Publication of the values of Spanish university libraries on their websites

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Abstract

The article aims to shed light on the values that guide professional practice in Spanish university libraries and the strategies deployed to publicise them on library websites. Identifying the statements that inform each library staff's behaviour called for analysing the corporate documents published on such sites. Value visibility and accessibility were assessed on the grounds of the length of the route from the home page. The prominence of the corporate document containing the information was also studied. The analysis initially revealed values relating to the administration of public assets, such as engagement with the institution, its services and users. That was followed by professional values such as defence of access to information, data and science. The values most frequently espoused were innovation and professionalism. Libraries are encouraged to define their values which, along with their mission and vision, are a significant component of their internal and external strategy and communication policy. Their publication, in turn, redounds to transparency and enhances the relationship with their target audience.

Keywords

Organizational communication; Library; Academic libraries; Web sites; Values statement; Transparency; Ethics; Profession; Professionals; Librarians.

1. Introduction

Martins and **Terblanche** (2003, pp. 65 and 67) define the culture of an organisation as the values and the deeply rooted and often subconscious beliefs shared by its staff, concluding that they are critical factors in the success of any organisation. The values of an organisation, together with the definitions of mission and vision, are important to direct and guide the people who are part of it. They are considered to be the pillar of any organisation, whether it is for profit or not. They represent the ideal principles of behaviour on which the organisational climate relies (**Valbuena**; **Morillo**; **Salas**, 2006). In a strategic framework they serve as an instrument to mobilise people toward a common purpose. They are also seen as vitalising elements of people's behaviour in achieving the goals of the organisation and, therefore, influence increase in productivity (**Dobni**; **Brent-Ritchie**; **Zerbe**, 2000; **Velasquez-de-Naime**; **Rodríguez-Monroy**; **Guaita**, 2012). A statement of values can also help an organisation attract better employees and generate more collaboration with similar institutions. Hence the interest for any organisation to define those values and communicate them to the wider world.

If organisations do not define, manage and disseminate these elements among their members, a lack of identity is created, which does not help to achieve a high level of identification or a solid corporate culture and identity (**Ramírez**; **Sánchez**; **Quintero**, 2005). There are different perspectives of this broad concept - organisational and communicational - and consequently the use of the qualifiers "organisational" and "corporate" that accompany the term identity, related to its treatment in the disciplines of strategic management and corporate marketing. Some see corporate identity as an explicit way of expressing organisational identity (**Powell** *et al.*, 2009). A mixed version considers identity as the set of attributes that members of an organisation use to describe it, including communication, behaviour and corporate symbolism as the most common elements that express its personality (**Pérez**; **Rodríguez-Del-Bosque**, 2014, p. 103). Among those attributes are the values and beliefs with which the organisation identifies.

> ' Values are communicated at any level of human relationships (among people, organisations, cultures, societies, economies …) although the most common way is through what is done and how it is done '

Values are studied from the viewpoint of any of the behavioural sciences (Sociology, Psychology), as well as other related sciences (Law, Administration, Politics). Depending on the area of study, the concept of value takes on different nuances and connections that at the same time complement each other. The ambiguity of the term has led some authors to make classifications of values, catering for human needs (**Gouveia**, 2003), or from other perspectives, both individually and culturally (**Jaén**, 2009).

Values are communicated at any level of human relationships (between people, organisations, cultures, societies, economies...) although the most common way is through what is done and how it is done. Every organisation has values, but they are not always written and announced and if they are, not all communicate and disseminate them properly, whether it be internally or externally. This fact can have a decisive influence when it comes to achieving both effectiveness in the organisation (**Poovathingal**, 2014), as well as suitable external relations to fulfill its aims. Hence, they have also been considered as an indicator of transparency in organisations (**Herranz-De-la-Casa**; **Cabezuelo-Lorenzo**, 2009). In particular, in the public sphere, **Gómez-Pereira** (2014, p. 19), attributes values in the transparency framework in management, accountability and responsibility, in the execution of the position held.

