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**Digging the Issues and Concerns in Subject Access Towards
Discoverability of Information and Resources**

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ABSTRACT

There is an information explosion in this computer age due to the rapid developments of information and communications technology. As a result, research and studies are quickly published because of faster printing and open access publishing. With these, access to information and resources is somewhat compromised. Without access, these collections are meaningless to educators, researchers, scholars, and other information users. Thus, this study prompted to determine the: 1) level of familiarity in the fundamental principles of subject cataloging; 2) level of usage familiarity of: a) grammar and code of relationships, b) types of subject headings and subdivisions, and c) authority tools; and 3) level of issues or concerns of librarians in assigning subject headings. On the level of familiarity on the fundamental principles of subject cataloging, findings revealed that the respondents are: 1) very familiar with the main objectives of subject cataloging, that is, to list in one uniform word or phrase all the materials on a given subject that a library has in its collection, and control the terms to be used in assigning subjects to materials; 2) extremely familiar on the first and last steps in subject analysis, that is, to examine first the library material at hand, and to use the decided keywords to go over the subject authority lists to identify appropriate headings; and very familiar on deciding on several keywords that could represent the subject; and 3) very familiar with the basic principles of subject headings. On the level of usage familiarity of grammar and code of relationships, types of subject headings, and authority tools, the study affirmed that the respondents are: 1) very familiar in assigning grammar of subject headings; 2) very familiar in the grammar, and code of relationships of subject headings; and 3) extremely familiar with the names of persons/corporations/meetings, and topical subject headings. On the level of issues or concerns of librarians in assigning subject headings, the respondents are moderately concerned or have an issue with all the different aspects of assigning subject headings. In order to efficiently and effectively retrieve information, issues and concerns in subject access should be addressed by catalogers.

Keywords: Authority tools, Cataloging, Information retrieval, Keywords, Subject headings, Technical services

Introduction

"The library is a growing organism" (Ranganathan, 1957). This law of S.R. Ranganathan is still applicable in this millennium age because collections are increasing. That might have foreseen him that there would be an information explosion in the future. In effect, collections continue to grow faster due to open access publishing, free access to information on the web, and posting information from government websites. In order to address access to information, cataloging must be given the utmost importance because it is the key to the effective and efficient retrieval of information. Thus, updating the online catalog is a must for easy access to information in a library or information center.

Collections are pointless to educators, researchers, scholars, and other information users without access. Cataloging plays an essential role between the library collection and the user, while the librarian serves as a mediator. It creates and maintains bibliographic and authority records in the library, such as printed materials, electronic resources, and other learning resources. Its purpose is to bring together all library materials of the same topic under one uniform subject heading (Bristow, 2018). The process involves three primary activities: 1) descriptive cataloging; 2) subject cataloging; and 3) authority control. However, the study only delves into subject cataloging and authority control. The steps for subject analysis are: 1) to assess the library material; 2) to determine and list down terms that could represent it; and 3) to identify appropriate subject headings (Ganendran, 1998) which geared towards finding the "aboutness" and the actual topic of the library material (Miller & McCarthy, 2010). Thus, subject cataloging is the process of deciding and assigning the subject headings that best represent the library material's topic.

However, there are issues and concerns in subject cataloging, such as accessing collections in the library. The subject headings are not so easy to discern. In most cases, they are readily available but not to materials with confusing titles. For some collections, the subject cannot be determined by the title alone, which is often ambiguous, like terms directly from the

text or are prominent in the field. Thus, the cataloger needs to inspect the other parts of the material, like the table of contents, the preface, and the introduction. If the subject is not apparent, the material's content has to be carefully read and analyzed. It is not that easy since users do not use the same terminology to describe things, making subject analysis difficult.

