinance, and demographic

diversity was not significantly correlated with LGBTQ holdings. Schools with larger

enrollments had more LGBTQ holdings, but that might be attributed to larger budgets for

book purchasing. Because LGBTQ books are increasingly reviewed in selection

journals, they are more likely to be approved for purchase. Additionally in the past

several years the United States has seen a dramatic positive shift in positive sentiment

toward the LGBTQ community.

   Building bridges of understanding. A deliberate and sustained effort to enrich

classrooms and libraries with culturally diverse literature is vital to build bridges of

understanding. Schools need to expand beyond the mainstream canon books to include

books that depict diversity (Hughes-Hassell et al., 2012; Jacobson, 2015). As a social

construct diversity is complex, multidimensional, and fluid. In literature themes that center on race ethnicity, culture, and languages are commonly considered salient characteristics of diversity. Diverse literature includes voices that discuss physical and mental disabilities, socioeconomic status, language variations, dialect differences, and religion. Unfortunately, the number of books by and about people in what can be termed "parallel cultures" does not reflect the population of the U.S. The deficit is worse when considering global literature (Boyd, Causey, & Galda, 2015).

Global Worldview. School librarians can build fiction and information collections intentionally designed to educate and inspire students to be positive citizens of their communities, the nation, and the world. While multicultural literature portrays domestically diverse American cultures, international literature refers to works produced and centered outside the U.S. It can also refer to literature that speaks to ethnic or immigration issues that take place inside the U.S. Global literature encompasses both multicultural and international literature. Globally inclusive and culturally authentic literature gives voice to those who are underrepresented. A strong selection of global literature is part of a strong library collection. "All types of cultural literature are necessary to prepare youth for living effectively, thoughtfully, and consciously in an increasingly interconnected world" (Moreillon, 2013, p. 36).

School libraries support social justice issues by helping learners become sensitive to the needs and struggles of others (IFLA, 2015b). Access to local, regional, national and global resources are provided in the library with the objective of exposing learners to diverse ideas, experiences and opinions. School librarians organize activities that encourage cultural and social awareness.

A major function of the library is to provide cultural social-educational information (Janavičienė, 2010). Librarians build strong communication skills to construct an understanding of their patrons' needs and motivations. School libraries have thoughtful collections that spur youth to contemplate their personal identities. Beyond this, students need to learn about the world community beyond their immediate understandings. Literature can be a powerful vehicle for students to build awareness and understand the importance of living in a just society.

Library Policies

School libraries stand for social justice as they promote the rights of intellectual freedom, learner empowerment, equal access to information, digital inclusion, the right to read, and sensitivity to the individual needs of each learner (ALA, 2017; McLaughlin & Hendricks, 2017). As an essential 21st century skill, students need to learn how to gather information in an ethically responsible manner (AASL, 2007). Further, school librarians are champions of intellectual freedom as they advocate for students' right to read information from a variety of sources and viewpoints. School librarians intentionally create policies that guarantee every student has access to equitable information and educational opportunities. Library policies embody distributive, fairness, utilitarianism, equity/egalitarianism, freedoms and society structures.

School libraries are to provide the information and ideas that are fundamental in a knowledge-based society (IFLA, 2015a). School libraries are inclusive as members of the school community are taught to become critical thinkers and users of information. Services are provided equally to all members

of the school community regardless of age, race, gender, religion, nationality, language, or social status. Library materials are not subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship or to commercial pressures. Intellectual freedom and access to information are essential elements of responsible citizenry in a democracy (ALA, 2017).

School libraries can provide a crucial literacy and learning bridge to students who come from economically or socially disadvantaged situations. Students who have access to print and digital materials through the school library can further their opportunities to succeed. School librarians can help students dream big and provide constant love in a safe environment (Hunsinger, 2015).

Clearly articulated school library policies include statements on intellectual freedom, learner empowerment, equity of access, age-appropriate guidelines, community standards, and equity of access for all (Chen, 2016). Processes for challenging materials are clearly delineated, preferably with parents being able to challenge for their own children, not all children. The right to information is an important key in maintaining a democratic society (Doiron, 2002).

Digital Inclusion. Twenty-first century school library collections are both physical and digital in nature. Digital inclusion provides physical and virtual access to information for students while giving the students the tools they need to interpret information in today's society. Issues of access to information are becoming increasingly important in the present digital era. "Students need to be able to discover, analyze, evaluate, interpret, and communicate ideas, information in a variety of ways" (AASL, 2016a). Today's school library includes a range of formats beyond printed books. The

digital content is made available to the school community both physically and virtually. Students and staff need to have current, relevant resources. Forward-thinking librarians anticipate changes in technology.

The use of informational technology in the classroom is now considered integral to the learning process for content delivery and learner support. A scarcity of adequate technology has led to teachers, school librarians and students having less than optimal access to information. Any group that does not have access to information, whether or not they are a traditionally disenfranchised group, is experiencing informational injustice. By using social justice strategies of utilitarianism (the greatest good for the greatest number of students) and forms of egalitarianism (equal access to information through group work), school librarians and teachers can maximize their students' use of the available technology (Dadlani & Todd, 2015).

In a 2012 study designed to explore teachers' views regarding informational technologies both within and outside the classroom, 2,462 Advanced Placement (AP) and National Writing Project (NWP) teacher from the United States, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands were surveyed (Purcell, Heaps, Buchanan, & Friedrich, 2013). The teachers saw disparities in access to digital tools that had at least some impact on their students. More than half (54%) said all or almost all of their students had sufficient access to digital tools at school, but only a fifth of these teachers (18%) say all or almost all of their students have access to the digital tools they need at home. Teachers of the lowest income students were the least likely to say their students had sufficient access to the digital tools they need, both in school and at home. Teachers in urban areas are the

least likely to say their students have sufficient access to digital tools in school, while rural teachers are the least likely to say their students have sufficient access at home.

Going Beyond Information Access. Providing access to information goes beyond supplying technological devices and digital materials. According to the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE, 2010), school librarians provide technology training with all constituents, including administrators, teachers, students, and parents. They prepare students to succeed in higher education, the work place, and in society. Responsible use of technology is instructed through digital citizenry lessons. School librarians provide leadership in the development of local information and technology literacy standards.

It is the role of the school librarian to provide leadership in technology integration within the curriculum (Johnston, 2015). Since they have been charged with the responsibility to prepare learners to participate and succeed in a global society, school librarians educate teachers and students on the values and uses of digital information and creation resources. The key to technology integration is that it is seamlessly blended to enhance the learner's experience and thinking skills. Teaching with technology is increasing exponentially as it permeates every level of education. School librarians need to demonstrate and be vocal advocates that they are experts in technology, actively working to not be marginalized out of digital education leadership positions.

School libraries are a constant place for students to make valuable discoveries. School librarians have a crucial role in bringing information to the diverse individuals they support. They know which information options are viable and are especially vital to providing three-dimensional pathways to understanding and constructing knowledge

(Ballew, 2014). School librarians are essential for students and teachers because they are a front line for finding and disseminating available resources. To be successful in the future, whether it be in the job market or in intrapersonal relationships, today's students need to be accurate in how they communicate across a range of formats. School libraries support learning standards as they support critical thinking, communication, information literacy, and media literacy throughout the curriculum.

Safe Haven. School libraries can be seen as places of advocacy for individuals as well as community and societal groups. As the educational heart of the school, school libraries work with all students and are in a position to know and understand their personal needs. Shaper and Streatfield (2012) found that school librarians provide often unrecognized or hidden roles in the pastoral care of students. They give reactive and proactive care to students on a one-to-one basis as they deal directly with students who have social, emotional, physical, behavioral, moral, or spiritual needs. The school library influences the school as whole by promoting and maintaining a supportive environment by building positive, continuous relationships with teachers and students. School librarians seek to create a safe, welcoming, peaceful, and accessible environment. The library promotes social inclusion, self-esteem, and appropriate behavior. School librarians provide emotional support in a variety of ways including promoting reading, helping with schoolwork, and fostering cultural engagement. The pastoral care of students is often an unsung third strand of the school librarians' role. Librarians need to draw attention to this important role to the school administration, perhaps through self-evaluation and annual reporting, so these services to not go unnoticed.

The school library is be a place where students can receive personal assistance with research, help with individual learning needs, and enjoy a safe haven (Jurkowski, 2006). School libraries provide an additional layer of support for students who have emotional or social problems. Students who have difficult family lives or need extra adult support can find support from the school librarian. They can teach resiliency and competency by mentoring and reading to students. School librarians can teach problem-solving strategies, social skills, and help students find hobbies. The library's collection resources can be used to help students who are dealing with perplexing life issues. Bibliotherapy allows students to discover connections between literary characters and their own lives. School librarians can individually guide students to appropriate books and other resources. In the pastoral role, the school librarian can set aside the library as a safe space. As a place that allows for anonymity and independence, the school library can be used as an oasis for students who need a break from regular classroom routines.

> **Intellectual Freedom.** Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. It provides for free access to all expressions of ideas through which any and all sides of a question, cause or movement may be explored (AASL, 2010).

Intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for libraries. It embodies the twin concepts of the right to know and freedom of expression. Knowledge through access to information makes possible freedom of thought and conscience (IFLA, 2015b). The ALA affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas. "Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves" (Library Bill of Rights,

2017). Library resources include a discussion of all points of view on current and

historical issues. Free expression and access to ideas are rights that librarians

foundationally uphold. Requests for information to be censored or suppressed are to be

resisted (Library Bill of Rights, 2017).

   Intellectual Freedom and School Libraries. School librarians are on the front

lines of ensuring students' intellectual freedom and their First Amendment right to read

and access information (Library Media Center Position Statements, 2000). School

librarians have the responsibility to be leaders in the articulation of intellectual freedom

within their schools. School libraries are learning laboratories where students can

voluntary access information and ideas. Resources are designed to invite and sustain free

inquiry by encouraging critical thinking skills. When lessons are structured in the library,

students are be able to locate, evaluate, and use a wide range of sources and ideas

effectively. A robust discussion of differing perspectives is encouraged. Age appropriate

resources represent many perspectives on current and historical issues. The linguistic

pluralism of a school's students is reflected in library materials to ensure equitable and

free access to information.

   One of the core values of AASL is intellectual freedom. James LaRue, executive

director of ALA and AASL's Office for Intellectual Freedom (OIF), has found several

threats to intellectual freedom in schools: the over-filtering of Internet access; speech

codes and social media monitoring; fear of book challenges on diverse materials; parental

permission for English class readings; disregard of patron privacy; and the continued

disappearance of school librarians. The importance of intellectual freedom needs to be

articulated by school librarians to school administrators. Students need to have open

access to information so they can learn and grow (Adams, 2016).

       Intellectual Freedom and Collections. School libraries provide materials that

allow for an open exchange of ideas. Clear selection policies are crucial to ensure

intellectual freedom and preserve students' right to read (Johns, 2007). "If school

librarians want to establish a culture of intellectual freedom, they must exert strong

leadership and sustained advocacy" (Stripling, 2015, p. 16). School libraries ensure

access to information by promoting intellectual freedom concepts to parents,

administrators, students, and the school community. The culture of intellectual freedom

needs to be articulated through clear selection policies. The procedures for challenged

materials are clear, fair, and consistent. School librarians are to balance print and

electronic resources, provide multiple perspectives, curate and guide the use of online

resources, and accommodate a wide variety of reading levels. When students learn

through inquiry and are able to make independent reading choices, intellectual freedom is

well-served. A culture of intellectual freedom is empowering as individuals and schools

grow and change.

School Librarians as Educators

       School libraries serve teachers and students with inclusive services that reflect

both individual and corporate needs. Since school libraries operate in an educational

context, it is vital that school librarians take the role of teachers (AASL, 2010). They

ensure that students receive educational services that will enable them to be productive

citizens in a democracy. School libraries can be seen as places of advocacy to build

student and local community awareness. They also have the responsibility to educate

students regarding the needs of others in the global community. School librarians as educators speak to distributive, fairness, utilitarianism, equity/egalitarianism, freedoms, society structures, global promises, and justice through education definitions of social justice.

School Library Instructional Practices. School librarians provide students the instruction they need to succeed in the present and into the future. Successful teaching in the library environment includes consciously including every student in instruction. Inclusive educational practices show awareness of the cultural, ethnic, and ability diversities of students. These practices are foundational for students to value the concepts and rights of living in an open democracy which values discourse. As students increase in awareness and curiosity about the world around them, school libraries can provide valuable, insightful information. School librarians give an accurate representation of the world with the hope of creating students who are aware of human dignity and act toward a more just future (Orme, 2006).