Communication of strategic identifiers, including values, to all employees of the organisation is considered essential to attract and retain workers and customers (**Paarlberg**; **Perry**, 2006). Websites have become a regular and ideal means of making them public, so declaring their intentions, both explicitly and implicitly (**Wenstop**; **Myrmel**, 2006). There is therefore a clear link between values and communication in offering members of the organisation information about their culture and, on a deeper level, enabling the socialisation and acceptance of values and thus sharing them (**Marañón-Rodríguez**; **Bauza-Vázquez**; **Bello-Rodríguez,** 2006).

University libraries are not unaware of the importance of such communication and they increasingly disseminate documents related to their organisational identity through various channels, including their websites (**Pacios**, 2003). It is the means by which its stakeholders can know what inspires their behaviour in the organisation, their know-how and the professional commitment of their staff. Alongside this, users of these services are increasingly empowered and require values and commitments.

This paper researches whether Spanish university libraries have announced values, recognized as constitutive elements of their work style and their organisational culture and identity, as well as the channels selected for formal communication through their websites. The identification of these values will allow people to know them, to see their typology and to see whether they follow the values declared in the deontological codes of the library associations, in particular the university ones.

2. Values in libraries

In the bibliography on management and administration of organisations definitions can be found of what should be understood by the term values and its difference with other related terms, such as principles or corporate culture. As example, Palom-Izquierdo and Tort-Raventós define values as:

> "a set of deep convictions or fundamental options that demonstrate the identity of an organisation, both in its internal life as well as in its relationship with the outside world" (**Palom-Izquierdo**; **Tort-Raventós**, 1991, pp. 86-87).

They serve to guide the activity of the organisation and arouse in individuals a style or way of behaving and acting that characterizes it. They relate to the leader's vision. Their objective is, therefore, to count on a reference framework that inspires and regulates the life of the organisation. They represent a management philosophy, a conceptual base from which to lead the organisation with influence over members' behaviour. **Allen** (1998) observed the differences in values between workers from different professional fields. They are therefore subject to cultures, professions and geographical areas.

If we stick to libraries, since the end of the last century some clear trends in the bibliography related to values have been observed. Some do not differ greatly from other areas of study and are summarised in the following points:

1) The interest in specifying the meaning of the term "value" and differentiating it from principles. From this perspective the value of a library has been defined as

> "synthesis of the principles, supreme models, guidelines, bearers of normative power, which are created and built as a result of a process of analysis and evaluation of social experiences and human agreements" (**Pérez-Pulido**, 2007, p. 14).

The author also indicates that they are characterized by their relativity, since they remain, are perfected, lose validity or disappear.

However, the consideration of these statements is sometimes evident under the double category of value and principle, which reveals an assimilation of both concepts. It happens for example with intellectual freedom, the basic principle on which the first code of ethics of the *American Library Association* (**Pérez-Pulido**, 2001) is based, but also declared as the main value by which others must be sustained, such as confidentiality or privacy (**Estrada-Vélez**, 2005; **Pérez-Pulido**, 2018).

2) The preoccupation in identifying and classifying values associated with the profession and services provided by libraries (**Allen**, 1998; **Branch**, 1998; **Berg**; **Jacobs**, 2016). Even more so during periods in which technological changes and their impact caused important modifications in the librarian profession (**Dole**; **Hurych**; **Koehler**, 2001; **González-Pérez** *et al.*, 2006). Donal Sager stated: "Without common values we are not a profession" (cited by **Flagg**, 2000, p. 81). This phrase reveals the need to guide members of the profession and help library staff develop their curriculum vitae, in addition to answering questions from the public.

Gorman (2001), based on his experience and literature on libraries, he identifies eight fundamental values linked to the profile of a reference librarian:

- administration (stewardship),
- service,
- intellectual freedom,
- rationalism,
- literacy and learning,
- equal access,
- privacy, and
- democracy.

Other works have focused on identifying the values that enjoy a greater reputation, through surveys aimed at librarians and those who in the future could become so (**Dole**; **Hurych**; **Koehler**, 2000; **Adebayo**; **Akole**; **Salau**, 2016). The results have allowed to see differences by country, especially among developed and developing countries, as well as influencing the professional category and role performed by the interviewee.