The usefulness of controlled vocabulary has been debated for years since the popularity of online tools such as Google searching and the use of keywords as a search strategy (Knowton, 2005). While such mechanisms as keyword searching provide beneficial additions to the arsenal searching capabilities available to users, they are not a satisfactory substitute for controlled vocabularies. Indeed, many machine-searching techniques rely on the existence of authoritative headings even if they do not explicitly display them. Also, the Library of Congress convened to examine cataloging practices and present findings and recommendations. One finding supports the continued use of Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) and other controlled vocabularies.

Despite the many suggestions, subject heading or controlled vocabulary should be discontinued due to the lack of importance of the catalog. Gross and Taylor (2005) proved that "if subject headings were removed from or no longer included in catalog records, users performing keywords searches would miss that one-third of the hits they currently retrieve."

It would show that subject analysis is still one of the core functions of cataloging. Also, subject headings have a great value in providing controlled subjects because it is a powerful tool to retrieve relevant information sources easily.

Further, specific subject headings provide a clear advantage to many researchers for the precision it brings to subject searching. However, for some researchers, precise subject headings hinder an efficient and comprehensive search. An appropriate broader heading, especially when made narrower in scope by adding subheadings, can benefit researchers by providing generic access to their topic.

Assigning specific and generic subject headings to work would enhance the subject accessibility for the diverse approaches and research needs of different catalog users. Gross and Taylor's (2005) study also showed literature stating that controlled vocabularies are still valuable for name, uniform title, date, and place, but not all agreed on the effectivity of controlled subject authorities to topical subjects. However, they eventually recommended considering using controlled vocabularies for topical subjects in bibliographic records. Moreover, finally, to consider whether automated metadata such as table of contents, indexes can become surrogates for subject headings and classification for retrieval.

However, it can be difficult for catalogers to assign broader terms consistently to different works without consistency. Some of the librarians' challenges with cataloging and classification were the difficulties in determining the subject content of the text of books with multiple subject headings, the use of outdated cataloging and classification rules that lead to poor interpretation and application, and shortage of professional staff to perform the task (Marshall, 2003). Also, librarians appear to rely almost exclusively on keyword searching for their library resources (Ferris, 2018). Controlled vocabulary provides unique access points for approximately one-third of the searches (Strader, 2009). Keywords provide a similar benefit, though not as strong, since they often duplicate terms that appear in abstracts.

Consequently, both controlled vocabulary and keywords provide significant numbers of unique terms that may increase the discoverability of library materials in a catalog where abstracts are not present. Also, controlled vocabularies have the added ability to collocate library materials in other formats in the library catalog. Studies of Rolla (2009), and Samanta and Rath (2020) compared user tags to certain books versus the library-supplied subject headings for the same books. They found out that users and subject catalogers approached subject terms very differently. User tags could enhance subject access to library materials, but they cannot entirely replace controlled vocabularies. According to Matveyeva (2002), classification systems include employing subject headings, improving access to bring related

topics together, helping librarians in their collection development, bibliography making, communication with publishers and suppliers, and other services.

With this, the study aimed to undermine the issues and concerns of catalogers or librarians in subject headings to improve the discoverability of information sources through subject access or headings. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions: 1) What is the level of familiarity of librarians in the fundamental principles of subject cataloging?; 2) What is the level of usage familiarity of librarians to: a) grammar and code of relationships of subject headings?; b) types of subject headings and subdivisions; c) authority tools; and 3) What is the level of issues or concerns of librarians in assigning subject headings?

Methodology

Descriptive method of research was utilized to determine the familiarity and issues encountered by the library practitioners in selected parts of Northern Luzon, Philippines. The researchers formulated a questionnaire in an online document comprising of three parts: 1) Profile of the respondents; 2) Level of familiarity of respondents in assigning subject headings; and 3) Level of issues or concerns in assigning subject headings. It was subjected to critique by Library and Information Science experts for face and content validity. The respondents were 53 library practitioners from Baguio City, Benguet, and Nueva Vizcaya in the Philippines. The data gathered from the online Google Form was verified, downloaded, tallied, classified, and tabulated for analysis and interpretation. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	10	19%
Female	43	81%
Age		
20-30	39	74%
31-40	7	13%
41-50 and above	7	13%
Types of Library		
Academic Library	40	75%
Public Library	2	4%
School Library	7	13%
Special Library	4	8%
Number of Years as Librarian		
6 months to 1 year	10	19%
2 to 5 years	30	56%
6 to 10 years	4	8%
10 years and above	9	17%