Inclusion and Equity in Instruction. Inclusion and equity in the library are the rights of all students. School librarians need to have mechanisms and understandings in place to serve students in the Special Education (SPED) population (Subramaniam, Oxley, & Kodama, 2013). School libraries must meet federal guidelines that govern working with disabled students, by being physically and intellectually accessible. The school librarian needs to make certain specialized instruction that meets the needs of individual students is delivered. To be effective the school librarian works in consultation with classroom teachers and becomes personally acquainted with special needs students. In developing library policies, the SPED population can be

accommodated by specialized selection policies, differentiated circulation periods, and enhanced accessibility to digital resources. Even alternative methods of library access, including home delivery are for consideration. School librarians need to be aware of the broad diversity in the student population. They make sure that the library is a safe, welcome, and comfortable place that encourages all students to fully participate. School library collections hold books that represent disabled characters in a fair, accurate and meaningful light. This can help build bridges of understanding within the entire school population.

"The richness and ranges of information sources underscore the importance of libraries for all students. However, the true value of resources can be realized only if they are accessible to users" (Blue & Pace, 2012, p. 51). School libraries look to be intentional in their design as they welcome students with disabilities. Today's school libraries can provide students with multiple means of accessing the world through many modes of information transmission. It is the responsibility of the librarian to provide many ways to retrieve, manage, interpret, critique, and present information. By using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) model, librarians can offer a variety of ways to teach and present information using technology. Enacting inclusion and independence features for those who are disabled benefits education for all students.

High ability students can benefit from library services as teachers and librarians work together to form learning communities. Advanced learners benefit from receiving extra guidance in finding age-appropriate reading materials that actively engage the reader. School librarians are an excellent resource for extension activities that enhance regular classroom instruction. In-depth study projects are valuable way to increase

understandings and engage high ability students. School libraries allow the world to come to students because of the variety of materials they curate. In cultivating the interests of advanced students, school libraries can be a friendly, open engaging place where opportunities to learn are exciting and endless (Haslam-Odoardi, 2010).

Reading Goes Beyond Decoding. As a lifelong learning skill, reading goes beyond decoding and comprehension to interpretation and development of new understandings (AASL, 2007). School librarians are building-wide champions of literacy as they teach students how to find the deep meanings behind what they read. They help students to find their own voices. Students can come to a greater understanding of those in poverty or who face discrimination and social pressures through accurate fictional and informational narratives. By examining ideas, topics, and viewpoints that come from outside their experiences, students find a deeper understanding of current issues and learn the importance of advocating for social responsibility.

> In an increasingly polarized and abrasive American society, social justice
> education has the potential to prepare citizens who are sophisticated in their
> understanding of diversity and group interaction, able to critically evaluate social
> institutions, and committed to working democratically with diverse others.
> (Glasgow, 2001, p. 54)

Teaching social justice through authentic literature to children. During their early years, children develop moral frameworks as they absorb the attitudes and values of their family, culture, and society. As children become more aware of themselves and their surroundings, they also are forming attitudes toward difference and diversity. Hawkins (2014) conducted an action research project to show how story time could be

used to teach for social justice. Both teachers and students learned to critically examine children's literature for social justice issues through discussion and reflection. Texts with both explicit and implicit social justice messages were chosen for this study. After stories were read aloud, the teachers gave time for students to respond. As the study progressed, the discussions following story time became longer, more reflective, and more in depth on the part of both teachers and children. Story time became more than just a transitional activity, but became a centerpiece in the lessons of the day. At the conclusion of the study, preschoolers were better able to recognize and articulate when story characters acted unjustly. Well after the study was complete, teachers documented that the groups that discussed social justice issues were more cohesive, harmonious, and inclusive than before. Teaching for social justice at an early age sets the foundations for lifelong learning based on respect and mutual accord. Children learn that all individuals have worth and can contribute to the social, economic, political, and cultural life.

Children's literature is often used as a gateway to discuss issues of social justice. Author studies can be a powerful tool in building a transformative curriculum (Fox, 2006). Students can see writing as a tool for social change by viewing the entirety of an author's work. They can learn to think critically about an author's voice by reading and analyzing several selections. Through an examination of trends and patterns, students can also learn to identify social justice themes in an author's work. In turn, students can see their own writing as a tool for expressing a social agenda. Authors including, Patricia Polocco, Tomie dePaola, Bobbi Salinas, Byrd Baylor, John Steptoe, and Alma Flor Ada, to name a few, can be used as models to study and emulate. As students understand the strength of empowerment through literature, they can come to greater

understandings about the challenges and opportunities within in our society.

        Teaching social justice through literature to adolescents. Young Adult literature can engage students in reading, writing, and speaking as they examine power, privilege, and oppression (Schieble, 2012). Students need to understand the importance of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and ability in establishing social identities. Access to institutions such as education, healthcare, and employment intersect with identity and can assist or inhibit an individual's ability to succeed or even survive. Students come to understand what implications that race, whether explicitly discussed or implicitly ingrained, makes within literature. Literacy teachers examine and engage 'whiteness' as a perspective of justice. This gives students power and boldness to understand race and racism on a deeper level.

        Multicultural YA literature gives voice to teens whose racial/social group has gone unheard or has been misrepresented in mainstream discourse. It gives voice to the way racism is institutionalized in our current economic, educational, and judicial systems (Hughes-Hassell, 2013). This literature is characterized by a sense of affirmation and validation in realistic, thoughtful situations. It lends understanding to the complexity of racial and ethnic identity formation. It challenges readers whose lives have been characterized by mainstream privilege to understand those who have been marginalized and oppressed. Counter-storytelling raises awareness of the inequalities that occur on a daily basis. By reading multicultural literature, teens of color and indigenous teens can gain insight as to how others who share their racial, ethnic, or cultural background affirm their own identities.

Wolk (2009) contends that many authors write to convey a good story and in most cases, convey an important message. Using YA literature gives students a pleasurable way to inquire about the relationship of social responsibility and the world. Strong authentic literature contains stories that focus on moral and ethical quandaries. Civic liberties and injustices are explored through a youthful, fresh lens. YA literature helps students understand and act upon injustices in culture, gender, economic class, and sexual orientation. When students learn what is happening in their communities and the world, they can be empowered to actively take a stand for social justice issues.

By looking at the world through the lens of YA literature, students can understand societal myths about others. They can learn to break through stereotypical images and see individuals for who they genuinely are (Miller, 2005). To break the cycle of oppression and prejudice, readers can learn not to be consumed by popular ideologies. The cycle of violence and oppression can be broken by students learning to be empathetic and open to others. Research has found that students are receptive to positive messages of compassion and caring as they look through the lens of literature.

Teaching social justice through building global perspectives. At the core of global citizenship education is the recognition of the world's shared humanity. Schools in the U.S. use global citizenship principles to teach about the world and interconnectedness (Barrow, 2017). This includes, but goes beyond, matters of global warming and ecology. Digital and business economies now transcend national boundaries and will continue to do so in the future. Multiple perspectives on global human issues lead to critical conversations and provide students opportunities to break the cycles of fear and hatred that come with ignorance and misunderstanding.

"Promoting empathy for the global village and an understanding of the world's interconnectedness should be supported by educators across all disciplines and all grade-levels" (Barrow, 2017, p. 164).

YA literature gives a critical window into the outside world by allowing readers to go beyond their own experiences. It gives a breadth and depth of experience well beyond the readers' life experiences (Philon, 2009). Quality authentic literature guides and mentors students to a greater understanding of societal and world issues. Students can build and reinforce concepts of justice, compassion, governmental structures, and diversity by reading about lives of others.

School libraries have the responsibility to bring greater awareness about the lives of children around the world (Orme, 2006). Although North American students are daily confronted with an enormous amount of information, they are not adequately informed about the realities in other parts of the world. Because of this lack of awareness, intellectual freedom, global social responsibility, and democracy are not well served. Students need to know the prevalence of relative material poverty and its impact on the health, education, and livelihood of children–particularly those in the regions south of the equator. Students in prosperous nations need an understanding of the inequities in how wealth is generated. Hopefully they will appreciate and be inspired by the resilience and resourcefulness of those who struggle in deep poverty and cultural anonymity. Mere understanding is not enough. Students need to know they have an obligation to make a positive difference as they act for justice in the world.

Authentic literature is a powerful tool in promoting social responsibility and global citizenship. The value of story is that it gives students a safe way to explore and

define their attitudes and perceptions toward the world outside. Literature can give youth

a compelling vehicle to look at contemporary issues through the eyes of others. As

literacy skills are developed, students learn that reading is a pleasurable and aesthetic

experience. It stretches the imagination, elicits emotions, and develops compassion (de

Groot, 2006).

Conclusion

Rioux's metatheory, which has its basis in social justice theories, provides a

foundation for a social justice approach to school libraries. School librarians are

educators, advocates for diversity and inclusion, ensure equitable access to information,

advocate for local and global causes, and make a powerful, positive impact. Three ways

in which school librarians act as agents of social justice are through collection

development, library policies, and instructional practices. The Social Justice School

Library survey will give understanding to the practices school librarians enact as agents

of social justice in a Midwest metropolitan area in the U.S.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The lens of social justice can bring clarity and definition to the roles that school librarians enact. Understanding the social justice agency of school librarians in the areas of collection development, policies, and instructional practices particularly as they relate to professional experiences gives a solid foundational base on which to grow the profession's future. This study seeks to answer the question: How do public school librarians in a Midwestern U.S. metropolitan area act as agents of social justice?

Design

Descriptive research is used to depict characteristics of a population. This study used a cross-sectional survey to examine the social justice agency of public school librarians. Survey research designs are procedures research in which a sample population is administered a survey to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a population. Survey studies describe trends in data, with the focus of learning about a population (Creswell, 2013).

By using a systematically constructed survey, the researcher can ask precise questions that can be answered within a specified range. "Standardization lies at the heart of survey research, and the whole point is to get consistent answers to consistent questions. We ask everyone precisely what we want answered" (Sapsford, 2006, p. 16). A survey can be an economical and efficient way to gather information from a large sample group. Online surveys can be a particularly economical way of gathering information, with the facilitation of a rapid turn-around time for information gathering. Survey researchers must sample from a population, collect data through questionnaires or

interviews, design instruments for data collection, and obtain a high response rate (Creswell, 2013). In this study it is important to gather a large sample of public school librarians, so inferences can be drawn to the larger population.

The Social Justice School Library Survey (Appendix B) collected data about the current attitudes, opinions, and beliefs of public school librarians to gain an understanding of their social justice practices. The questions in the Social Justice School Library Survey are original. They have been reviewed through the process of construct validity. This process ensures that the survey instrument measures what it intends. Because of their nature, qualitative questions evolve and are sharpened through input and discussion from several knowledgeable individuals and groups. The first iterations of questions are the starting point to hone the primary emphasis of the study (Creswell, 2013). The process of refining questions leads to gaining the specific data needed to comprehensively answer the research question and sub-questions. By examining what is being asked and how it is being asked, questions that provide relevant data are generated. The objective is to eradicate inherent bias in the phrasing of questions, so the survey results are those genuinely intended. The questions need to be clear; asking what they actually mean.

Using Rioux's (2010) nascent metatheory of social justice approach to library information science (LIS), three areas in which school librarians can act as agents of social justice have emerged. They are collection development, library policies, and instructional practices. These areas were divided into question sections for the survey. Additional questions were written to inform the respondents' professional experiences.

The initial set of 41 original questions was reviewed by a group six of doctoral candidates in an Educational Administration program who are certificated school library professionals. In a face-to-face group meetings, phone, and e-mail discussions, the questions were revised for accuracy, clarity, and relevancy. The resulting 24 questions were piloted in a survey to six public school librarians in the same metropolitan area as the population being studied. The pilot study librarians represented elementary, middle, and secondary levels. They were informed via e-mail communication that the survey was a prototype that would be used in a doctoral dissertation. The respondents were advised that their responses to the survey were confidential and would be used to see if the survey answered the questions that it intended to measure. The pilot survey showed a range of responses to the questions, with a variety of answers to the open-ended questions. As part of the pilot, the survey respondents were asked to give feedback as to whether the survey questions were clearly phrased and give suggestions for improvement. Three respondents gave input on the survey questions in e-mail and face-to-face responses. The consensus from the respondents was the questions were worded in such a way as to be understandable. One respondent thought that though the open-ended questions were big, the survey questions were helpful to establish thinking about social justice issues. No specific suggestions were made for revision of the questions.