Pérez-Pulido (2018) classifies the values of information professionals into three types:

- traditional: those that are timeless and are maintained from the beginning (such as intellectual freedom);
- emergent: result of the evolution of society and new work environments (intellectual property);
- redefined: some traditional values but that have evolved as a result of new work systems (privacy and confidentiality).

3) Its relationship with ethics and codes associated to the profession. Libraries have a social mission and objectives that entail a series of added values. The tasks performed by professionals working on them involve ethical conduct, which implies the recognition that professionals dedicated to information management are morally responsible to themselves and to society as a whole. Additionally, as in the case at hand, libraries are services of public institutions, such as public universities. Therefore, the values are considered inherent to the public service profession, to public ethics, if the benefit of the community is pursued (**Chávez-Ramírez**; **Vargas-Hernández**; **Gómez-Ramírez**, 2014; **Diego-Bautista**, 2008). This is why it is necessary that they be integrated into the structures, processes and systems of organisations to make shared values an integral part of the public service culture (**Kernaghan**, 2003).

Although codes of ethics are an instrument for the promotion and development of values, they are not an end; that is, it is not enough to achieve their appearance (**Diego-Bautista**, 2008). It is necessary that there are people who disseminate, propagate and promote them, which is another argument to communicate them effectively and clearly.

Miller (2007, pp. 7-8) indicates that although ethical terms and values are often used interchangeably in literature on libraries, they are terms that have different meanings and contribute to discussion among professionals of those libraries in different ways. Miller distinguishes the values of ethics because, in his opinion, the former represent deep-rooted beliefs and ideals, while ethics and codes of ethics are established guidelines that attempt to describe standards and influence behaviour so that it meets those standards. On analysis of the bibliography from 114 articles, he identifies the presence of 298 values linked to library services. The ones that appeared with the highest frequency were:

- service,
- education and learning throughout life,
- professionalism, and
- access.

However, some such as diversity, public good, preservation, social responsibility, democracy, confidentiality / privacy and intellectual freedom, appeared less frequently than expected. Others, such as **Dutta** (2015), have established the relationship between the values of the libraries and the code of ethics of the country they belong to.

But it is in specific literature on library planning that reference to values is always found, delving into the form and method of writing them within the framework of strategic management, in particular when addressing the development of a strategic plan while the mission and vision are defined (**Nelson**, 2008). **Corrall** (1994) advises the participation of the library staff in its definition, and its acceptance by consensus. There are examples, such as *MIT* libraries, that demonstrate this process. Through its website, **Fay** (2017) indicates that the process of articulating the mission, vision and values was very collaborative and included a solid discussion throughout the organisation, in which any member had the opportunity to give their opinion, comment and discuss the proposals. Even other authors consider that its definition should also involve those who finance it (**Poustie**, 1999). **Nelson** (2008) also recommends auditing values, which would imply a review of policies, evaluation of library performance and the relationships between managers and employees, and indicates that they should be updated.

The primary library associations have been involved with defining and sharing values from an early stage through their codes of ethics. The *American Library Association* (*ALA*) is an example whose writing dates back to 1939 and has served to inspire many later texts. Professional associations have a set of core values that are displayed on their websites (*ALA*, 2019). The review of those published by the main international professional association (*IFLA*, 2012) and by other national ones from several countries (*ALIA*, 2007; *Cilip*, 2017; *Fesabid*, 2013) allow the identification of more differences than similarities, at least regarding to the denominations they use. The common values obseved by all are:

- access to information,
- service,
- quality,
- intellectual freedom,
- professionalism, and
- diversity.

In the set of values that they assemble (shared and not shared) there are those that remain over time and others that have been incorporated in response to the concerns and changes in society. Some refer to the library as an institution, others focus on the behaviour of librarians and others are related to the characteristics of library services.

In particular, if taking into account the values of the associations and specific networks of university, academic, research and specialized libraries [*Association of College and Research Libraries* (*ACRL*, 2018), *Special Libraries Association* (*SLA*, 2018) and the *Red Española de Bibliotecas Universitarias* (Spanish University Libraries Network) (*Rebiun*, 2012a)], it is observed that they assume fundamental values present in the main library associations referred to above (e.g. equality, intellectual freedom, etc.), but they also add other definitions of their mission (e.g. scientific communication and Open Access).

