

## **Assessing the Compliance of Special Libraries towards Malaysian's 2010 Special Library Guidelines**

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DOI: 10.24191/aclim.v1i2.9

Received: 15/12/2020/ Accepted: 08/06/2021 / Published Online: 30/11/2021

**Abstract:** The Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) has published Special Libraries Guidelines 2010 (SLG 2010) to guide and reference special libraries in managing and adequately administrating the library. Providing special libraries with planning guides and evaluation measurements is the primary purpose of SLG 2010 development. Yet, no study was conducted to measure whether Special Libraries in Malaysia adhere to SLG 2010. Therefore, it is important to conduct a study to identify whether the special libraries in Malaysia comply with SLG 2010. This study attempts to assess the extent of compliance with SLG 2010 by two selected special libraries in Malaysia. The study examines libraries' compliance with SLG 2010 in four areas: budgets, human resources, services, and promotion. The interview, document analysis, and observation methods were used to gather data on the degree of compliance with SLG 2010 by the chosen special libraries. The investigation discovered that the two chosen special libraries are typically out of compliance with SLG 2010. The research revealed many factors contributing to SLG 2010 non-compliance, including a lack of knowledge about SLG 2010, top management decision-making, outdated guidelines, and guidelines authority. The findings of this research will assist the responsible authority in taking steps to raise the degree of SLG 2010 compliance among Malaysia's special libraries.

**Keyword:** Special Library Guidelines 2010, Compliance Towards Guidelines, Library Budgeting, Library Human Resource, Library Services, Library Marketing

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

A key aspect of standards or policy is providing a common language to evaluate and assess performance, make interoperability of components made by different companies possible, and protect consumers by ensuring safety, durability, and market equity. Library standards are the heart of the library to ensure the library can provide the information resources, facilities, and services needed by its users. The standard designed to guide libraries in developing and supporting their role in achieving their own or their organization's missions and positioning libraries as leaders in assessment and continuous improvement on their organization. It is the root of success for the library to become more competitive in this technology world. The standards are structured to provide a comprehensive framework using an outcomes-based approach, with evidence collected in ways most appropriate for each institution. Weingand (2001) has stated that standards are those statements, regardless of length, that articulate the library's position on philosophy and operations. Standards differ from the objectives and rules, and procedures. The library standard aims to offer their users library resources, services, and facilities that are equitable, accessible, cost-effective, and efficient. Library standards set the parameters of the library's daily operation. The careful and creative creation of practical library standards offers both challenges and opportunities in this time of quick change.

This study attempts to assess the extent of compliance with *Special Libraries Guidelines 2010* (SLG 2010) by selected special libraries in Malaysia. SLG 2010 serves as a valuable guide and reference for special libraries in Malaysia. The study was carried out to evaluate whether the selected special libraries fulfill the SLG 2010 specifications for library budgeting, human resources, library services, and library promotion. Additionally, this study evaluates the practices employed by the selected special libraries in managing their collections if they are not refer to SLG 2010. Seeing as standards or guidelines should always be updated regularly, research or surveys should be conducted to determine SLG 2010's weaknesses and strengths. It is possible to improve and amend standards since the involved parties can pinpoint the standards' weaknesses. The purpose of this study is to determine the level of compliance of SLG 2010 with the two special libraries and then clarify the guidelines or procedures these two libraries are using when they're not complying with SLG 2010. This study allows us to look at the SLG 2010 guidelines in more detail, and the degree to which the selected libraries complied with them. The final result may allow the PNM and special library management in Malaysia to recognize the SLG 2010 compliance among selected special libraries. In general, these findings indicate how closely special libraries adhere to the SLG 2010. The findings of this study suggest that the guidelines are both valuable and accommodating in special libraries.

The following section reviews the literature on Special Libraries, Malaysia Special Libraries Guidelines 2010, and the four SGL 2010 areas that will be discussed in this paper. Section #3 discusses the method that this paper adopts. The discussion follows in Section #4 and section #5 concludes the paper.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Special Library**

Previous research findings conducted by the American Library Association (ALA) (1966), the special library services are limited to furthering the organization's objectives, and the library's collection is restricting by the subject areas of particular interest of the organization. Special libraries provide a client-focused and increasingly diverse information service. The services are designed to meet the needs of the community it serves. Specific guidelines or standards for special library services need to develop as part of the library district's long-range plan. The critical problem with non-compliance to the library standards may result in the library's services offered may not meet library users' needs.