Construct validity to the survey questions was further established through a meeting with a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) graduate assistant at the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO). Each question was discussed to determine if the wording asked what was intended. This session gave insights into the interpretation of the questions from a non-librarian perspective. As a result of the

discussion, three questions were modified and two questions were added to the policy practices section of the survey. The modified question was split into two questions for clarity. The added question addresses the role of school librarians in encouraging students to read books from a variety of viewpoints.

The Social Justice School Library Survey consists of fourteen questions that are answered on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, and 4=strongly agree). Three open ended questions allowed the respondents to give more in-depth insights in collection development, policies, and instructional practices. Six questions established demographic and professional information about the respondents. An additional open-ended question asked for in-depth insights into the importance of professional experiences as they relate to social justice issues.

Participants

The participants in this study are public school librarians from eleven different school districts from a metropolitan area and its surrounding districts in a Midwestern U.S. city. These school districts are represented in the Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium (MOEC). The Social Justice School Library survey was sent electronically to 195 librarians. Of these, 128 are elementary school librarians, 33 are middle-level librarians, and 34 are high school librarians. The contact information for the survey group was obtained through an open source database sponsored by the Nebraska Library Commission.

Assumptions

Represented in these districts are urban and suburban public school librarians who work with students from a wide range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds.

Librarians at primary, middle, and high schools were surveyed. Because participation in the survey was both voluntary and anonymous, it is assumed that the responses to the survey are candid and honest.

Limitations

The survey was administered only to public school librarians in a Midwestern metropolitan area. Private school librarians are not included in this study. Because participation in this survey was voluntary, the answers of the sample population of public school librarians may not address the social justice actions of the general public school library population. Since this survey is regional, the results may not apply to the general U.S. population of public school librarians.

Research Questions

The Social Justice School Library Survey was used to answer the following questions:

1. How do school librarians act as agents of social justice in their collection development?

2. How do school librarians act as agents of social justice in their library policies?

3. How do school librarians act as agents of social justice in their instructional practices?

4. Do school librarians have differing social justice practices based on the grade levels they teach (secondary or elementary)?

Data Collection

Qualtrics is an official University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO) licensed product,

designed to support survey research particularly in the social sciences. Using the

Qualtrics platform, an e-mail was sent to MOEC area public school librarians that

informed them of the purpose of the study and gave a timeline for completion (Appendix

A). The e-mail had a unique link to the Social Justice School Library Survey for each

recipient. Three weeks ensued from the initial contact to the closing of the survey.

Survey recipients who did not respond within the first two weeks were re-contacted and

given another week to respond. The day before the close of the survey an additional

reminder was sent. The data was collected through a secure Qualtrics server. The use of

Qualtrics is in compliance with UNO's confidentiality policies that relate to educational

research. Only the researcher has access to the data (Qualtrics, 2017).

Data Analysis

After the survey data was collected, it was transferred to a regulated data server

hosted by UNO in accordance with the university's policies in compliance with the state

of Nebraska to maintain the respondents' privacy.

The results of this survey employ a mixed methods framework, using an

integration of qualitative and quantitative data for analysis. According to Creswell

(2012), a mixed methods approach is helpful in conducting in-depth research to provide a

more meaningful interpretation of the data or the phenomenon beings studied. The mixed

methods convergent (parallel or concurrent) design gave the researcher the opportunity to

understand the results of the quantitative questions by the responses to the qualitative

questions. The combination of complimentary data provided a better understanding of the social justice agency of school librarians better than either approach alone.

The quantitative responses were exported from Qualtrics to Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Using SPSS, survey questions 1-4, 6-11, and 13 - 16 were reported using descriptive statistical measures, reporting the means, standard deviations, and standard error of the means for those items. T-tests were used to determine if significant differences exist between secondary and elementary respondents. Using analyses of variance (ANOVA) testing, a hypothesis-testing procedure that determines whether a significant difference exists between two or more means at a selected probability level, the answers question 4 were statistically evaluated. The ANOVA is designed to determine if the differences among the means represent true, significant differences or chance differences due to sampling error. The ANOVA provides researchers flexibility in interpreting results because of its ability to compare more than two treatments (Gravetter & Williams, 2013).

The answers to open-ended questions (5, 12, 17, and 24) were analyzed using Dedoose, which is a web-based qualitative and mixed-methods research application. The survey respondents were anonymized and the results were encrypted for security. Over two hundred responses were coded to determine trends in responses.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In 2010, Rioux developed a nascent metatheory of social justice as it applies to the information sciences. Based on historical and current social justice precepts, this metatheory makes assumptions about what drives library science education, research, and practices. Rioux's assumptions are (a) all human beings have an inherent worth and deserve information services that address their information needs; (b) people perceive reality and information in different ways, often within cultural or life-role contexts; (c) there are many different types of information and knowledge, and these are societal resources; (d) theory and research are pursued with the ultimate goal of bringing positive change to service constituencies; and (e) the provision of information services is an inherently powerful activity.

Using Rioux's metatheory as a framework, this study examined the social justice agency of public school librarians in a Midwestern U.S. city. For the purpose of this study, the researcher examined school librarian social justice agency in collection development, policy practices, and instructional practices. The effect of library experience levels was also examined as a factor in determining social justice attitudes. This chapter addresses results to the research question: How do public school librarians act as agents of social justice?

A survey was sent to 195 public school librarians. The data from 73 fully completed surveys was used to gain an understanding of how they act as agents of social justice. Fourteen questions were queried on a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Disagree). Three open-ended, short answer questions were also posed.

Respondents by School Library Experience

More than 50% of the seventy-three survey respondents have been school librarians for ten years or less. Twenty-one respondents, 28.77%, have been school librarians from 1–5 years, while eighteen respondents, 24.66%, have been school librarians for 6–10 years. Twelve respondents have been in the school library profession from 11–15 years, 16.44%. Ten respondents have been in the profession for 16-20 years, 16.44%. School librarians with 21 or more years of experience totaled twelve, 16.44% (see Table 1).

Table 1

Years of School Library Experience

Years of School Library Experience	Answer	Number	Percent
	1 to 5	21	28.77
	6 to 10	18	24.66
	11 to 15	12	16.44
	16 to 20	10	13.70
	21 +	12	16.44
Total		73	100

Respondents by Years at Present Location

More than 50% of the seventy-three respondents have been school librarians at their present location for five years or less. Thirty-nine the respondents, 53.42%, have been at their current school from 1–5 years, while seventeen, 23.29%, have been at their school for 6–10 years. Ten respondents, 13.27%, have been at their present location from 11-15 years. Three respondents, 4.11%, have been at their school library from 16–20 years. Those working at their present school 21 years or more is, four, 5.48% (see Table 2).

Table 2

Years at Present School Library

Years of School Library Experience	Answer	Number	Percent
	1 to 5	39	53.42
	6 to 10	17	23.29
	11 to 15	10	13.70
	16 to 20	3	4.11
	21 +	4	5.48
Total		73	100

Respondents by Membership in Professional Library Associations

   The seventy-three respondents belong to multiple professional library associations, with a total of 114 memberships. The most represented association is the Nebraska School Library Association (NSLA) in which forty-three respondents, 37.72% are members. Sixteen respondents, 14.04%, belong to the Nebraska Library Association (NLA). Nationally, eighteen respondents belong the American Library Association (ALA). Within the participants who belong to the ALA, many belong to ALA divisions: seventeen, 14.91%, belong to the American Association of School Librarians (AASL); and four, 3.51%, belong to the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA). Sixteen respondents, 14.04%, belong to other library professional organizations (see Table 3).

Table 3

Membership in Professional Library Associations

Association	Number	Percent
NSLA - Nebraska School Library Association	43	37.73
NLA Nebraska Library Association	16	14.04
ALA - American Library Association	18	15.79
AASL - American Association of School Librarians	17	14.91
YALSA - Young Adult Library Service Association	4	3.51
Other	16	14.04
Total	114	100

Respondents by Membership in Other Professional Associations

The seventy-three respondents belong to multiple organizations affiliated with literacy, technology, and other professional affiliations. Five, 5.62%, are members of the Metropolitan Reading Council (MRC), while three, 3.37%, belong to its parent organization, the International Literacy Association (ILA). The Nebraska Educational Technology Association (NETA) has the most affiliation with fifty-nine members, 66.29%, of respondents. Eight, 8.99%, are members of NETA's parent association, the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE). Other professional organizations have fourteen members, 15.73%, of respondents (see Table 4).

Table 4

Membership in Other Professional Associations

Association	Number	Percent
MRC - Metropolitan Reading Council	5	5.62
ILA - International Literacy Association	3	3.67
NETA - Nebraska Educational Technology Association	59	66.29
ISTE - International Society of Technology in Education	8	8.99
Other	14	15.73
Total	89	100

Respondents by Attendance at Professional Development Sessions

Of the seventy-three respondents, forty, 54.74%, attend professional development sessions occasionally. Twenty-one, 28.77%, attend professional development sessions often. Twelve, 16.44%, never/seldom attend professional development sessions (see Table 5).

Table 5

Attendance at Professional Development Sessions

Professional Development	Answer	Number	Percent
	Never/Seldom	12	16.44
	Occasionally	40	54.79
	Often	21	28.77
Total		73	100

Respondents by Purpose for Attending Professional Development Sessions

School librarians attend professional development sessions for a variety of reasons. The seventy-three respondents gave a total of 88 responses to this open-ended question. Thirty-six responses, 41%, went to learn what's new in librarian services. Seventeen responses, 19%, went to increase professionalism. Networking and learning new technology were the next popular responses with fourteen respondents, 16%, and ten, 11%, respectively. The responses also included advancing literacy with seven, 6%, advocating for the profession with four, 5%, and sharing knowledge with one, 1% (see Table 6).

Table 6

Purpose for Attending Professional Development Sessions

Purpose for Attendance	Number	Percent
Learn What's New	36	41
Increases Professionalism	17	19
Networking	14	16
Technology	10	11
Literacy	6	7
Advocacy	4	5
Share Knowledge	1	1
Total	88	100

Research Question 1 - Collection Development

How do public school librarians act as agents of social justice in collection

development?

In the area of collection development, seventy-nine respondents answered the

questions on diversity, inclusion, vantage point, and international perspectives.

Subquestion 1 – Diversity. When purchasing materials for my library, I

intentionally seek materials that reflect diversity.

The majority of respondents, forty-nine, 62.03%, strongly agreed with the

statement that they intentionally seek materials that reflect diversity while twenty-six,

32.91%, agreed. Two respondents, 2.53%, disagreed with the statement that they

purchase materials that reflect diversity and two respondents, 2.35%, strongly disagreed

with the statement (see Table 7).

Table 7

Diversity of Materials Collected by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	2.53
Disagree	2	2.53
Agree	25	32.91
Strongly Agree	49	62.03
Total	100	79

Subquestion 2 – Inclusion. All students can see themselves in the materials in my school library.

The majority of respondents, fifty, 63.29%, agreed with the statement that all students can see themselves in the materials in their library, while twenty-five, 31.65%, strongly agreed. Four respondents, 5.06%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 8).

Table 8

Inclusion of Materials Collected by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	4	5.06
Agree	50	63.29
Strongly Agree	25	31.65
Total	100	79

Subquestion 3 – Vantage points. I collect materials that look at issues from more than one vantage point.

The majority of respondents, fifty-four, 68.35%, agreed with the statement that I collect materials that look at issues from more than one vantage point, while nineteen, 24.05%, strongly agreed. Six respondents, 7.59%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 9).

Table 9

Vantage Points of Materials Collected by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	6	7.59
Agree	54	68.35
Strongly Agree	19	24.05
Total	100	79

Subquestion Question 4 – International viewpoints. The materials in my library help students consider international viewpoints.

Fifty-three respondents, 67.09%, agreed with the statement, the materials in my library help student consider international viewpoints, while thirteen, 16.46%, strongly agreed. Thirteen respondents, 16.46%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 10).

Table 10

International Viewpoints of Material Collected by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	13	16.46
Agree	53	67.09
Strongly Agree	13	16.46
Total	100	79

Subquestion 5 - Collection for social justice. How does your collection reflect social justice issues?

The seventy-nine respondents in this portion of the survey gave 110 answers to the question of their collections reflecting social justice issues in the areas of diversity, inclusion, vantage points, and international viewpoints.

