

2004–05 Completed Research Grant Project

¶1 The AALL Research Grant Program funds projects of value to those professions that create, disseminate, or use legal and law-related information. The program aims to stimulate a diverse range of scholarship in any format. Areas for potential research may include, but are not limited to, those described in the Association’s Research Agenda.¹ The program is administered by the AALL Research Committee, which oversees two research funds: the AALL/Aspen Publishers Research Grant Program, made possible through a \$50,000 contribution from Aspen Publishers, and the AALL Research Fund, established with an endowment of \$100,000 from LexisNexis.

¶2 A final report for one completed research project was delivered to the Research Committee in 2004–05: Kelly Browne, “The Emotional Intelligence of Law Librarians.” An abstract of this report is provided below; the full report is available from the committee upon request.

The Emotional Intelligence of Law Librarians

¶3 Studies have shown that emotional intelligence is an important factor in being successful in life and that certain patterns of the thirteen qualities² that make up your “EQ” contribute to success in specific career areas. Many employers, including law firms, use EQ tests to make hiring and promotion decisions. Job seekers use EQ assessments to determine which careers would best suit them or to identify skills they need to develop to succeed in a desired position.

¶4 At the 2003 AALL Annual Meeting, I coordinated a program³ in which an expert on emotional intelligence described the EQ profiles of successful academic law librarians in three positions: cataloger, reference librarian, and director.⁴ Three people in each position had been tested and their profiles compared to an “ideal” EQ profile developed via interviews with persons responsible for hiring candidates in each position.⁵

¶5 Previous studies using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) concluded that there are personality differences between librarians and the general

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1. Am. Ass’n of Law Libraries, AALL Research Agenda (2000), *reprinted in* AALL DIRECTORY AND HANDBOOK 2004–2005, at 515, *available at* <http://www.aallnet.org/committee/research/agenda.asp>.
 2. The thirteen elements of emotional intelligence are: (1) stress; (2) optimism; (3) self-esteem; (4) commitment to work; (5) attention to detail; (6) emotional energy; (7) desire for change; (8) courage; (9) self-direction; (10) assertiveness; (11) tolerance; (12) consideration for others; and (13) sociability.
 3. Maximize Career Success by Evaluating “Emotional Intelligence,” program presented at 96th Annual Meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries, Seattle (July 13, 2003) (audiotape available from Mobiltape Co.).
 4. A commercial assessment tool, the Simmons Personal Survey, was used to test the law librarians’ EQ. The Simmons Personal Survey is administered in two parts. On part 1, persons check any of 360 adjectives, stating how they think others feel about them. On part 2, they check any of 360 adjectives that describe how they feel about themselves. For more information on the survey, including validity studies, see Simmons Management Systems, <http://www.eqhelp.com> (last visited June 1, 2005).
 5. The nine librarians tested were identified by those interviewed to create the “ideal” EQ profile.

population, and between librarians working in subspecialties of the information science field.⁶ The EQ profiles developed for the 2003 AALL program, albeit based on an extremely small sample, indicated the same was true for academic law librarians. For example, the catalogers in the 2003 sample had a significantly lower average stress score (2.45 on a scale of 0 to 10) than the reference librarians (4.33) and the directors (4.5).⁷ As might be expected, the 2003 sample catalogers' attention to detail score (5.55) was higher than the average scores of directors (3.83) and reference librarians (2.46),⁸ while the traits that set the directors apart from the others in the 2003 sample were high emotional energy (6.36)⁹ and desire for change (7.73) scores.¹⁰

¶6 After the program, many commented that further research on the EQ of law librarians in different work environments would be valuable. An AALL/Aspen research grant allowed me to expand the study and survey a total of sixty law librarians, ten in each of six job categories: the three job categories mentioned above and large firm librarians, small firm librarians, and academic IT directors. Nominations for the best or most successful individuals in each of the six positions were solicited on law-lib and other law library-related discussion lists. The most-nominated individuals were invited to participate in the study. A consultant was hired to proctor the survey and convey the results to me identified by job position only.¹¹ I was not able to link survey results with the individual who took the test.

¶7 Survey results from the sixty-law librarian study, though not statistically significant, show a pattern similar to the 2003 sample.¹² Catalogers again had the lowest average stress score (3.67), and academic law library directors the highest

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6. See, e.g., Mary Jane Scherdin & Anne K. Beaubien, *Shattering Our Stereotype: Librarians' New Image*, LIBR. J., July 1995, at 35.
 7. The catalogers in the 2003 sample were also, on average, less optimistic (3.85) than the reference librarians (4.13) and directors (4.2). We theorized that this was because good catalogers need to be able to point out and correct problems.
 8. At first the reference librarians' lack of attention to detail surprised and alarmed us, but then we speculated that a good reference librarian should be able to grasp the "big picture" of a patron's inquiry and point them to relevant resources quickly. Too much attention to detail can cloud the real research issue.
 9. The directors' average emotional energy score was 6.36, indicating very active, energetic individuals who handle high stress well and recover quickly. The reference librarians also scored higher than the general population (5.86), signifying they prefer an above average pace. The catalogers scored an average of 5.4, indicating that while they can think and move moderately fast, they may tire gradually under high stress and recover somewhat slowly.
 10. Directors in the 2003 sample also expressed a high desire for change, scoring an average of 7.73. Such a high change score showed that these directors are creative and open to new ideas and projects. They are bored with routine tasks and seek variety. We speculated that this characteristic may be what enables a manager's requisite "vision," that is, the ability to look ahead and imagine possibilities for the future. The reference librarians and catalogers also scored higher than the general population, averaging 7.65 and 6.5, respectively.
 11. The consultant, Susan Freeman, was also the expert who spoke on emotional intelligence at the 2003 Annual Meeting Program.
 12. Many thanks to Mary Pinar, public services librarian at Sacramento County Public Law Library, for designing and implementing the Access database and Excel spreadsheets used to analyze the data.