Results and Discussions

Cataloging has become challenging because of the fast evolvement of information technology. Catalogers then moved into a new role of providing access to information resources and new skills required for cataloging and classification (Bello & Mansor, 2012).

A. Familiarity with the Fundamentals of Subject Cataloging.

The general objective of organizing information through cataloging and classification is to disseminate information to users efficiently (Gunasekera, 2009). Subject headings are applied, and libraries use these for specific content or collections to provide multiple access points beyond the limits of a physical location. It is a term that signifies the topic in which all library materials on that topic are entered in a catalog (Chan, 1981). Moreover, libraries use authority files to control variant forms of personal, corporate, geographic, and jurisdictional names (Hodge, 2000).

Table 2. Level of Familiarity in the Fundamentals of Subject Cataloging

Fundamentals of Subject Cataloging		Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
A. Objectives	1. The main purpose of a subject catalog is to list in one uniform word or phrase all the materials on a given subject that a library has in its collection.	3.49	0.64	Very Familiar
	2. The objective of subject headings is to control the terms to be used in assigning subjects to materials.	3.45	0.61	Very Familiar
B. Subject Analysis	3. In subject analysis, the first step is to examine the library material at hand.	3.55	0.61	Extremely Familiar
	4. Another step in subject analysis is to decide on several keywords that could represent the subject.	3.49	0.67	Very Familiar
	5. Finally, in subject analysis, use the decided keywords to go over the subject authority lists to identify appropriate headings.	3.51	0.58	Extremely Familiar
C. Principles	6. The subject cataloger should always consider the reader's point of view, their background, and the type of library to fit the needs of the people who are likely to use the material.	3.38	0.66	Very Familiar
	7. The rule of specific and direct entry is to enter the material under the most specific subject heading which accurately and precisely represent its content	3.30	0.72	Very Familiar
	8. The rule of common usage is to use a subject heading that expresses popular or common usage rather than specific or technical.	3.21	0.66	Very Familiar
Overall		3.42	0.64	Very Familiar

Legend: 3.5 – 4.0 Extremely familiar; 2.5 – 3.49 Very familiar; 1.5 – 2.49 Moderately familiar; 1.0 – 1.49 Not at all familiar

Objectives of Subject Cataloging. The primary purpose of the library catalog is to provide users assistance in finding, identifying, selecting, and obtaining library materials. A catalog is an essential information tool that serves as a key to the location of resources. Without such, it is not easy to know what is available and where it can be located. Thus, its emphasis is more on the use rather than preservation or conservation.

Subject cataloging primarily deals with classifying the subject content or discipline and assigning subject headings. Table 2 revealed that respondents are very familiar with the main objectives of subject cataloging, that is, "to list in one uniform word or phrase all the materials on a given subject that a library has in its collection," and "to control the terms to be used in assigning subjects to materials." Most of the respondents were at the same time catalogers in

their workplace. It is maybe due to the minimal positions and requirements of librarians in basic education libraries. Most of them perform multiple functions, which might lead to superficial assigning of subject headings. They claimed that they could not perform in-depth subject cataloging because they were "one-man librarian" in an interview with them. It means that they perform all the librarian's tasks from selection and acquisition, cataloging and classification, circulation to reference work.