Diversity in collection development. Forty survey respondents commented on the importance of diversity in their library collections. In the responses of collecting for diversity, the themes of collecting diverse materials as mirrors, windows, and for authenticity were expressed.

Mirrors. The theme of diverse collections as reflections of the school community was characterized by one librarian as,

> It is my intent that students have free access to a diverse collection and the latest information from databases and other resources to be able to think, question, and analyze information relevant to their studies. Having resources for all students to be successful and feel confident with is key. Our student population is very diverse. With that being said, finding books and resources in their first language is a challenge, but it is a priority for me to provide for them what they need to be successful.

Sixteen respondents commented that books with diverse characters can mirror the population of the school and help students see their life experiences from those who have similar perspectives. Diverse books relate to patrons who face difficult personal issues and help build an understanding of difficulties in the school, community, and beyond. They include situations related to racism, religious beliefs, gender issues, and language

barriers. Literature that reflects diversity often contains social justice issues that relate to marginalized communities. The librarians in this survey look to select books that reflect an understanding of their patrons, making them feel welcomed. One respondent expressed, "We have refugee students and other students who often feel bullied because of their beliefs. I try to find media to help educate others about what makes us different so that stigma doesn't persist at our school."

Windows. Diverse collections can be a window for students into the lives of others. One librarian expressed her collection for diversity as,

> Our rural school is majority Caucasian...the majority of my budget reflects purchases of books. I do try to make purchases that include minorities and ethnic diversities. There are many wonderful books that reflect social justice issues. Kids are exposed and they don't even know it sometimes!

Twenty-one comments discussed the impact diverse materials have in allowing students to understand other people and issues with which they do not have a personal connection. They said that materials that give insights into different cultures and life experiences can help students better understand themselves and others. The respondents commented that through awareness to various issues, readers gain empathy. Two librarians commented that picture books can be especially useful in helping students learn about others as they show a wide variety of ethnic characters, settings, and cultural events.

Authenticity. Three respondents commented on the importance of authenticity in the literature and materials that represent diversity. One respondent expressed,

Our collection has a fantastic selection of materials focusing on the civil rights movement of the 1960s. In addition, I actively try to have my biography collection reflect the diversity of our country and world, especially focused on portraying African Americans as a diverse group -- not just entertainers and athletes.

These survey respondents look to build diverse collections materials that show historical perspectives, including the Civil Rights movement in the 1960's and current social issues, including gender identity, religious wars/injustices, and women's rights. Curating books from a variety of perspectives and avoiding stereotypes helps build strong, diverse collections. These three respondents expressed that it is important to seek authors from a variety of cultures, nationalities, and perspectives. Understanding the author's background and intent helps students come to a greater understanding of diversity.

Inclusion in collection development. Twenty-six survey respondents commented on their perspectives on building inclusive library collections. In the responses to inclusion in collection development, the themes of cultural life experiences, inclusion in the culture, personal identity structures, and uplifting materials were expressed.

Cultural life experiences. Ten respondents commented that inclusive literature relates to students' cultural life experiences by helping build cross-cultural perspectives and understandings. One librarian articulated,

Because I teach a large group of minority students, I make sure to try to find books from their perspectives--be it cultural background, religious group, etc. We have refugee students and other students who often feel bullied because of their

beliefs. I try to find media to help educate others about what makes us different so that stigma doesn't persist at our school. I also try to find books that teach tolerance and kindness.

The respondents discussed that selection of materials reflects the school curriculum and the population differences of students in the respondents' schools. Librarians in schools with ethnically diverse populations curate selections that help students feel comfortable with life experiences and situations by adding books that reflect their cultures. Literature that features cultural traditions from around the world can be particularly enjoyed by students from immigrant backgrounds. Inclusive collection building can be enhanced by encouraging requests and taking into account student backgrounds when ordering.

Inclusion in the culture. Six respondents said that inclusive literature helps students feel included in the larger culture. Breaking down language barriers by providing materials for students in their first languages, though sometimes difficult, can be a key to student success. They also said that inclusive literature can help students from marginalized groups understand that they are not alone and they are welcome in the community. One librarian commented, "Having resources for all students to be successful and feel confident is the key."

Personal identity structures. Seven respondents commented on inclusiveness in building personal identity structures. Adding materials that assist students in their personal identity structures is a component of inclusive collection curation. Identity, specifically gender identity, was a focus of the respondents in this area. One respondent said,

I try and work with individual students to find what they need/want. Also, I have done lists of books for the GSA [Gay Straight Alliance] Club since some of them were unsure of what titles were available that they were interested in. I try and feature books too that students may be afraid to verbally ask for.

Five librarians responded that books reflecting minority or marginalized groups let students know they are a welcome part of the school and are not alone. Books that feature LGBTQ characters and topics are being added to collections, both in the fiction and nonfiction sections. One elementary librarian commented that more gender identity books could be added at the elementary level if they were available.

Uplifting materials. Three respondents addressed the importance of materials that uplift students through support and encouragement. One respondent captured this through relating this experience,

I recently read a picture book called *Six Dots,* which is about Louis Braille. The hope was not only to inform students about the person but also to think about the challenges of someone who is visually impaired. The students connected the book with a fellow student at our school that is blind.

Vantage points in collection development. Thirty-four librarians responded to the concept of placing materials from a variety of vantage points in the library. The themes of currency, critical thinking, increasing zones of awareness, and collecting with tough questions in mind emerged from their responses.

Currency. Two librarians commented that fiction and nonfiction materials that reflect current issues engage students. Library materials can cover a variety of

perspectives and encourage students to question what is happening in the world. One librarian stated,

> I purchased books this year that cover a wide range of current social justice issues. I searched for books with good reviews and that appeared to be interesting and thought-provoking to read even to students who are just browsing (as opposed to those who search for things because of a research project).

Critical thinking. Six respondents commented that by reading a variety of perspectives, students can be taught to develop critical thinking skills. This is important especially in light of the predominance of social media. They said that students need to learn how to think for themselves as they develop their own opinions and philosophies on major social issues. A variety of perspectives helps students feel comfortable with their ethnicity, identity, and cultures. Materials that show a variety of perspectives help students to become more understanding and compassionate toward others. The respondents articulated that free access to a diverse collection and the latest information from databases and other resources helps students question and analyze information relevant to their studies.

Zones of awareness. Two respondents work to have students read books that increase their zones of awareness. One librarian expressed, "By exposing students to different opinions, their social and moral actions could be positively impacted." They articulated that teaching with materials offering multiple vantage points helps students learn to make informed decisions. Collecting books with different vantage points includes books written in different languages, real-life stories of refugees, and stories from less traditional perspectives. Another librarian commented,

As with all issues there are at least two sides. I try to have books that present varying viewpoints. If I know my student body is mostly of one mindset I try to represent another in the literature. We conquer social justice issues is in everyday conversations, usually stemming from media coverage. Sometimes I have to take on a viewpoint I may not agree with just so students take the opportunity to explore why someone may not agree with them.

Multiple perspectives. Nineteen librarians commented that multiple perspectives, particularly on tough issues help students understand the vantage points of others. The respondents said they offer materials with different vantage points which reflect the local community and beyond. One respondent noted that biographies and graphic novels are a particularly effective way to teach vantage points and social justice issues. Another librarian commented that the library had a fantastic selection of materials focusing on social justice movements of the 1960's. One librarian's controversial issues materials include a large collection of civil rights issues with additional holdings that depict religious wars, injustices, and women's rights.

Fiction is a particularly effective way to bring awareness to various issues as students empathize with situations characters face. It can offer a glimpse into diverse lives expressed with a variety of cultural and religious worldviews. Social issues are becoming more prevalent in young adult literature, so secondary collections contain books dealing with difficult life situations. The librarians voiced that avoiding stereotyping is important for students to authentically understand those from different backgrounds. Authorship is an important factor in teaching students to find authentic information and points of view. One respondent articulated the importance of

intentionally seeking authors from a variety of cultures, nationalities, and point of views, opinions, and perspectives.

Helping students understand the importance of vantage points is particularly important in teaching research skills. One respondent discusses the problem of "fake news" with students by exploring a variety of news sources. As one librarian articulated, "I talk about how it is important to check your sources and make sure what you are reading is reliable. I encourage students to do their research before making important decisions and not just trust the first thing they see or hear." Materials that are informative and give non-biased perspectives are important additions to the collection.

The respondents stated that they were careful to consider the age-appropriateness of difficult or controversial materials. This is expressed by the comment,

> When selecting, I look for age appropriate materials that directly impact students at an elementary age level. I do not select material that is too much for them to handle. For example, if I were picking a book about refugees, it is a picture book that focuses on the view of a student/students at the perspective.

Five respondents commented that social justice issues were not strongly reflected in their collection. Two librarians said that they did not do a good job of collecting materials with social justice issues in mind. Another librarian remarked that social justice issues were covered only at a very basic, rudimentary level. One respondent commented that the library had books reflecting social issues, but they were outdated. This librarian went on to say that some single issue books, such as, *An Inconvenient Truth* are in the collection, but students who were interested in social justice issues were generally

directed to use databases for information. Another librarian said, "Due to content, I need to limit which social justice issues are incorporated in our elementary library."

International viewpoints in collection development. Twelve librarians commented on the role of international materials in the school library. The themes of finding materials that accurately reflect the differences of people in the world and showing inclusivity to immigrant students emerged. One respondent stated,

I actively seek authors from a variety of cultures, nationalities, point of views, opinions, and perspectives. I also work with my students to help them seek out information about the authors, so they grasp the idea of where the information is coming from.

International differences. The respondents look for a variety of materials that reflect the differences between people in the world. They said that international materials include and model materials from different cultures and experiences. Curation with international perspectives include books written in different languages, those that tell real-life stories of refugees, and show the world from a less traditional perspective. One respondent said that picture books can be an effective way for students to visualize a wide variety of ethnic characters, settings and cultural events. Another commented that by showing the differences in looks and cultural practices students can see the humanity of all peoples.

Inclusivity to immigrants. International materials are an effective way to show inclusivity to students who have family and personal ties to other cultures. One librarian commented, "Our Indian population has enjoyed the many new books that have been added on cultural traditions from around the world." Two librarians reflected that their

curriculum imperatives, the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Magnet Focus programs strengthen international materials collection as librarians become more intentional about purchasing books that reflect real world/global issues.

Two librarians commented that collecting materials with an international perspective was an emerging area in their collections and they hoped to add more in the future.

Research Question 2 - Policies

In the area of policies, seventy-five respondents answered the questions on unrestricted access to all materials, availability of materials to students in all formats, reading for accuracy, safe haven, freedom to read, and variety.

Subquestion 6 – Unrestricted access to materials. My students have unrestricted access to all library materials.

The majority of respondents, twenty-nine, 38.67%, strongly agreed with the statement that all students should have unrestricted access to all library materials, while twenty-five, 33.33%, agreed. Twenty-one respondents, 28%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 11).

Table 11

Unrestricted Access to Materials by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	21	28.00
Agree	25	33.33
Strongly Agree	29	38.67
Total	75	100

Subquestion 7 - Access print and digital formats. All my students can access print and digital materials available through the library.

The majority of respondents, thirty-nine, 52%, strongly agreed with the statement that all students can access print and digital materials available in their library, while thirty-two, 42.67%, agreed. A minority of respondents, four, 5.33% disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 12).

Table 12

Access Print and Digital Formats by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	4	5.33
Agree	32	42.6
Strongly Agree	39	52.00
Total	100	75

Subquestion 8 – Critical reflection. I encourage my students to critically reflect on what they read. The majority of respondents, fifty-one, 68%, agreed with the statement, I encourage my students to critically reflect on what they read, while nineteen, 25.33%, strongly agreed. Five, 6.67%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 13).

Table 13

Critical Reflection by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	5	6.67
Agree	51	68.00
Strongly agree	19	25.33
Total	75	100

Subquestion 9 – Safe haven. I create an environment to make my library a safe haven for students.

Fifty-one respondents, 68%, strongly agreed with the statement, I create an environment to make my library a safe haven for students, while twenty-four, 32%, agreed. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 14).

Table 14

Safe Haven by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Agree	24	32.00
Strongly agree	51	68.00
Total	100%	75

Subquestion 10 - Freedom to read. I promote freedom to read initiatives.

In reacting to the statement, I promote freedom to read initiatives thirty-two, 42.67%, strongly agreed with the statement, while thirty-two, 42.67%, agreed. Eleven respondents, 14.67%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 15).