In summary, the attention to some of these values demonstrates the evolution of libraries and their particular way of seeing the profession, according to territories and cultures. A number of values that are reaffirmed by their presence in all the aforementioned associations - conservative, traditional or timeless values - and by remaining nuclear in successive updates. At the same time, other new ones appear described as modern and open to emerge in order to respond to changes in the functions and procedures that society imposes. Taking this into account, two types of values can be established (table 1):

- conservative (also called traditional, nuclear): matching and characteristic of public institutions (**Kernaghan**, 2003; **Chávez-Ramírez**; **Vargas-Hernández**; **Gómez-Ramírez**, 2014) that respect the values outlined by professional associations;
- modern and open to change, also adopted by professional associations, which are close to those declared by corporations and companies, such as creativity and innovation (**Lencioni**, 2002; **Poovathingal**, 2014).

The recent literature on values also classifies them -whether conservative or modern- into three subclasses:

- professionals: those strictly related to activity;
- democratic: those that seek the good of society;
- ethical: those intimately related to the citizen as an individual.

Table 1. Typology of values in libraries (conservative and modern)

Conservative			Modern		
Professionals	**Democratic**	**Ethical**	**Professionals**	**Democratic**	**Ethical**
–Continuous training –Conservation and preservation –Excellence in service –Professionalism –Quality –Impartiality in the purchase and evaluation of resources –Loyalty and institutional commitment	–Free and egalitarian universal access –Collaboration / cooperation –Public good –Respect for human rights –Intellectual property –Copyright –Social responsibility	–Confidentiality and privacy –Intellectual freedom –Freedom of expression –Respect for diversity –Integrity –Impartiality –Transparency and multiculturalism	–New ideas and global perspective –Innovation –Leadership –Acceptance of change –Training and educational technology	–Results and accountability –Scientific communication –Open Access	–Transparency –Against bullying and harassment of any kind

3. Methodology

In order to show a perspective of the values linked to the work of librarians that the Spanish university libraries communicate through their website, as well as the way to do it in terms of accessibility and visibility, in this research the following methodology has been followed:

1) Choice of the sample of libraries that would be the object of the study. The 50 public universities that are part of the *Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias Españolas (*Spanish University Library Network, *Rebiun*) were chosen. The selected libraries share common aspects: they maintain collaborative links through this network and their financing depends on public funds. As services of a public institution, professionals who develop their activity in these libraries are obliged to retain transparency in their management as a principle that inspires the code of conduct of public employees (*Real decreto legislativo (Royal Legislative Decree)* 5/2015, of 30 October, which approves the consolidated text of the *Ley del estatuto básico del empleado público* (*Law on the basic statute of the public employee*)). The observance of this principle was supposed to also influence a greater predisposition to communicate these statements, if it is considered that their activities are subject to greater public visibility (**Martín-Castilla**, 2006, p. 29). In addition, it was considered that they should all the same share values as public services in their professional performance and in their relationships with the users.

2) Search for and exploration of values on each library's website, developed in January 2019. The search for statements was performed through the hyperlinks that group corporate documents made accessible by libraries. From the homepage of the library the links and the information they contained were reviewed. When it was not found in this way, a search using the term "values" was performed through the search engine of the website.

3) Collection and classification of values. As they were identified on each website, they were collected in an *Excel* spreadsheet to detect the most common ones, those with the least presence and those that were ignored (according to the codes of the profession), as well as to recognize coincidences and variations in the terminology used and facilitate the results count.

4) Analysis of the websites on which they are published, evaluating their navigation path based on the number of clicks and their relationship with the document or page where they are located in order to assess their visibility and accessibility. Visibility was considered as the information that is easily accessible and is located in a clearly perceptible place (**Norman**, 1988). Taking this into account, it was described as "visible" when the link where these statements are located uses this term and allows its rapid location.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Number and form of localized values

The 62 published values that were collected correspond to 27 (54%) libraries out of the 50 that make up the sample (the list of libraries in which values were found on their website is shown in the Annex). For the remaining libraries (23) it was not possible to find any of these statements.