Subject Analysis in Cataloging. The elements of cataloging consist of bibliographic description, subject analysis, and classification, and these necessitate the skills and competencies of catalogers or librarians, which are considered the most difficult (Caborero & Dolendo, 2012). In subject analysis, it requires critical thinking and exposure to different fields of knowledge. It is a process of analyzing the material in question to determine the exact subject content. Many of these are evident by looking at the title of the item alone. However, when these simple measures do not work, the cataloger may have to resort to reading a few paragraphs to several chapters of the materials. It is crucial to complete the cataloging process as quickly as possible, with little wasted time. However, it is essential to be sure of the content of anything that subject headings are being assigned to. A "miss-assigned" subject heading can lead to incredible frustration on the library users and when the material found does not deal with the specified topic at all. Thus, in performing such a task, the librarian or cataloger must possess a high level of grammar and code of relationships of subject headings. They must be knowledgeable on the narrower, broader, related, and associated terms used in a particular topic.

In Table 2, respondents are extremely familiar with the first and last steps of subject analysis, that is, "to examine first the library material at hand," and "to use the decided keywords to go over the subject authority lists to identify appropriate headings"; and very familiar on deciding on several keywords that could represent the subject. Analyzing the subject content of the library materials is one of the most difficult parts, and yet, the respondents claimed that

they are highly familiar. Seemingly, the librarians were proficient in subject analysis and can be attributed to the efforts of library and information science schools in the Philippines due to the low board performance of the Licensure Examinations for Librarians takers in Cataloging and Classification (Lanzuela et al., 2018).

Principles of Subject Headings. In assigning subject headings, the objective is to provide access by subject to all relevant information resources, bringing together the same subject regardless of disparities in terminology, show affiliations among subject fields, and providing an entry through any vocabulary common to any considerable group of users. According to Rondeau (2012), the “aboutness” determination is a part of subject cataloging where the cataloger attempts to identify the subject of material, and there is a need to deepen the catalogers’ relatedness to the resource in “aboutness” determination.

A subject heading list is a standard list of terms used as subject access, either for general knowledge or a specialized subject area, including references made to and from each term, notes explaining the scope, and usage of certain headings (Chatterjee, 2016). Knowledge and skills of catalogers can be deduced from Table 2. They are very familiar with the basic principles of subject headings such as: 1) The rule of specific and direct entry is to enter the material under the most specific subject heading which accurately and precisely represent its content; 2) The rule of common usage is to use a subject heading that expresses popular or common usage rather than specific or technical; and 3) The subject cataloger should always consider the reader's point of view, their background, and the type of library to fit the needs of the people who are likely to use the material.

In summary, the catalogers are very familiar with the fundamental principles of subject cataloging. However, it can be noted that “the rule of common usage where a subject heading that expresses popular or common usage should be used rather than specific or technical” has the lowest mean which suggests that they have experienced difficulty in applying the rule, especially if the library material is about the technicalities or specialties in the field. Thus, the

cataloger's basic skills will still be needed, and the fundamental nature of cataloging will remain (Ivey, 2009).

B. Familiarity with the Grammar and Code of Relationships of Subject Headings

Libraries spend significant time in adding subject headings to records. As measured in two production systems running on identical catalog records, subject heading facets did not successfully increase the use of subject headings. Without further refinements, the faceted display may not successfully increase patron use of subject headings (Bauer & Peterson-Hart, 2012). Aside from the standardized and established subject headings, web service tools use the technology that autosuggest subject headings. These autosuggest subject heading tools consolidate the second step of subject cataloging, that is, identifying the correct subject headings from manually looking into the terms into just clicks away using an autosuggest technology. These tools significantly reduce the manual efforts of subject catalogers to come up with a good subject heading entry, which further increases the cataloger's output and efficiency (Bennett, O'Neill, & Kammerer, 2014).