Table 15

Freedom to Read by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	11	14.67
Agree	32	42.67
Strongly agree	32	42.67
Total	75	100

Subquestion 11 – Variety. I encourage my students to read a wide variety of books.

Forty-nine respondents, 65.33%, strongly agreed with the statement, I encourage my students to read a wide variety of books, while twenty-six, 34.67%, strongly agreed. No librarians disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 16).

Table 16

Variety by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0.	0.00
Disagree	0	0.00
Agree	26	34.67
Strongly agree	49	65.33
Total	75	100

Subquestion 12 - Policies for social justice. How do your policies help you address student needs?

The seventy-five respondents in this portion of the survey gave seventy-two answers to the question of their policies reflecting social justice issues in the areas of unrestricted access, print and digital materials, critical reflection on reading, library as a safe haven, freedom to read initiatives, and variety of books.

Unrestricted access to materials in policies. Twenty-seven librarians responded to the question of allowing open access to all materials in the library. Some school librarians do not restrict the materials students are allowed to checkout, while others recommend materials they consider appropriate. Librarians supplement their holdings through inter-library loan agreements. Listening to student wants/needs assists in building strong collections.

Unrestricted check-outs. Eight respondents said they have policies that do not restrict student check outs. In one case, the lack of restrictions applies to letting students with missing books check out materials and not charging fines. Other librarians said that students from any grade level may check out books. Respondents articulated the importance of students being able to check out a wide variety of materials in various formats to meet their different needs. As part of the openness policy, privacy of patron borrowing habits is also protected.

Makes recommendations. Eleven respondents commented that book recommendations help students make judicious choices. One librarian allows students to check out books with some restrictions. This librarian commented that age appropriateness plays a role in setting the restrictions. Younger students are confined

checking out to picture books that are more appropriately on their reading levels. This respondent further commented that by making sure young students have a wide selection of choices that mirrors what is available in the rest of the library, students can be pleased with their choices. As students grow in their library skills, the collection becomes more open to them. One librarian commented that an unlimited checkout policy was prevented by classroom teachers who have rules on the materials students are allowed to select.

 In the upper grade levels, some books are restricted to middle school students due to content. One library has an "official" policy of not checking out professional resources to students, but exceptions can be made if a student has a need for that material. Another librarian commented,

> Because I service students in grades PreK through 6th grade, the whole collection is not available to them. However, I actively teach students to find materials that are a "just right" fit for them. I teach them to be interested in more than just a fancy cover. I also collaborate with the public library when possible to make sure students have access to media even when they don't have access to the school library (when the library is closed for the summer or due to testing).

Inter-library loan. Five respondents responded that openness to having students check out materials extends to providing services for students to get books from other schools upon request. One librarian said, "If students have specific needs, we do our best to meet them." Respondents borrow books or order books when requested from students or if the librarian determines a particular title might be of interest to a particular student. One respondent articulated, "We love helping to fill the wants and needs of our students. If we don't have something, we try to fill the request through ILL [Inter-Library Loan]."

Another librarian said that if a student wants a book that is too mature for the collection, it can be requested from another school with parent permission. A respondent said,

> We strive to provide students with access to all materials that meet the selection criteria of our department. This means that middle school students should be able to access information on a variety of topics written at his or her developmental level and appropriate for the student's age and maturity level. Occasionally, I have students who wish to read materials from the high school. Since we did not select those materials and they could prove to be more appropriate for older students, we require parental permission for these topics.

Librarians as listeners. Three librarians addressed the issue of openness in students obtaining materials extends to librarians listening to the wants and needs of their students. They said that listening to student interests plays a role in building strong collections of interest to students. Students have the ability to share what they would like to see on the shelves with the librarians surveyed. This gives patrons the freedom to choose books that they want to read. One commented that it is important to ask students what they want to read and to know the students' needs and interests are met. Another respondent said that by having books on a variety of reading levels, students can explore and comprehend a variety of topics.

Access to print and digital formats in policies. Five librarians responded to the question of all students being able to access the print and digital materials available through the library.

Virtual and physical access. The respondents to this question addressed both virtual and physical access to the library. They said they make all materials available to

students, both in digital and print formats. According to the respondents, materials in

digital formats ensure students have access to books and information even when the

school library is closed. Both print and digital formats include a wide variety of

materials, designed to meet the differing needs of students. One school has formal access

policies that ensure all students can easily visit the library anytime.

  Critically reflection in policies. Two librarians commented on encouraging

students to critically reflect on what they read.

  Non-discrimination. One respondent spoke against discrimination, the other

affirmed the value of understanding multiple perspectives. In the words of one librarian,

"I have no tolerance for others discriminating. I hold myself and my work to the same

standard."

  Multiple viewpoints. The other respondent affirmed the importance of teaching

students to explore multiple viewpoints in research and personal decision making.

  Safe haven in policies. Twenty-one respondents addressed the issue of the school

library as a safe haven. The responses were grouped into two categories. The first

addressed the importance of getting to know students individually. One librarian stated,

> I create a safe place in the school where students have access to all materials and
>
> feel comfortable enough to ask me for other resources or make requests of needed
>
> materials that we do not have.

  One respondent said that by listening to individual students and building

relationships, a librarian can help patrons find what they need or want. In this way, the

library can also be a haven for students to have the freedom to choose the books they

want to read. One librarian tries to feature books that students may be afraid to ask for verbally.

The respondents discussed the importance of learning about student backgrounds when ordering books and materials. They affirmed that by listening to students, librarians can be more effective in purchasing. Students understand they are valued when library holdings reflect their interests. They also articulated that when the librarian values students, the library becomes a safe haven where they can go to ask for help. Librarians put policies in place to support students in reaching their full potential.

According to the respondents, the second facet of making the library a safe haven is for librarians to take time and effort into making open, accessible spaces for students of all backgrounds and interests. Students of any race, religion, gender, or sexual preference are welcome in the library. It was agreed that the school librarian can create a non-judgmental, safe place for students. One librarian stated, "My policies are all about making the library very accessible to students and to make the library a comfortable and desirable place for all students to be."

Library policies that allow students to easily access the library at any time are part of a safe haven strategy. One librarian said, "The library is open all day in addition to before and after school hours to accommodate students who need computers or a safe place to be."

Freedom to read in policies. Though no respondents directly addressed promotion of freedom to read initiatives in their comments, three librarians discussed the importance of students being allowed to freely use the library.

Free use of the library. One respondent discussed the value of putting a lot of time and effort into making the library a welcoming place that students want to be. The freedom to read was addressed in this comment, "Students should feel free to read whatever they want, whenever they want." One librarian addressed the importance of keeping student check out records confidential to protect patron privacy.

Variety in policies. Fourteen respondents commented on the question of encouraging students to read a wide variety of books. Students are encouraged to read a variety of books when a wide range of appropriate materials are readily available, student choice is respected, librarians take student requests, exploration is encouraged, and thoughtful selection policies are in place.

Appropriate and available materials. According to the respondents, variety allows students to find materials that are of interest to them. This not only includes a breadth of topics to explore, both fiction and nonfiction, but also an inclusive range of reading levels. Recommending books can also entail advising students to save books for later due to mature content. Finding the right materials includes looking beyond attractive covers to find content of interest. One librarian said, "I work with students to select books not only according to their interests, but reading levels so they can get excited about reading on their own at an early age."

Student choice. Choice is a key ingredient in getting students to read a variety of materials. One respondent commented, "I support their choices and give choices." Another librarian directly communicates with the students that library time means checking out materials of their choice. Under this guideline, though, students must check out one fiction, one nonfiction, and a third book in either category. One librarian has to

balance giving the students choice in a book selections when some classroom teachers require students to only check out books on their reading level. This requires negotiating student choice with teacher wishes.

Taking requests. When the library is a safe place in the school, students are comfortable to ask for resources of interest or make requests for needed materials not available in the library. One librarian commented,

> When students come into the library to make book selections I try to make myself available to help them select a book they are interested in. Sometimes it takes several questions before we find a genre that fits the student's need at that time.

Exploration is encouraged. One responded said that variety in holdings allows students to explore uncharted territory. It gives patrons who do not care to read a window of opportunity. Another librarian commented on the importance of variety in reading materials. A range of books encourages students to understand alternate perspectives and helps them think critically. Students can be empowered to develop their own opinions and philosophies on major social issues. Another respondent commented that a variety of reading materials featuring multiple viewpoints helps students make better-informed decisions.

Collection curation. Selection policies are important in ensuring a variety of books in the collection. One respondent looks at monthly check out statistics and then fills in the parts of the collection that show the greatest demand. In this way, adding materials that are based on student diversity, needs, and interests keeps the collection relevant and up-to-date. One respondent pointed to the importance of working with classroom teachers or counselors in collection building. Another librarian answered that

hosting a specialized book fair helps create a culture of readers when families look forward to coming to the school to purchase books. Book selection for the book fairs is based on interests of teachers, parents, and students.

Research Question 3 - Instruction

How do school librarians act as agents of social justice in their instructional practices?

In the area of instructional practices, seventy-four respondents answered questions on meeting the needs of all students, teaching students to value democracy, challenging inequities, and solving global problems.

Subquestion 13 – Instruct all students. I meet the instructional needs of students at all ability levels [e.g. HAL, SPED, ELL].

Fifty-three respondents, 71.62%, agreed with the statement that they meet the instructional needs of students at all ability levels, while fourteen, 18.92%, strongly agreed. Seven respondents, 9.46%, disagreed with meeting the needs of students at all ability levels. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 17).

Table 17

Instruct All Students by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	7	9.46
Agree	53	71.62
Strongly agree	14	18.92
Total	74	100

Subquestion 14 – Value democracy. I intentionally teach my students to value the ideals that form the basis of our democracy.

Forty-two respondents, 56.76%, agreed with the statement that they teach students to value the ideals that form the basis of our democracy, while nineteen, 25.68%, strongly agreed. Thirteen respondents, 17.57%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 18).

Table 18

Value Democracy by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	13	17.57
Agree	42	56.76
Strongly Agree	19	25.68
Total	74	100

Subquestion 15 – Challenge social inequities. I encourage my students to challenge social inequities in my school [bullying, for example].

Thirty-nine respondents, 52.70%, agreed with the statement that they teach students to value the ideals that form the basis of our democracy, while thirty, 40.54%, strongly agreed. Five respondents, 6.76%, disagreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 19).

Table 19

Challenge Social Ineqities by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	5	6.76
Agree	39	52.70
Strongly agree	30	40.54
Total	74	100

Subquestion 16 – Explore global problems. I create learning experiences geared to discussing global problems.

The majority of respondents, thirty-nine, 52.70%, agreed with the statement that they create learning experiences geared to global problems, while twenty-three, 31.08%, disagreed. A minority of respondents, twelve, 16.22%, strongly agreed with the statement. No librarians strongly disagreed with the statement (see Table 20).

Table 20

Explore Global Problems by Percent

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly Disagree	0	0.00
Disagree	23	31.08
Agree	39	52.70
Strongly agree	12	16.22
Total	74	100

Subquestion 17 – Instruction for social justice. How have your recent teaching experiences reflected social justice ideals?

The seventy-four respondents in this portion of the survey gave sixty-one answers to the question of their instruction reflecting social justice issues in the areas of meeting student needs, valuing democracy, challenging social inequities, and solving global problems.

Instruct all students in instructional practices. Five librarians responded to the question of meeting the needs of all students in the library.

Inspiration. One respondent affirmed that, "The goal is to inspire and educate all of our students."

Flexibility. One librarian said the lack of policies in the school library was helpful in addressing the needs of all students. This respondent accommodates student instructional needs by waiving fines, not limiting checkouts, having an open library during the school day, and extending hours in the mornings before school.

Impairments to teaching all students. Two librarians responded they have little time to teach lessons due to time constraints and classroom teacher demands. One of these respondents remarked, "Since this is my first year here, I haven't had a lot of opportunities to teach. Usually teachers have lessons they have already planned and they ask me to show students resources they can use to complete their lessons."

One librarian disagreed on meeting the needs of all students and commented,

I do differentiate and scaffold my lessons but there are still some students I am unable to reach due to SPED or ELL barriers. I do "agree" that I work hard to reach each student but I know the reality is that sometimes my lessons don't.

Value democracy in instructional practices. Five respondents discussed teaching students to value the ideals that form the basis of our democracy. The themes of helping students understand how the U.S. government functions and discussing the election process were articulated.

Process of Democracy. One librarian taught a unit on the government to help students understand the process of decision making in our country. This respondent commented, "It's hard to change something if you don't know how the process works." Another respondent worked to teach students how governmental decisions are made. Teaching students to value American freedoms was part of library lessons for another school librarian.