The exact number of special libraries in Malaysia is unknown because most special libraries in private organizations are not reported and registered under PNM. For government agencies, court/law, and research/training institute libraries under government supervision, the PNM has published a statistic in the PNM Statistic Report 2018. The table below provides the summary statistics for special libraries under government supervision in Malaysia:-

<b>Type of Library</b>	<b>Total Library</b>
Government Agency Library	109
Academic Library (Polytechnic/ Community Collage/ Matric Collage/ IPG)	159
Training Institute / Research Institute Library	99
Court/ Law Library	43
Medical Library (Hospital/ Training Institute / Health Institute)	87
Safety Institute Library	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>557</b>

## **Malaysia Special Libraries Guidelines 2010**

Malaysia Special Libraries Guidelines 2010 (SLG 2010) are a set of guidelines developed by Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia (PNM) to promote the continued development of high-quality library services, particularly in ministry and government agency libraries. This guideline superseded the 2001 version to create more stable and up-to-date policies that are compatible with current information and technology. This guideline addresses eight areas of special library management: library administration and management, human resources, user services, collection development, information communication and technology, physical facilities, promotion, and library cooperation.

To ensure consistency in the management of special libraries in Malaysia, SLG 2010 serves to assist libraries in Malaysia in providing accurate and timely information service via a systematically organized collection, playing a role as information provider, and promoting the principles of ethical standards of the library profession. Regardless of the ongoing development and updating of SLG, the level of compliance of selected special libraries with SLG 2010 may not be measurable. SLG 2010's primary objective is to provide planning guides and evaluation metrics for special libraries. administration and resources, but no study has been conducted to determine the prevalence of the SLG 2010 in Malaysian special libraries. This study aims to quantify and assess Malaysian Special Library's compliance with SLG 2010, focusing on four areas outlined in SLG 2010:-

- a) Library budgeting;
- b) Human resources;
- c) Library services; and
- d) Library promotion.

## **Library Standard Assessment**

Typically, the assessment is used in the library field to determine the effectiveness, benefits, and drawbacks of library programs and activities: Jr (1990) found that the field of library assessment has evolved from looking strictly at resource inputs for examples budgets, staffing levels to an examination of organizational processes such as efficiency, levels and quality of service outputs (e.g., number of circulations, reference questions) and library impact on institutional goals (e.g., student achievement, user satisfaction). Hockenberry and Little (2013) express creating an assessment plan can provide qualitative and quantitative results. In comparison, librarians would emerge with knowledge about how to improve their services and library collections. Taken together, these studies indicate that the library should be evaluated on all levels, including management, staffing, and services offered apart from measuring effectiveness. The assessment outcome will provide evidence of the library's current state of practice and aid the library in making improvements. Obille (2007) examine similarities and differences of existing standards for academic libraries in the Philippines. The author make an argument on the perceived accuracy, applicability, and relevance of these standards to the present educational system. The comparison of two standard which are the Philippine Association of Academic and Research Libraries (PAARL) standards for Academic Libraries, and the accreditation standards from Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) and Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

In specific, this study demonstrates that library standards focus primarily on features such as collection, staffing requirements, physical facilities, and services offered. Additionally, there is a lack of emphasis on efficient service and efficient use of library resources and output in terms of the teaching-learning process, which the library should actively participate in. This stud has revealed that the CHED minimum requirements for libraries specified in the curricular guidelines for individual courses vary in terms of space requirements, collection size requirements, and the manner in which the guidelines are outline. PAASCU, PACUCOA, and PAARL standards also differ in terms of the scope of their library requirements. Thus, the paper proposes that a greater emphasis be placed on the library's outputs in relation to the teaching-learning process in order to assist in producing more globally competitive graduates capable of effectively utilizing information in the so-called information age.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative case study method is used in this study to conduct research. The study will discover the true picture of selected special libraries in terms of their compliance with SLG 2010. It identified and analyzed the study's problem using the triangulation method. SLG 2010 was being used as a measurement instrument in this study. This guideline will serve as a foundation against which the researcher can compare the selected library administration and the standards they adhere to. Additionally, a semi-structured interview with the heads of librarians and supporting staff at two selected special libraries was conducted to obtain data and gain a better understanding of the subject discussed. In addition to these two methods, simple observation was used to elicit additional data. Two special libraries operated by Malaysian government agencies were chosen for this study as a sample. Both libraries can be classified as law or health libraries. Each library is required to present one or two individuals to respond to the research's questions.