Table 3. Familiarity in the Grammar and Code of Relationships of Subject Headings

Grammar of Subject Headings	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Single noun headings	3.25	0.70	Very Familiar
2. Compound headings	3.19	0.65	Very Familiar
3. Adjective with noun headings	3.00	0.62	Very Familiar
4. Phrase headings	2.96	0.68	Very Familiar
5. Inverted headings	2.85	0.74	Very Familiar
6. Complex headings	2.72	0.69	Very Familiar
Code of relationships of subject headings			
7. Reference: Use, Use for, See, See also	3.58	0.60	Extremely Familiar
8. Hierarchical: Broader term, Narrower term	3.57	0.60	Extremely Familiar
9. Association: Related term	3.55	0.70	Extremely Familiar
10. Scope notes	3.19	0.68	Very Familiar
Overall	3.18	0.66	Very Familiar

Legend: 3.5 – 4.0 Extremely familiar; 2.5 – 3.49 Very familiar; 1.5 – 2.49 Moderately familiar; 1.0 – 1.49 Not at all familiar

Grammar of Subject Headings. Table 3 revealed that the respondents are very familiar with assigning grammar of subject headings, particularly single noun headings, compound headings, adjective with noun headings, phrase headings, inverted headings, and complex headings. The use of single noun headings, compound headings, and adjectives with noun headings had the highest mean, implying that respondents are proficient in the grammar of subject headings. However, they revealed in the interview that new editions of commercial subject heading tools also create inconsistencies of subject headings used. In effect, it will create confusion on the part of library users. Thus, the catalogers should also update their manual incorporating such issues in assigning subject headings with specific rules, decisions, or policies.

Code of Relationships of Subject Headings. Overall, the respondents are very familiar with the grammar and code of relationships of subject headings. However, they are highly knowledgeable on using references, hierarchical codes, the association of related terms, and the slightest knowledge of inverted and complex headings. It connotes then that the respondents are very proficient in the use of cross-references (Use, Use for, See, See also), hierarchical codes such as broader term (BT), the narrower term (NT), and association or related term (RT). The interview revealed that they do not practice scope notes, which resulted in unfamiliar responses from the catalogers.

C. Types of Subject Headings and Subdivisions.

The two most common subject cataloging authorities are the thesaurus and the subject heading list (Miller & McCarthy, 2010). Most libraries used standardized subject languages such as Library of Congress Subject Headings, Sears List of Subject Headings, Medical Subject Headings, and the like. These are called controlled vocabulary primarily to promote a consistent representation and comprehensive searching of subject matter. According to Gunasekera (2009), it is imperative to know the relationship between subject headings and

controlled vocabulary since the subject analysis will determine its overall content, identify various subjects, aspects, and relationships, and represent all these concerns in the language of the controlled vocabulary being used. If not a controlled vocabulary, a thesaurus can be used by generating keywords or natural language. Using natural language to describe the subject of the materials will also lead to inconsistency. On the other hand, subject heading is more consistent when using controlled vocabulary.

Table 4. Familiarity with the Types of Subject Headings and Subdivisions

Types of Subject Headings	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Topical subject headings	3.57	0.64	Extremely Familiar
2. Jurisdiction / Geographical	3.47	0.64	Very Familiar
3. Names of persons / corporation / meetings	3.58	0.60	Extremely Familiar
4. Genre / Form	3.49	0.61	Very Familiar
Types of Subdivisions			
5. Topical subdivisions	3.45	0.64	Very Familiar
6. Form subdivisions	3.42	0.69	Very Familiar
7. Chronological / period subdivisions	3.42	0.75	Very Familiar
8. Geographical subdivisions	3.55	0.67	Extremely Familiar
Overall Mean	3.49	0.66	Very Familiar

Legend: 3.5 – 4.0 Extremely familiar; 2.5 – 3.49 Very familiar; 1.5 – 2.49 Familiar; 1.0 – 1.49 Not at all familiar

Types of Subject Headings and Subdivisions. Typically, there are four types of subject headings, namely: 1) topical subject headings; 2) genre or form subject headings; 3) geographic subject headings; and 4) names of persons, corporations, meetings. Table 4 revealed that among the types of subject headings, the respondents are “extremely familiar” with the names of persons/ corporations/ meetings and topical subject headings. At the same time, they are “very familiar” with jurisdiction/geographical, and genre/form. It implies that the cataloger or librarian respondents are proficient in using these types of headings. Sugando (2021) explained that one of the factors to be considered is the subject authority control list which will improve information storage and retrieval.