Election process. Two librarians taught lessons surrounding the election and the ideals of democracy on which our country is founded. Innovation and technology can also be part of teaching democracy as articulated by this librarian,

> In my Minecraft for Education pilot program, 4th and 5th grade students explored the ideals of a democracy in world-building exercises; they learned the purpose of service when a 'natural disaster' occurred. All students in grades K-6 used PebbleGo to hold a mock-election this fall. They discussed why they wanted to vote, how they made their decisions, and what they thought was fair.

Challenge social inequities in instructional practices. Thirty-nine librarians discussed challenging social inequities in their schools. Sixteen responses addressed teaching digital citizenship, particularly in relationship to cyberbullying. Eleven respondents discussed teaching tolerance in school, while eleven discussed local and national social justice issues with their students.

Digital citizenship. Seven of the librarians surveyed teach lessons on digital citizenship. As online safety is discussed, the curriculum guides/leads students into discussions that include the problems of hacking and predators. Positive digital citizenship includes learning and reflecting on ethical online behavior. Students are challenged to understand what they do can affect them and others. One librarian said that teaching responsible activity in digital mediums includes discussions on the importance of mutual respect of all opinions and the desirability of multiple viewpoints. Students are taught to value all participants in online conversations. Another librarian said,

> We frequently talk about social media and the right to express our own beliefs, but also to be sensitive to others and their point of view. We cover some social justice ideals in our digital citizenship lessons.

Cyberbullying. In particular, cyberbullying and the issues surrounding it are taught in the library, according to nine respondents. Instruction on cyberbullying is taught on multiple grade levels on a regular basis. Because it is a strong concern for students, cyberbullying is often covered in depth. These lessons include discussions of accepting others who are different from the norm.

Tolerance. According to eleven respondents, school justice issues are discussed in the library as well. Three respondents in this area talked about the importance of addressing negative peer interactions in their schools. Book talks that have themes of anti-bullying, tolerance, and kindness are used in instruction. Other media that helps educate students about valuing the differences in people, including those with disabilities, helps break down the stigmas of personal and social inequities. One respondent in an elementary school teaches specific lessons that focus on good citizenship and fairness.

Another librarian is planning to collaborate with the guidance counselor and art teacher to create a Kindness Fair to encourage students to treat each other (and the school) with respect. One librarian said, "We often talk about not what can you do but what should you do in various citizenship activities."

Looking to the community and beyond. Issues in the local community and beyond are part of instruction on social inequities according to eleven respondents. Three librarians said that literature can be used to discuss social inequities. Conversations with students about civil rights, child abuse, racism, unfair treatment of people with disabilities, climate change, and sex/gender discrimination are can be instigated through book talks and book clubs.

Social justice issues and topics are often taught in inquiry-driven projects. Six respondents discussed their role in working with students to gather information from databases and teach research skills in English and Social Studies classes. One librarian recently co-taught a lesson for a group of student who were researching the need for charitable organizations. Collaboration in curricular instruction with classroom teachers allows librarians to develop units and lessons that address historical and current inequities. One respondent said,

> One example of teaching for social justice would be after our students studied Native American displacement during the 1800's. We were able to then critically examine what is happening now in North Dakota at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and compare and contrast it to the historical event.

Not all teach for social justice. Teaching about social inequities is not part of all the experiences of school librarians. One respondent said that social inequity lessons are

not taught within the library. Another respondent articulated that opportunities to promote social justice ideals are limited. This was followed by this comment,

 I work hard, however, to support the efforts of classroom teachers since my digital literacy lessons do not necessarily give me the opportunities to truly teach these things. I provide materials that support the curriculum in these areas and challenge students to be more accepting and tolerant. When the situation presents itself to engage students in this sort of discussion during a library lesson or as a function of book talks, I always grab it, but since I don't have a regular course load, my opportunities are fewer than those a regular classroom teacher might have.

Learning experiences geared to solving global problems in instructional practices. Twelve librarians commented on creating learning experiences designed to solve global problems. Most respondents said they lead classroom lessons designed to educate students in understanding global problems through teaching tolerance, building awareness of global inequities, understanding positive global citizenship, and considering ways to solve historical and current world problems.

The respondents said they show their students that people from all over the world are human and that helps teach tolerance. One librarian commented that by looking at global issues, "We show students that people from all over the world are human ... we may look different and someone else's practices aren't what we do ... but it doesn't mean it is not wrong." Another said that global lessons give students opportunities to reflect on the similarities and differences that people throughout the world share. One respondent reported that, "Students have an opportunity in media class to bring up current events -

this has been a busy year discussing the positive and negative things going on world-wide."

These school librarians build awareness of global inequities in human social justice and animal rights along with advocacy for the environment through the lessons they teach. One librarian uses literature in the lessons to demonstrate situations of social injustice, such as racism, unfair treatment of people with disabilities, and sex/gender discrimination. Another librarian examines lives and cultures from around the world in relation to people and animals in society. Topics such as illegal poaching, environment issues, and biomes are used in the discussion of global problems. These lessons provide opportunities to discuss difficult situations and ways that students can see they can make a difference in the world.

Students learn positive global citizenship through lessons on Earth Day around the world and the Scientist March. By understanding more about what people in other countries do, students can learn more about the U.S. One respondent said,

Many of our inquiry projects deal with national and global social justice issues which has been least 3/4 of my teaching this year with both social studies and English classes. It's been pretty much a constant in my instructional responsibilities!

Historical and current events are subjects of classes that teach global problem solving. One librarian had a holocaust survivor come and talk to the 6th graders as a follow-up to the annual showing of the video *Shadow of Hate*. Another librarian teaches a media class that discusses current events, which gives an opportunity for whole class discussions on the positive and negative events that are happening world-wide.

A respondent who works at an IB school says that infusing global issues is part of the curriculum as problematic scenarios are taught. These scenarios guide students into action in the local community and on the global scale as well. Another librarian teaches global citizenship through Global Goals lessons.

In one library's Genius Hour research projects, a respondent challenged students to pick a real-world problem that they really thought they could solve. This idea was taken from the #TeachSDGs trend online. Another respondent infuses lessons with personal global experiences into library discussions, "I brought my US Peace Corps Volunteer experience into my library in the form of books, artifacts, music, presentations and close reading activities."

One respondent said that global problems and discussions in the library have been more on a per student basis while looking for books that are of interest to individual readers. Another respondent reported inadvertently including global issues in the lessons taught.

One librarian disagreed that solving global problems is part of what is taught in that library and said that,

> While global problems and social justice issues are included in the type of books purchased, lessons are not created that are geared toward discussing global problems. Even when global problems are mentioned, they are not the meat of the lesson.

Social Justice Measures Summary

School librarians responded positively to social justice measures in collection development, policy practices, and instructional practices. The highest mean score for all respondents was 3.67 for the library as a safe haven in policy practices. The lowest mean score for all respondents was exploring global problems in instructional practices with a mean score of 2.85 (see Figure 1).
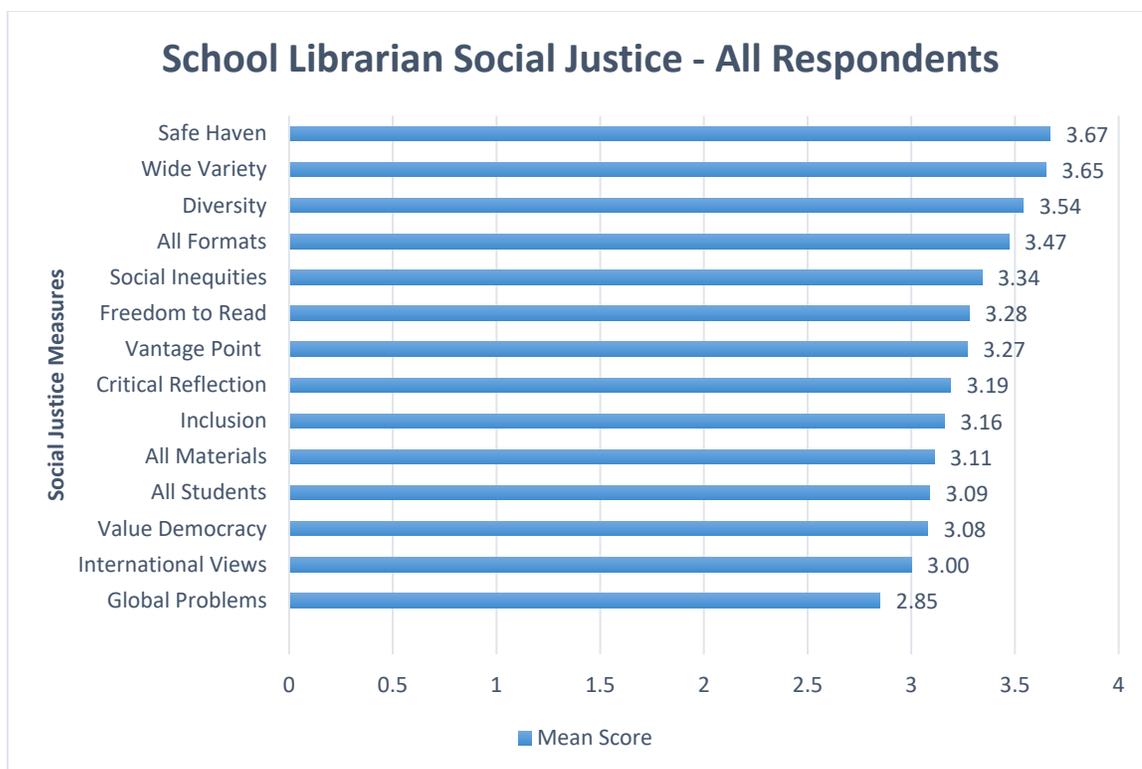
Figure 1 – School Librarian Social Justice – All Respondents by Mean

Research Question 4 – Differing Views

Do school librarians have differing social justice views based on the grade levels they teach (secondary or elementary)?

Collection development. The independent *t*-test for Equality of Means was conducted to compare the views of secondary and elementary librarians in collection development for diversity, inclusion, vantage point, and international viewpoints.

There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.70, *SD*=.68) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.43, *SD*=.66) in diversity; *t*(77)=1.72, *p*=.09. Nor was thera significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.33, *SD*=.54) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.22, *SD*=.55) in inclusion; *t*(77)=.93, *p*=.36. There was a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (M=3.39, SD=.609) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.00, *SD*=.42) in vantage points; *t*(77)=.3.399, *p*=.001. There was a not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.18, *SD*=.58) and elementary librarians (*M*=2.87, *SD*=.54) in international viewpoints; *t*(77)=2.45, *p*=.02 (See Table 21).

Table 21

Collection Development by Mean, Standard Deviation, and Independent t-test

	Secondary		Elementary		*t*	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Diversity	3.70	.68	3.43	.66	1.72	77	.09
Inclusion	3.33	.54	3.22	.54	.93	77	.36
Vantage Points	3.39	.61	3.00	.42	3.40	77	<.001
International Views	3.18	.58	2.87	.54	2.45	77	.02

Policy practices. The independent *t*-test for Equality of Means was conducted to compare the views of secondary and elementary librarians in policies for unrestricted access, all formats, read for accuracy, safe haven, freedom to read, and variety.

There was a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.48, *SD*=.83) and elementary librarians (*M*=2.87, *SD*=.718) in unrestricted access, *t*(73)=3.39, *p*=.001. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.66, *SD*=.55) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.35, *SD*=.60) in all formats, *t*(73)=2.22, *p*=.03. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.34, *SD*=.55) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.09, *SD*=.51) in read for accuracy, *t*(73)=2.07, *p*=.04. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.79, *SD*=.41) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.61, *SD*=.49) in safe haven, *t*(73)=1.68, *p*=.10. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.41, *SD*=.73) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.20, *SD*=.69) in freedom to read, *t*(73)=1.30, *p*=.20. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.69, *SD*=.47) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.63, *SD*=.49) in variety, *t*(73)=.52, *p*=.61 (See Table 22).

Table 22

Policy Practices by Mean, Standard Deviation, and Independent t-test

	Secondary		Elementary		*t*	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
Unrestricted Access	3.48	.83	2.87	.72	3.39	73	<.001
All Formats	3.66	.55	3.35	.60	2.22	73	.03
Read for Accuracy	3.34	.55	3.09	.51	2.07	73	.04
Safe Haven	3.79	.41	3.61	.49	1.68	73	.10
Freedom to Read	3.41	.73	3.20	.69	1.31	73	.20
Variety	3.69	.47	3.63	.49	.52	73	.61

Instructional practices. The independent *t*-test for Equality of Means was conducted to compare the views of secondary and elementary librarians in instructional practices for instructional needs for all students, value democracy, challenge inequities, and read for accuracy, freedom to read, and variety.