(5.04).¹³ Solo firm librarians were the second most stressed group (4.9), followed by large firm directors (4.69), IT directors (4.5), and reference librarians (4.48).

¶8 The most optimistic group was large firm directors, with a score of 6.025.¹⁴ Large firm directors also had the highest average commitment to work score, at 7.49,¹⁵ and even surpassed the catalogers as the most detail-oriented group (7.18).¹⁶ They were also the most considerate toward others (5.63).¹⁷ From this we can deduce that a successful large firm director must be optimistic, hard-working, detail-oriented, and considerate.

¶9 Emotional energy again set the academic directors apart from the rest, with an average score of 5.69. Reference librarians were the second most energetic at 5.49, followed by IT directors (5.29), large firm directors (5.22), and solo firm librarians (5.05). Catalogers again were the least energetic, with an average score of 4.99.

¶10 The biggest difference between the 2003 sample and the 2004 survey was the average desire for change scores. Academic library directors did not have the highest change score, but the next to the lowest (6.66). While the catalogers again had the lowest desire for change score at 6.17, all the change scores were quite high. Reference librarians now showed the highest change score (6.95), followed closely by solo firm librarians (6.93), large firm librarians (6.76), and IT directors (6.67). This indicates that a successful law librarian in any position must have an above average desire for change.

¶11 As might be expected, academic library directors had the highest average self-direction score (5.55), followed by IT directors (5.425) and large firm directors

13. From this we hypothesized that people who choose to become catalogers do so in part because cataloging is less stressful than reference work or management. In contrast, reference librarians and directors need a job with a moderate degree of pressure and stress to be fulfilled.

14. Followed by academic library directors, with an average score of 5.6125. Perhaps this indicates that to lead and encourage others a good manager needs to see the world in a positive light. IT directors were the most pessimistic group of all (4.425), followed by catalogers (4.5). Solo firm librarians and reference librarians fell in the middle of the optimism scale, at 4.8625 and 4.925, respectively.

15. Catalogers were the second hardest workers (6.42), followed by academic library directors (6.26), reference librarians (6.11), and solo firm librarians (5.5). The group with the least commitment to work was IT directors, whose average score was 5.46. We speculated that this may be because the IT directors polled were not necessarily librarians. IT directors can work in almost any setting. Law librarians may be more committed to working in law libraries.

16. Followed by catalogers (6.37), academic library directors (5.89), reference librarians (5.73), solo firm librarians (5.48), and IT directors (5.46).

17. Followed by academic directors (4.93), solo firm librarians (4.86), catalogers (4.76), and IT directors (4.21). Reference librarians were the least considerate group, with an average score of 4.15. This perhaps surprising result could be explained by several factors. The reference librarian group was the only group that consisted solely of women. Their average age was more than forty and their average tenure in the profession was between ten and fifteen years. Women older than forty consistently score lower than men in consideration for others on EQ tests. We speculate that this is because traditionally women were raised to put others' needs ahead of their own, but by the time they reach forty, women start to consider their own needs more than those of others. Perhaps when these reference librarians entered the profession they were very considerate, but have simply grown less considerate as the years progressed. Or perhaps a reference librarian who is too considerate would not be successful because patrons would take advantage of them.

(5.3),¹⁸ indicating their need for the ability to form opinions, set goals, and make decisions.¹⁹

¶12 IT directors were the most assertive (5.85),²⁰ the most sociable (5.31),²¹ and had the highest courage score (5.725)²² of the groups. Perhaps this combination of characteristics is necessary for an IT director to communicate well with diverse constituencies. IT directors were also the least tolerant (5.04),²³ most pessimistic (4.425), and the least detail-oriented (5.46) of the groups, characteristics needed to be able to anticipate and recognize problems and to see the “big picture” that is vital to an academic library IT director.

¶13 Solo firm librarians were the second most assertive (5.83) and second most sociable (5.29) of the groups, and they had the most self-esteem (5.92). These characteristics would seem to help solo firm librarians interact well with both attorneys and paraprofessionals. Solo firm librarians had the second highest change score (6.93), and were the least self-directed (4.9), indicating that, like reference librarians, they are happiest when their job involves a variety of duties.

Kelly Browne²⁴

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18. Solo firm librarians were the least self-directed (4.9), followed closely by reference librarians (4.925). Catalogers were the most self-directed of the nonmanagement groups, with an average score of 5.18.
 19. Academic library directors, however, were the least assertive (5.21) and most tolerant (6.58) of the groups, perhaps reflecting the academic directors' discourse with law school faculty. Large firm librarians were the second least assertive (5.36) and second most tolerant (6.50) of the groups, perhaps reflecting their discourse with law firm partners. Large firm directors (3.73) and academic library directors (4.79) also had the lowest self-esteem scores of the groups. Solo firm librarians had the most self-esteem (5.92), followed by IT directors (5.31), reference librarians (4.96), and catalogers (4.84).
 20. Solo firm librarians were the second most assertive (5.83) of the groups, followed by catalogers (5.70), and reference librarians (5.55).
 21. Solo firm librarians were the second most sociable of the groups (5.29), followed by catalogers (5.14), reference librarians (4.94), academic library directors (4.60), and large firm directors (3.95).
 22. Large firm directors were the second most courageous of the groups (5.0625), followed by academic library directors (5.05), reference librarians (5.0125), catalogers (5.0), and solo firm librarians (4.95).
 23. Reference librarians were the second least tolerant of the groups (5.78), followed by catalogers (6.13) and solo firm librarians (6.39).
 24. Assistant Director for Public Services, Sacramento County Public Law Library, Sacramento, California.