### **4.0 FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

As indicated previously, this study aims to assess the degree of compliance of Malaysian special libraries with the SLG 2010 and to examine the practices followed by Malaysian special libraries in managing and administering their library. The most exciting finding of this study is that both of the selected libraries did not fully comply with the SLG guidelines. They must manage the library in accordance with the policies of their representative institution. This result may be explained because these two libraries do not adhere to any existing special library standards, but their administration and management practices will be determined mainly by top management. Additionally, because government agencies administer both libraries, they should indeed apply for and adhere to the government body's rules and regulations, such as PNM and SPA. They will be unable to manage the library efficiently and effectively without referring to the government-mandated legislation.

Another significant finding is that the budgets provided to both libraries are insufficient. Both libraries are underfunded due to their parent organization's allocation of library budgets. Financial management is critical for library administration, as well as for special libraries. Due to the library's status as a supporting unit within an organization, the budget allocates to them is insufficient to cover library expenses. Occasionally, the library's budget must be limited to purchase resources. In aspects of library human resources, the analysis focused on four areas: staffing standards, staffing size, the person qualified to become head of library, and planning for staff training and development programs. As a result, both libraries are in non-compliance of the SLG 2010 guidelines. Due to the fact that both libraries are run by government agencies, their representative institution was primarily responsible for human resource management. They are unable to meet the SLG 2010's overall requirement.

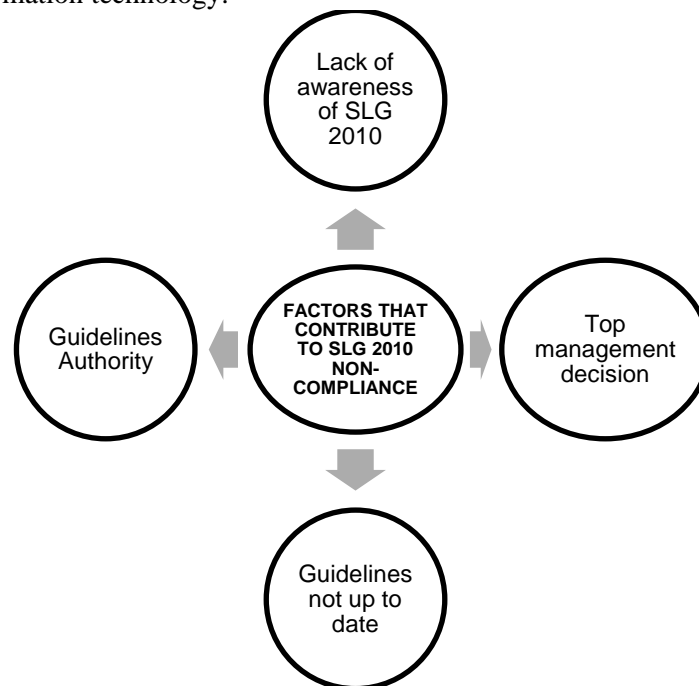
The analysis of library services revealed that the selected libraries weren't adhering with the SLG 2010. Both libraries do not offer all of the services listed in the SLG 2010. These libraries limit themselves to providing convenient services to their patrons. However, they offered additional services to their users due to the fact that both libraries are specialized in law and health. They provide services related to their area of expertise, such as updating the collection of legislation. The marketing and promotional program analysis reveals that both libraries are unable to implement all of the marketing activities recommended in the SLG 2010. According to one of the interviewee, as the library's mission is to serve legal practitioners, the marketing and promotional programme is unnecessary because they will always use the library resources and services, even without an effective marketing programme.

Additionally, for the reason that the library serves VVIP clients, they did not engage in extensive marketing activities to maintain client exclusivity. According to these data, we can infer that the selected libraries are aware of the SLG 2010. The comparative analysis indicated that this finding is contrary to the specification or requirement of the SLG 2010 which have suggested. It specified that

the selected special libraries' degree of compliance towards the SLG 2010 still in the middle level. Due to some obstruction, the libraries did not meet any of the requirements stated in SLG 2010.