Regarding how to communicate these 62 values, three ways are detected:

- simple enumeration (e.g., quality, user orientation);
- explanatory enumeration (e.g., quality: offer our users outstanding services);
- exhaustive explanatory enumeration, including allusive terms or related to the principles it is based on (e.g., to recognize the uniqueness of each user and respect their right to privacy).

In only one case, that of the *Universidad de Cádiz*, the library groups them according to classification: law, relations, and organisation and operation (e.g., in the area of rights: equality, justice and equity).

The number of explicit values in the 27 libraries ranges from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 16, with 9 being the number of values that are declared in a greater number (7) of libraries (graph 1).

4.2. Visibility and accessibility of values

The search and location of the values indicates that, according to the title and place of the link used for its publication, most libraries do not have good visibility. The term "values" only appears literally in the link in 3.53% of
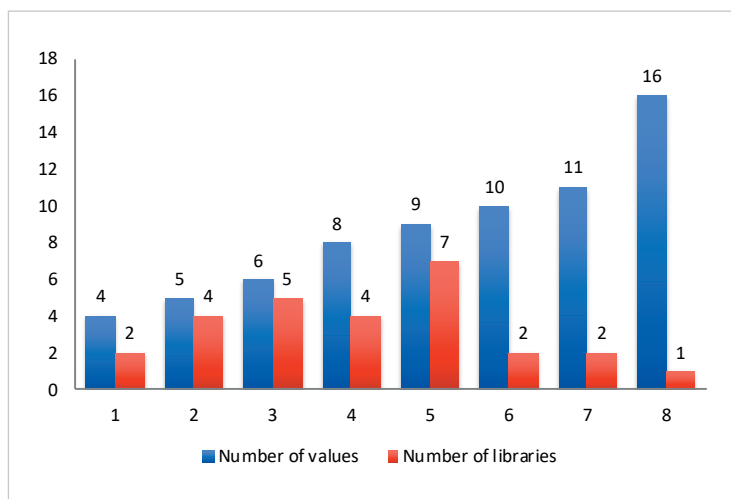
Graph 1. Coincidence in the number of values that libraries communicate

the libraries. The location that would give them greater visibility is when they appear linked to the mission and vision of the library, as they are statements formulated regularly when developing a strategic plan, as well as values. However, it happens that only if the person looking for the values knows the terminology of the strategic plan, can they easily locate them if the link does not explicitly contain this term. For example, it is possible when the library has a strategic plan, a document in which, generally, the values are defined.

> The location with the greatest visibility is when they appear linked to the mission and vision of the library, as they are statements formulated regularly when developing a strategic plan, as are values

In general, to reach the values it is necessary to go through links that group documents related to management, some in particular with quality management. In certain cases, they were able to be located in more than one site or document (e.g. Strategic plan, List of services and Regulations). There are also libraries that have an ethical code (e.g. from *Cádiz*, *Córdoba*, *Granada*, *Sevilla*, *La Laguna*, *Valladolid* and *UNED*) or, because they belong to a community with a professional association that has an ethical code (e.g. Catalan universities), they subscribe to it through a link that allows access to its content from the library website.

In relation to the visibility of these statements, and therefore with the characteristics or elements that enable and facilitate their location, the most common starting link -and that which gives access to other links to pages in which the values are located- is on the the library homepage and contains general information about it. Examples are titles such as "About us ", "The library", "About the library", "General information", "Introduction", "Find us". *UNED* is the only case that appears under the title "Transparency".

Once this first link is opened the casuistry is diverse (table 2):

- in 9 libraries the link is shared with the mission and/or the vision; when the same term is displayed on the link it is very easy to locate the values, this being the most suitable method of communicating them and therefore the recommended one. Only in 2 libraries were they found under the mission and vision link, in spite of the term value not being used therein;
- in 8 libraries they were in the documents corresponding to the strategic plans or action plans;
- in 6 they were located within the list of services;
- other locations are related to links that contain management documents, such as service reports or quality assessment reports.