Regarding subdivisions, the respondents revealed that they are “very familiar” with the topical, form, and chronological subdivisions while “extremely familiar” with geographical

subdivisions. Seemingly, the respondents are proficient in use of subdivisions. However, the respondents expressed that assigning subdivisions was not a problem during the interview. However, the problem lies on the availability of subject heading tools, particularly on locally published information resources.

D. Familiarity with Subject Authority Tools.

Authority control is a must in the Cataloging Section. Authority files must be established and updated for the benefit of users and not the catalogers. Ferguson (2003) pointed out that "if catalogers are to provide effective service, they must ensure, for example, that if users search for resources by a particular, known author or subject, the system will retrieve all records relating to the author's work or the subject and not just some of them." According to the National Committee on Resource Description and Access (2014), every library should develop authority files that derive terms from other authority lists, including the terms created by catalogers. The content of these authority files depends on the policies of individual libraries. The files are vital records containing the agreed forms of names and topical terms that have been authorized as access points, along with their associated cross-references. Also included in the authority files are lists of terms that are used to control the variant names for a person, institution, or field (Hodge, 2000).

Table 5. Familiarity with the Different Subject Authority Tools

Subject Authority Tools	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Library of Congress Subject Headings	3.25	0.81	Very Familiar
2. Library of Congress subject headings for children's literature	2.38	0.79	Familiar
3. Sears List of Subject Headings	3.58	0.63	Extremely Familiar
4. Medical Subject headings	2.51	0.87	Very Familiar
5. Music Subject Headings	2.13	0.81	Familiar
6. National Agricultural Library Subject Headings	2.06	0.82	Familiar
Overall	2.65	0.79	Very Familiar

Legend: 3.5 – 4.0 Extremely familiar; 2.5 – 3.49 Very familiar; 1.5 – 2.49 Familiar; 1.0 – 1.49 Not at all familiar

Table 5 revealed the subject authority tools used by catalogers and libraries. The respondents revealed "extremely familiar" in using Sears List of Subject Headings while "very familiar" with Library of Congress Subject Headings and Medical Subject Headings. It was found out that they are only somewhat "familiar" in using Library of Congress subject headings for children's literature, Music library Subject Headings, and the National Agricultural Library Subject Headings, respectively. It is fascinating to note that most of the respondents used the Sears List of Subject Headings, and they reasoned that it is handy, unlike the LCSH.

In an interview with some catalogers, the existing subject headings sometimes display cultural, political, or religious bias such that subject heading are not taken from any subject heading tools. Against the LCSH, librarians worldwide continue to raise questions about certain biases in subject headings. Even if the LCSH is considered the most widely adopted subject authority tool worldwide, the criticism continues over the years (Strader, 2009). According to Stone and Tam (1991), LCSH terminology used in many headings is naturally biased, lacks consistency, and is insufficient in cross-references, particularly in the law and legislation headings and subdivided headings. Moreover, Wiggins (2007) said that it takes time to train anyone to correctly apply the complex rules of LCSH pre-coordinated subject strings. The specific terms and text strings are users or even librarian-friendly. Also, Bristow (2018) mentioned that LCSH was initially a list of headings that have been already used in the Library of Congress, which explains its terms used and grammar structure.

E. The Issues and Concerns in Assigning Subject Headings

Subject headings describe the content of information resources such as books, journals, and the like. These terms are selected from subject heading tools containing the preferred subject access terms. The tool is a controlled vocabulary that identifies alternative and preferred terms to be used as subject access. If subject authority control is not practiced, different catalogers use different terms for the same subject content or

concept dealing with the same topic, resulting in inconsistent, mismatch, or unreliable terms. It thus affects information access and retrieval.