There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.07, *SD*=.66) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.11, *SD*=.43) in instructional needs of all students *t*(72)=-.29, *p*=.77. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.00, *SD*=.82) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.13, *SD*=.54) in value democracy *t*(72)=-83, *p*=.41. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=3.32, *SD*=.61) and elementary librarians (*M*=3.35, *SD*=.60) in challenge inequities *t*(72)=-.18, *p*=.86. There was not a significant difference in the scores for secondary librarians (*M*=2.79, *SD*=.69) and elementary librarians (*M*=2.89, *SD*=.67) in global problems *t*(72)=-.65, *p*=.52 (see Table 23).

Table 23

Instructional Practices by Mean, Standard Deviation, and Independent t-test

	Secondary		Elementary		t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*			
All Students	3.07	.66	3.11	.43	-.29	72	.77
Value Democracy	3.00	.82	3.13	.54	-.83	72	.41
Challenge Inequalities	3.32	.61	3.35	.60	-.18	72	.86
Global Problems	2.79	.69	2.89	.67	-.65	72	.52

Social justice rankings by instructional level. Secondary librarians strongly agreed with the social justice measures of safe haven (*M*=3.79), diversity (*M*=3.70), having a variety of materials (*M*=3.69), and access to all formats (*M*=3.66). They agreed with students having access to all materials (*M*=3.48), supporting freedom to read initiatives (*M*=3.41), materials with several vantage points (*M*=3.39), having students read for accuracy (*M*=3.34), inclusion (*M*=3.33), challenging inequalities (*M*=3.32), international views (*M*=3.18), teaching all students (*M*=3.07), and valuing democracy (*M*=3.0). Secondary librarians were less than in agreement with examining global problems (*M*=2.79).

Elementary librarians strongly agreed with the social justice measures of having a variety of materials (*M*=3.63) and safe haven (*M*=3.61). They agreed with diversity (*M*=3.43), access to material in all formats (*M*=3.35), challenging inequalities (*M*=3.35), inclusion (*M*=3.22), supporting freedom to read initiatives (*M*=3.20), valuing democracy (*M*=3.13), teaching all students (*M*=3.11), having students read for accuracy (*M*=3.09), and having materials with several vantage points (*M*=3.0). Elementary librarians were less than in agreement with students having access to all materials (*M*=2.98), examining global problems (*M*=2.89), and international views *(M*=2.87) (see Table 24).

Table 24

Secondary and Elementary Librarians Social Justice by Mean Scores

Secondary	*M*	Elementary	*M*
Safe Haven	3.79	Variety	3.63
Diversity	3.70	Safe Haven	3.61
Variety	3.69	Diversity	3.43
All Formats	3.66	All Formats	3.35
Unrestricted Access	3.48	Challenge Inequalities	3.35
Freedom to Read	3.41	Inclusion	3.22
Critical Reflection	3.39	Freedom to Read	3.20
Read for Accuracy	3.34	Value Democracy	3.13
Inclusion	3.33	All Students	3.11
Challenge Inequalities	3.32	Read for Accuracy	3.09
International Views	3.18	Critical Reflection	3.00
All Students	3.07	Global Problems	2.89
Value Democracy	3.00	Unrestricted Access	2.87
Global Problems	2.79	International Views	2.87

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Rioux (2010) developed a nascent metatheory of social justice as it applies to the information sciences. Based on historical and current social justice precepts, this metatheory makes assumptions about the principles that drive library science education, research, and practices. Rioux's assumptions are (a) all human beings have an inherent worth and deserve information services that address their information needs; (b) people perceive reality and information in different ways, often within cultural or life-role contexts; (c) there are many different types of information and knowledge, and these are societal resources; (d) theory and research are pursued with the ultimate goal of bringing positive change to service constituencies; and (e) the provision of information services is an inherently powerful activity.

Discussion

Using Rioux's metatheory as a framework, this study examined the social justice agency of public school librarians who live in a U.S. Midwestern city, in collection development, policy practices, and instructional practices. The effect of library experience levels was also explored as a factor in determining social justice attitudes. A survey was sent to 195 public school librarians. The data from 73 fully completed surveys was used to gain an understanding of how school librarians act as agents of social justice. Fourteen questions were queried on a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Disagree). Three open-ended, short answer questions were also posed to collect participant insights into collection development, policies, and instructional practices.

In comparing the social justice responses of secondary and elementary librarians, the survey found secondary librarians had an overall higher mean score than elementary librarians. Both secondary and elementary librarians ranked having the library as a safe haven for students as an area of strong agreement. Access to a materials in all formats, diversity, and variety of materials were also in the top five for both instructional levels. Exploring global problems and international viewpoints were in the bottom four agreement for both educational levels.

Rioux's first assumption. The respondents demonstrated strong support for Rioux's first assumption, that all human beings have an inherent worth and deserve information services that address their information needs. Within the area of policy practices, Rioux's first assumption is upheld through policies in information services that promote the library as a safe haven, support freedom to read initiatives, and encourage students to read materials with a variety of viewpoints. The instructional practice of teaching all students also affirms Rioux's first assumption.

Safe haven. The study provided strong support for the policy practice of the library as a safe haven. According to the survey respondents, making the library a safe haven involves getting to know students personally to support them in reaching their full potential. Open, accessible spaces for students of all backgrounds and interests create a welcoming and comfortable atmosphere. An important component of the school library as a safe haven is the practice of extending before and after school hours to accommodate students who need a welcoming place to stay and study.

Freedom to read. The study results indicate support for the policy practice of supporting the freedom to read. Though no respondents indicated they formally promote

freedom to read initiatives, they saw the importance of giving students the freedom to read materials of choice. An invitation to use library services gives students the opportunity to look at materials that might question their worldview assumptions. Library confidentiality in check-out policies allows students to interact with new or controversial ideas.

Variety. The respondents firmly supported the policy practice of encouraging students to read a wide variety of materials. Students are encouraged to read a variety of books when a wide range of appropriate materials are readily available, student choice is respected, librarians take materials requests, exploration is encouraged, and thoughtful selection policies are in place. Ensuring a variety of reading options involves giving students a breadth of materials to explore with an inclusive range of reading levels. When students make their own choices, they take positive ownership of their reading. Taking student requests helps librarians better understand their patrons through questioning and careful listening. By providing a wide-range of materials, students are empowered to develop their own opinions and philosophies on social issues.

Instruct all students. The study results indicate support for the instructional practice teaching students at all ability levels. In this area, the themes of inspiring students and flexibility in instruction emerged. Even though the goal of instruction is to reach all students, some respondents acknowledged they fall short in this area given the difficulty of teaching a wide-range of students in a constrained time.

Rioux's second assumption. The area of collection development thoroughly supports Rioux's second assumption that people perceive reality and information in different ways, often within cultural or life-role contexts. When school librarians curate

materials that support diversity, inclusion, multiple vantage points, and international perspectives, they validate the personal life experiences of their students. Collection development that includes stories and resources outside students' life situations help them understand the experiences and lenses through which others see the world.

Diversity. The results of this study firmly support curating diverse materials. The themes of reading materials as mirrors and windows emerged in collecting for diversity. Literature experiences allow students to gain an understanding of themselves and the world beyond what they know. The surveyed school librarians articulated the importance of selecting authentic materials for their collections, enabling students to gain insights into different cultures and life experiences. Materials that give insights into different cultures and life experiences help students better understand themselves and others. Picture books are especially useful in helping students learn about others by showing a wide variety of ethnic characters, settings, and cultural events.

Inclusion. The study participants displayed strong support for curating with inclusion. Inclusive materials take into account varied cultural life experiences, help students feel included, develop personal identity structures, and are uplifting. Librarians in schools with ethnically diverse populations curate selections that help students feel comfortable with their life experiences and cultures. Books that reflect minority or marginalized groups help students know they are not alone and are a welcome part of the school. Uplifting materials that encourage and support students help build positive relationships.

Vantage points. The study results substantially support collecting materials with a variety of vantage points. The themes of engagement, critical thinking, increasing

zones of awareness, and collecting with difficult questions in mind were articulated in vantage points. Informative materials with accurate, non-biased perspectives are considered to be important additions to library collections. School librarians offer materials with different perspectives that reflect the local community and beyond. Biographies and graphic novels are particularly effective in teaching social justice issues.

A significant difference was found between secondary and elementary librarians in the area of providing materials with a variety of vantage points. This difference can be attributed to a greater breadth and depth of research materials provided to students at upper grade levels.

International viewpoints. The study participants affirmed having school library collections that consider international viewpoints. The themes of finding materials that accurately reflect the differences of people in the world and showing inclusivity to immigrant students emerged in the questions related to international viewpoints. School librarians curate materials with international perspectives that currently and accurately reflect other countries, ethnicities, and cultures. In the school environment, picture books are an effective way for students visualize life in the world beyond their homes. International materials are an important way for school librarians to welcome students who have personal and family ties to other nations and cultures.

Rioux's third assumption. The respondents indicated varied support for Rioux's third assumption, that there are many different types of information and knowledge, and these are societal resources. Policy practices that support unrestricted access to library materials and access to print and digital resources support Rioux's third assumption. In

the area of instructional practices, teaching students to value democracy supports information as a societal resource.

Unrestricted access to library materials. The study results demonstrated varied support for Rioux's third assumption in the area of unrestricted access to library materials. The respondents acknowledged the importance of allowing unrestricted checkouts, making recommendations, supporting inter-library loans, and listening to patrons. They agreed that by being open to listening and understanding their patrons, strong collections are built. School librarians had differing views on ensuring that all library materials are available to students. While some allow unfettered access to materials, others have restrictions based on age-appropriateness or reading-level abilities.

A significant difference was found between secondary and elementary librarians in the area of students having unrestricted access to library materials. Elementary respondents were more likely than secondary librarians to restrict materials based on reading levels and age-appropriate content.

Access to digital and print formats. The study participants indicated significant support for ensuring access to digital and print materials for all students as part of the egalitarian library services they provide. Virtual access to the library during non-school hours is part of the digital shift in education. School librarians in this study are working to make available materials in all formats to meet the educational needs of their students. Creating formal policies on access can positively impact the ability of students to visit school libraries, regardless of their situation.

Value democracy. Instructional practices that teach students to value the ideals that form the basis of our democracy support the importance of open access to

information and freedom of expression. Valuing democracy is tied to providing a wide range of reading and research materials. The school librarians in this study teach students to value democracy by discussing civic responsibilities and the election process with their students. Instructing students regarding the importance of intellectual freedom and the right to express opinions is integral to the practice of social justice.

Rioux's fourth assumption. The study results provide varied support for Rioux's fourth assumption, that theory and research are pursued with the ultimate goal of bringing positive change to service constituencies. In the area of policy, school librarians enact this assumption through encouraging students to critically reflect on what they read. Two themes in instructional practice, challenging social inequalities, and exploring global problems support and reflect Rioux's fourth assumption

Critical reflection. The policy practice of encouraging students to critically reflect on what they read was affirmed in this study. The respondents discussed the importance of critical reflection on reading, particularly in preventing negative discrimination and stereotyping through providing materials with multiple positive viewpoints. They agreed that students can learn the value of tolerance by understanding issues from several perspectives. School librarians can actively teach the importance of differing views to aid students in research and personal decision-making. Helping students think through difficult issues gives a higher level of understanding and depth to research projects.

Challenge social inequities. Instructional practices that challenge social inequities were positively affirmed in this study. The respondents instruct on social inequities through digital citizenship lessons, particularly in relationship to cyberbullying.

Lessons on cyberbullying include discussions of kindly accepting others who are different from the norm. School librarians use book talks to discuss valuing the differences in people, including those with disabilities. Social justice issues are often taught in research and inquiry-driven projects.

Explore global problems. Instructional practices that explore global problems received varied support from the respondents in this study. School librarians who instruct on global problems educate students through teaching tolerance, building awareness of global inequities, understanding positive global citizenship, and considering ways to solve historical and current world problems. Global lessons give students opportunities to reflect on the similarities and differences that people throughout the world share.