Accessibility, overshadowed by poor visibility, could be described as average considering that the navigation path to reach these statements in most cases does not exceed 2 clicks: 41% require 2, 34.4% do so through 3, 13.70% of 4. Only in one library, the one from *Burgos*, was it necessary to use the search engine to locate them.

An element that usually accompanies the statement of values is the date of adoption or update, although in 9 cases it does not appear. Globally on those cases, the dates go from 2001 to 2017, which it gives an idea of its updating.

Table 2. Location of the values on the websites of university libraries, according to title of the link (visibility) and the number of clicks for access (accessibility).

Name of the links (and navigation path to follow) in which the value statements are located
1. Links that present the term values (greater visibility)
About us > Mission and values
About us > Mission, vision, values and users
About us > Evaluation and quality > Mission, vision and values
About us > *CRAI* > Strategy and quality > Mission, vision and values
Documents > Strategy, quality, regulation > Mission, vision and values
Introduction > Library and quality > Mission, vision and values
Transparent library > List of services > Mission, vision and values
General information > quality management > Mission, vision and values
About the library > Quality and library > Mission, vision and values
2. Values under the mission and vision links without using the term values
Information > Mission and vision
About us > Strategy, quality, regulations > Mission and vision

3. Values in the list of services
Evaluation and quality - Documents > List of services
What do we do > List of services
The library > List of services
About us > Mission and activity > List of services
Find us > Corporate commitment > Normative, regulations and rules of use > List of services
4. Values in planning related documents
About us > Strategic planning
The library > Regulations > Strategic plan
Library > Strategy and quality > Action plan
About us > Management and organisation > Strategy
General information > Documents about the library > Strategic plan
The library > Strategic planning > Strategic plan
About us > Strategic planning > Period 2014-16
About us > Management and regulations > Quality management > Strategic plan
5. Other locations of values related to management documents
About the libraries > Management
General information > General introduction and regulations
Introduction > Regulations > Activities reports

4.3. Types of values that guide librarians of Spanish public universities

Identification of the 62 values shows that those with the greatest consensus among professionals in Spanish university libraries, with than 10 mentions, are: innovation (20), professionalism (14), access to information (13), cooperation (12), social responsibility (12), personal responsibility (12), continuous improvement (11) and quality (10).

Innovation is associated with the creation of new services or processes, and is a sign of change and renewal. Although innovation is not new in libraries, it could be considered an emerging value, fundamentally associated with technological changes (**Riaza-Chaparro**, 2014). Innovation being the most common value implies that these libraries are favourable to creativity and change. It is a value very related to others also present in the set such as teamwork and collaboration.

Professionalism is one of the main positive characteristics desired in all information professionals, regardless of the country in which they practice (**Yaya**; **Kikelomo**, 2015). It is an attitude related to the development of professional activity and the area of specialisation that implies commitment, conduct with and between people, inside and outside the workplace, in accordance with specific training received and following the socially established guidelines. One way of seeing someone's attitude is to value aspects such as the level of commitment to the assumed tasks, their dedication, solidarity with the people in their environment or the way they address customers, among other aspects. Bivens-Tatum indicates what it means to be professional:

> The values with the greatest consensus among university library professionals are: innovation, professionalism, access to information, cooperation, social responsibility, personal responsibility, continuous improvement and quality

> "...see ourselves in our library, but also the library, and see the library in the world" (**Bivens-Tatum**, 2008).

Access to information is one of the fundamental ethical values associated to librarians, given that it constitutes the main mission of the library, being traditionally linked to intellectual freedom (**Pérez-Pulido**, 2015). Access includes support for the principles of Open Access, open source and open licenses. Hence, it appears sometimes accompanied by the qualifications "open" and "free." In some countries concerned about transparency it is also a value connected to the codes of conduct of civil servants.