### **Factors That Influence SLG 2010 Non- Compliance Among Selected Libraries**

According to The Institute of Internal Auditors (2004), compliance refers to conformity and adherence to policies, plans, procedures, laws, regulations, contracts, or other requirements. The standards serve as a guide for library boards and directors as they direct local long-range planning efforts. As for SLG 2010, PNM's outline these guidelines to assist libraries within government agencies in developing and managing their libraries in terms of staffing, services, collection development, and information technology.



*Figure 2: Factors that contribute to SLG 2010 non- compliance*

In summary, these findings indicate that four factors may contribute to non-compliance with SLG 2010 among special libraries. These factors include the following:-

**i. Lack of awareness of SLG 2010**

Despite the fact that the majority of special libraries in government agencies were provided with SLG 2010, they did not fully implement these guidelines. They are unaware of the significance of the guidelines or the benefits that will accrue from adhering to them. Additionally, the majority of them are unconcerned with implementing the elements of these guidelines because the library can survive without them or they can manage the library without them.

**ii. Top management decision**

The library has difficulty complying to this guideline because they demand approval from top management prior to implementing anything, particularly the four elements discussed in this study. Due to the fact that the majority of critical decisions, particularly regarding library staffing, library budgeting, library services, and marketing, are made by the top management, PNM should approach top management to ensure the library can adhere to the SLG 2010.

**iii. Guidelines not up to date**

Certain elements of the SLG 2010 are out of date, most notably the collection development guidelines, which omitted electronic sources. Due to the widespread use of electronic sources, the SLG 2010 should be reviewed, and electronic library resources should be included as library collections. The SLG 2010 committee must be vigilant for changed types of library resources and updating the guidelines accordingly.

**iv. Guidelines Authority**

SLG 2010 known as a guideline, not mandatory legislation for all libraries. It shows that compliance with these guidelines is neither necessary nor mandatory for the library. More importantly, even if PNM were to issue orders for the special library (especially the government library), it doesn't have the authority or the power to force the library to comply.

**Recommendation**

The three recommendation outlines presented in this study are:-

**i. Promoting SLG 2010 to all Special Libraries**

The accountable body, such as PNM, should actively promote SLG 2010. They may host a seminar or discussion and solicit input from other librarians on how to enhance the SLG 2010. The library may refer to this guideline to guarantee consistency in special library administration since it provides pertinent information. The possibility of a library adopting SLG 2010 is high if they are aware of the SLG 2010 existence. One respondent to this survey remarked that this guideline is really valuable, particularly for new libraries, since it may assist them in managing the library efficiently.

**ii. Suggest SLG 2010 to top management**

PNM may advise to the representative institution top management refer to SLG 2010 when making library-related decisions. Given their control over the library, they have the power to utilize and implement the SLG 2010 requirement as a basic foundation for decision-making.

**iii. Updating SLG 2010 based on the current situation**

The current data highlight the importance of updating SLG 2010 on a regular basis with new requirements, information, and library needs. It presents challenges for the library management to refer to the outdated guidelines. The responsible body should be vigilant to changes in the present scenario, particularly in the growth of information science and technology, in order to update the guideline in accordance with the current circumstances and library requirements for SLG 2010 to be applicable.

**5.0 CONCLUSION**

This study has found that generally, both selected special libraries are not complying with the SLG 2010 in managing and administrating their library. Awareness about SLG 2010 is there, yet they still have a barrier in implementing SLG 2010 in their library. The accountable body should make a greater effort to explain and promote this guideline to other special libraries. A seminar or forum related to SLG 2010, should be held to present this guideline and obtain feedback and suggestion from other librarians for further improvement. Apart from that, the PNM should recommend this guideline to the organization's top management since they are mainly responsible for the library's future. Given that a special library is only a supporting unit inside an organization, they often lack the authority to make decisions about their library; thus, the organization's top management may utilize SLG 2010 as a guide in administering the library.

Additionally, the SLG 2010 must be updated on a regular basis to fit current information and library requirements in order to remain relevant. It may propose that the future study might explore in other

types of special libraries. From there, we may be able to acquire a clearer idea of the SLG 2010's degree of compliance. Additionally, the future researcher needs to examine more closely other areas or facets of the SLG 2010.

In the future, it is hoped that this guideline can be adopted as a compulsory guideline to be followed in the special library administration and management. It may improve the standardization and consistency of the special library's management. On the other hand, the SLG 2010 should serve as a metric for determining the performance of a special library in delivering services and resources to its users.

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