Table 6. The Issues or Concerns on Assigning of Subject Headings

Aspects in Assigning Subject Headings	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
1. Perception on the purposes of subject headings	2.60	0.97	Moderately an Issue or Concern
2. Familiarity about the library users	2.79	0.97	Moderately an Issue or Concern
3. Importance of determining the subject through the title, subtitle, author, preface, introduction, table of contents, and text contents	2.79	1.04	Moderately an Issue or Concern
4. Knowledge on the grammar of subject headings	2.75	1.02	Moderately an Issue or Concern
5. Competency in codifying relationships of subject headings	2.66	0.92	Moderately an Issue or Concern
6. Knowledge on the types of headings	2.72	1.06	Moderately an Issue or Concern
7. Knowledge on the types of subdivisions	2.60	1.07	Moderately an Issue or Concern
8. Familiarity on the available subject authority tools	2.62	1.10	Moderately an Issue or Concern
9. Importance of library policies and procedures in assigning subject headings	2.91	1.06	Moderately an Issue or Concern
10. Attitude of the librarian in performing the task of subject cataloging	2.68	1.05	Moderately an Issue or Concern
Overall	2.71	1.03	Moderately an Issue or Concern

Legend: 3.5 – 4.0 Extremely an Issue or Concern 2.5 – 3.49 Moderately an Issue or Concern; 1.5 – 2.49 Somewhat an Issue or Concern; 1.0 – 1.49 Not at all an Issue or Concern

As revealed in Table 6, the respondents are moderately concerned or have an issue with all the different aspects in assigning subject headings. It can be noted that the issue on the "importance of library policies and procedures in assigning subject headings", "familiarity about the library users", "importance of determining the subject through the different parts of library materials", "knowledge on the grammar of subject headings", and "knowledge on the types of headings" had the highest mean respectively and this implies that their practice on these aspects of assigning subject headings was barely an issue or a concern. Even though the issues and concerns are moderate, there could be root factors, and these could be attributed to: 1) lack of institutional library policies and procedures in subject cataloging; 2) presence of cataloging manual but it is incomprehensive, or other instructions are unclear; 3) lack of knowledge on the diverse library users, and being new to the library as a workplace; 4) lack of time in analyzing and determining the subject content from the different parts of the material; 5)

unable to remember the principles on the grammar, and types of headings on the part of the cataloger; and lastly 6) the attitude of the cataloger in assigning the appropriate subject headings.

In addition, the catalogers aired their issues and concerns during the interview such as: 1) difficulty in applying the rule, especially if the material is about the technicalities or specialties in a particular field; 2) use of the new editions of commercial subject heading tools which create inconsistencies and confusions on the part of library users; and 3) the practice on the use of scope notes which is unfamiliar to most catalogers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Cataloging evolved over the past years; however, some questioned its importance in the library as one of the major functions. Others believed that the level of work has declined into clerical work due to copylogging practice. However, catalogers defended the current practice in cataloging as a librarian's technical or professional work. Catalogers earned their license as professional librarians, which is proof that they are experts in cataloging and classification. One of the categories in cataloging is subject access, and this is an important factor in the discoverability of information resources in the library which is a task performed in subject cataloging. The library users are then the primary beneficiaries.

Overall, the respondents know the principles of subject cataloging, the grammar, and code of relationships of subject headings, the type of subject headings, and subject authority. However, they also raised issues or concerns such as the agreement to these principles, perception on the purpose of subject cataloging, the attitude of the cataloger in performing the task. The study recommends innovative ways to improve the subject authority file of libraries to maintain its consistency of terms used as subject headings, add new terms relevant to the courses offered by the school, eliminate terms that are vague or synonymous. Also, further study is conducted to augment this study, particularly the causes of issue or concern of library

practitioners in the different aspects of subject headings. Finally, Libson (1985) reminded the catalogers to develop, maintain, and continue to update the subject headings and cross-references in their libraries along with the established subject authority tools.

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