Rioux's fifth assumption. The entirety of this study affirms Rioux's social justice metatheory assumption that the provision of information services is an inherently powerful activity. Just over a hundred years ago, school libraries were founded on the social justice principle of egalitarian and equitable access to informational materials. Through the years school libraries have developed from adjunct hubs of curated information to educational centers at the heart of schools. The role of the school librarian has expanded from information manager, to teacher, and beyond, to educational leader. As we look to the future, the role of the school librarian will continue to shift as educational advances and informational realities warrant. To ensure a strong future, it is essential that school librarians understand the informational and social justice foundations that underlie the profession.

Implications

This study has implications for school librarians in the understanding of social justice, the practice of social justice, and for future research.

Implications in understanding social justice. Understanding the theoretical foundations of social justice is the first step in informing practice. Through pre-service training or in-service sessions, school librarians can develop an understanding of the progression of social justice understandings. Older social justice models look to the financial security of individuals within the nation-state, while newer models look to social justice as a global concept that look to equity of opportunity. As the digital era progresses, informational justice has become an increasing national and international imperative.

In foundational and policy documents, the American Library Association (ALA) and the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) have taken a strong stance on social justice principles. These look to the importance of a literate populace who has access to information and related services in a democratic society. Libraries provide information access and purposely curate materials in a variety of formats in an equitable, open, and egalitarian manner. Increasingly librarians also provide community and social services.

Informational justice in the library profession acknowledges the inherent worth of every individual in society. Library services are delivered to a broad economic and cultural spectrum of patrons in an egalitarian manner. Information is inherently a societal resource. Libraries are a vehicle for positive, societal progress. On this foundation librarians play a vital and powerful role.

School libraries work beyond the scope of public libraries for young patrons. School librarians have a unique role in the educational setting by working with students of all academic abilities at a range of grade levels. Beyond the scope of a single teacher, a school librarian can see students grow and develop over an extended period of time. Building trusting relationships with students allows the school library to be a welcoming, safe destination for learning.

Barbara Stripling, 2014 president of ALA, sees school librarians as agents of change in the world. This involves having a clear vision of librarians' collective future and a commitment to act on that vision. She sees that ensuring a just society for all is a responsibility and a moral obligation that comes with the library profession. This study shows that librarians can work to build a society that is based on social equity, diversity, and inclusion.

"Through public and honest conversation and individual actions, we can build an equitable and just society for our members, for the field of librarianship, and for our communities" (Stripling, 2014, p. 5). School librarians find a depth and purpose in their work by acting as agents of social justice.

Implications in practicing social justice. The practice of social and information justice in school librarianship manifests itself in professional and practical ways. For the purpose of this study, the social justice agency of school librarians was examined in the light of encouragement through collection development, empowerment through policies, and enlightenment through strong educational practices.

Carefully chosen cohesive collections encourage students. Diverse and inclusive collections help students build a positive worldview. Thoughtful collection development

ensures that all students are included and reflected in the materials available. Strong

collections contain materials that teach tolerance, acceptance, and advocate for the

marginalized. School libraries provide windows into the world beyond what is

immediately known to students, providing materials that instill wonder and reinforce

curiosity. They provide information about the students' personal cultures, larger

communities, nations, and the world. Learning to value international viewpoints helps

students think creatively and build acceptance for others.

Collecting materials for school libraries is not a haphazard task. Collection

development is methodical and thoughtful. While individual teachers might have

classroom libraries, the school library is a comprehensive, vital, centralized area for

information. School libraries weave a tapestry of thoughts and ideas with their

collections, respecting that in a democratic society many points of view are to be heard.

Materials in school libraries engender thoughtful discussion and debate in a positive

manner.

At the core, socially just collection development relies on school librarians that

build relationships with students. Professional, inspirational school librarians know their

students. They understand their students' life situations and personalities to make caring

recommendations based on that knowledge.

Socially just school libraries empower students through library policies that

ensure egalitarian and equitable access to information. Whether in digital or print

formats, students have the right to access information available through the school

library. School librarians advocate for a depth and breadth of resources so all students

have an equal opportunity to succeed. Beyond physical and virtual access, school

librarians are equipped to provide intellectual access to information. They have the unique role of giving students the tools they need to interpret information in today's world. The digital revolution has seen a shift from locating relatively scarce information to sorting through large amounts of it. More than ever, and continuing into the future, students need to be taught how to source and interpret the information they find.

The ALA and AASL have strong policies advocating for intellectual freedom, which is a central tenant in the quest for social justice. School librarians stand for the right students have to read literature and discuss ideas that might be uncomfortable to some. Though balanced in schools with age-appropriateness and curricular demands, school librarians advocate for many voices to be heard.

Socially just school librarians build relationships with students. In this study school librarians view their libraries as safe havens in which to nurture the beliefs and identities of students. Valuing individual students and building relationships allows school librarians to understand their students' needs. Advocating for students goes beyond providing literature and information to giving voice for those who are marginalized and in need.

School librarians enlighten students through socially just educational practices. By teaching and leading with excellence, the school library stays relevant and at the forefront of educational development. Through direct instruction and collaboratively working with classroom teachers, school librarians give opportunities for all students to learn and grow into their potentials.

The information and discussion provided in the school library can inspire students to impact the world in positive ways, whether it be to stand up against bullying or to

listen with intent to the ideas of others. By modeling and actions, school librarians can teach students to treat others with respect in view of our common humanity.

School librarians stand at the forefront of access to accurate, vital information that is essential in an open society that values freedom of thought and expression. Protecting the value of democracy and the freedom for all to access information affirms the social justice rights embodied at heart of library services. Not only is it important for school librarians to uphold the values of a democratic republic, those values need to be integrated into learning experiences in the library. Giving students the tools to analyze, question, and work toward eliminating societal injustices is vital for a strong future.

Because of the variety of information in school libraries, students can be taught to appreciate the differences of those in the wider world. School librarians have the power to educate students to understand that in the information age we cannot isolate or insulate ourselves from the rest of the world. Understanding global perspectives helps students grow beyond complacency about our present and actively build toward a more positive world in the future. Further, studying the ways other countries solve common social and human problems lends insight into creative and useful ways for us to resolve difficult issues that face our nation.

Implications for future research. Both in theory and practice school libraries are institutions of social justice. The intent of Rioux's metatheory is to encourage discussion and develop greater understandings of how librarians understand and enact social justice precepts. This framework gives a basis on which to build new understandings and conceptualize stronger ways to serve students. This present study can lend itself in many ways to future research that will bring a greater depth of understanding to school library

research.

The survey was administered to certified public school librarians in a U.S. Midwestern city. In further studies it can be replicated with respondents from private schools from within the same area to determine if differences exist between private and public schools. The survey can also be broadened to include school librarians within the state from beyond the metropolitan area being studied. This can include school librarians from other regional cities and schools in rural locations. The survey can also be administered in other locales beyond the state, region, and country to gain further insight into the social justice practices of a wider range school librarians.

This study looked at collection development, policy practices, and instructional practices as they apply to the intersection of school libraries and social justice issues. Each of these areas could be further studied by asking deeper, specific questions in each of the sub-headings. For example, when studying diversity, questions could be asked about the specific types of material collected in racial, ethnic, cross-cultural, orientation, religious, or other areas to see if differences exist between or within them.

The survey asked for short answer responses in the general areas of collection development, policies, and instructional practices. Future studies could consider asking for short answer responses to each question within the specific questions. This could add clarity and depth to some areas which received fewer responses than others. For example, no respondents directly commented on freedom to read initiatives in policies, while 35 respondents commented on diversity in collection development.

Based on the open-ended short answer responses, questions could be further developed for in-depth interviews with school librarians. By conducting personal

interviews, the respondents could have the opportunity to give responses that give a deeper reflection of their practices.

Social justice is an encompassing topic of study which has many more facets than can be studied in conjunction with school libraries and librarians. Areas that impact school libraries, such as social justice practices in technology education could also be explored, for example. The results of this study showed that for both secondary and elementary respondents, the library as a safe haven was an area of strong agreement. Understanding what constitutes a 'safe haven' and how libraries can articulate and enact policies that promote the library as a safe haven is another area for a research study.

Much of the literature on social justice in the information sciences deals with research and public libraries. The social justice interactions between these and school libraries is another area of interest for research. The impact that school librarians have on literacy development is another area that would bear additional research as well. In an era of cutbacks, a study of this nature could show implications for wider library staffing. Further, a broader study could be conducted on the interaction between social justice in education and the mission of school libraries.

Other surveys such as the Miami University Diversity Awareness Scale (MUDAS), have been developed to understand general knowledge, intercultural interaction, and social justice awareness in issues related to diversity (Mosley-Howard, Witte & Wang, 2011). By administering this survey to school librarians, comparisons can be made to individuals and groups who have been studied previously.

Social Justice and School Libraries

By understanding how school librarians are agents of social justice, we ensure a strong future for school libraries. A social justice foundation helps develop the larger picture of what libraries can do in an increasingly interconnected world in communications, information, and economics. The calling of the school librarian is far deeper than managing a space, teaching the latest technologies, and checking out books. What is the way forward for school libraries? It is looking to their social justice roots and setting a course for the future based on them. Social justice gives the profession of school librarian meaning and coherence. Indeed, social justice is the past, present, and future of school libraries.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Social Justice School Library Survey

Dear Metropolitan Omaha Public School Librarian,

I am a librarian at Millard North high school and a student at the University of Nebraska, Omaha. I would appreciate your help in completing a survey that looks at how public school librarians act as agents of social justice in their roles of collection development, policy practices and instruction.

There is no risk for you to participate in this study. There are no potential benefits that you may reasonably expect to receive from participation in this study. However, this study may lead to a better understanding and knowledge of the social justice roles that school librarians enact with their students. I would be pleased to share the results of this survey with you upon completion.

If you agree to participate, please click on the link which will take you to the survey. It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete. By returning the survey, you are implying your consent to participate in this study. Your response will be confidential and anonymous. Participation is completely voluntary. You may choose not to return the survey with no penalty.

This survey will be active for the next three weeks. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie A. Burdic
Doctoral Student
14047 Woolworth Cr.
Omaha, NE 68144
402-330-5012
saburdic@gmail.com

Appendix B

Social Justice School Library Survey

This survey is designed to find out how school librarians act as agents of social justice.

Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential.

Collection Development

This section asks about social justice in the areas of inclusion, diversity, and variety of

materials you curate in collection development.

1. When purchasing materials for my library, I intentionally seek materials that

   reflect diversity.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

2. All students can see themselves in the materials in my school library.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

3. I collect materials that look at issues from more than one vantage point.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

4. The materials in my library help students consider international viewpoints.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

5. How does your collection reflect social justice issues?

   [Short Answer]

Policy Practices

This section asks about your policies as they apply to social justice issues in

addressing student needs.

6. My students have unrestricted access to all library materials.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

7. My students can access all print and digital materials available through the library.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

8. I encourage my students to critically reflect on what they read.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

9. I create an environment to make my library a 'safe haven' for students.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

10. I promote 'freedom to read' initiatives.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

11. I encourage my students to read a wide variety of books.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

12. How do your policies help you address student needs?

   [Short Answer]

Instructional Practices

This section asks about your instructional practices as they apply to social justice issues.

13. I meet the instructional needs of students at all ability levels [e.g. HAL, SPED, ELL].

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

14. I intentionally teach my students to value the ideals that form basis of our democracy.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

15. I encourage my students to challenge social inequities in our school.

   [bullying, for example].

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

16. I create learning experiences geared to discussing global problems.

   Strongly Disagree   Disagree   Agree   Strongly Agree

17. How have your recent teaching experiences reflected social justice ideals?

   [Short Answer]

Professional Experiences:

18. Current Level of Library

   Elementary

   Middle

   Secondary

19. Years of School Library Experience:

   1-5

   6-10

   11-15

   16-20

   21+

20. Years at Present School Library:

    1-5

    6-10

    11-15

    16-20

    21+

21. I am involved library professional associations:

    Check All that Apply

    NSLA – Nebraska School Library Association

    NLA – Nebraska Library Association

    YALSA – Young Adult Library Service Association

    AASL – American Association of School Libraries

    ALA – American Library Association

    Other

22. I am involved in other professional associations:

    Check All That Apply

    MRC – Metropolitan Reading Council

    ILA – International Literacy Association

    NETA – Nebraska Educational Technology Association

    ISTE – International Society of Technology in Education

    Other

23. I attend voluntary professional development activities.

Never   Seldom   Occasionally   Often

24. Have your involvements helped strengthen your role as a school librarian?

[Short Answer]