Cooperation related to collaboration -present in 5 libraries- has been essential for libraries that are part of networks, systems, consortiums or other forms of collaborative work to be able to count on materials and services that they cannot offer individually. It has been fundamental to improve global access to knowledge among librarians, even in cases where there could be a technological gap among libraries, as demonstrated in some experiences (**Onifade**; **Bridges**, 2016). Cooperation-collaboration has always been a priority among the objectives of libraries and for librarians. By sharing experience and building alliances it is possible to address common problems much more effectively than when working alone, as evidenced by some issues (e.g. copyright, preservation, etc.) (**Mark**, 2007).

Social responsibility is a value in line with the teaching and researching role of universities, committed to the transfer of knowledge to society. *Rebiun*'s report (2012b) on this topic indicates the concern for environmental, economic and social sustainability in the sense that the survival of universities and their libraries is connected to their economic viability, commitment to environmental sustainability and socially responsible performance (**Marraud**, 2013), reason enough to justify the adoption of this value by university libraries. Not to be overlooked is (personal) responsibility as the value of accepting and fulfilling what corresponds to the job in question, assuming the consequences of decisions and actions, something common to any worker of any organisation.

Continuous improvement and quality, closely related values, are very present in Spanish university libraries since *Aneca* in 2005 began its specific program of library evaluation (**Balagué**, 2007).

Other values that appear with less presence among the 62 located, after assimilating the different denominations used, but with the same or similar meaning, they reveal a wide range:

- some are mostly common to other work environments, such as those already mentioned: e.g. vocation of service, loyalty and institutional commitment, user orientation, training and professional development, equality, etc.;
- others, with clear less frequency, are more associated to the profession: e.g. copyright, intellectual property, information literacy, resolve information needs, communication with the user.

Although most identified values are shared by more than one library there are others that have only been adopted by one (e.g. honesty, respect, cordiality, plurality, integration, respect for people, respect for ideas, solidarity, leadership, self-demanding, versatility, and integrity).

In the collected values it can be observed that the majority of those already identified by Branch (1998) are present in the survey developed by university library professionals, which demonstrates their survival: customer service, respect for diversity of opinions, information literacy, cultural diversity, equality of access, copyright, confidentiality and neutrality, among others. Some are values that are also among those included in the codes of ethics of professionals from several countries, as **Pérez-Pulido** (2001) already observed, in particular of Spanish professionals (*Fesabid*, 2013). However, surprising is the absence of some such as preservation and conservation, traditional values associated to the librarian's work and in this case, because they are libraries that mostly have heritage collections (**Herrera-Morillas**, 2019). Only one library, that of the *Universidad Complutense* of Madrid, has a value called "heritage" that could be related to both. Others such as intellectual freedom, intellectual property and copyright have a low presence although, as understood through libraries with a code of ethics, they are considered principles that have served to guide the defined values with those the libraries work with.

A classification of the types of values identified addresses the following aspects:

- related to the good practice of the profession and its responsibilities (e.g. professionalism, impartiality, continuous training);
- with colleagues and professionals in the sector (teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, etc.);
- with the provision of service to users (e.g. satisfy their information needs, information literacy, user orientation, etc.);
- with information resources that they handle (access to information, visibility of research, data protection, etc.);
- with the institution which it depends on (institutional commitment, institutional loyalty);
- with society as a whole (social responsibility, sustainability).

However, any classification is likely to include values shared by more than a few categories. This is the case, for example, of excellence or transparency, two values that could be integrated by the categories of ethical and professional values.

5. Conclusions

Just over half of the libraries that make up the sample (54%) communicate their values through the internet, which does not imply that those that do not declared them on their website have not defined them or have adhered to those of the code of the parent institution or those from the professional association they identify best with. It is necessary to highlight the effort and commitment demonstrated by those who have chosen somehow to make them available them in this way.

> The identification of the 62 values in this group of university libraries shows the willingness to be transparent in the performance of the profession, in addition to promoting its organisational image

The identification of the 62 values in this group of 27 university libraries (out of a total of 50 analyzed) demonstrates the willingness to be transparent in the performance of the profession, in addition to promoting its organisational image as companies and organisations all types do. However, taking into account their visibility and accessibility, it follows that libraries do not always choose the most appropriate place to communicate these statements, resulting in it not being easy to locate them, and even more to those who are not familiar with planning. The list of documents found is varied: strategic plans, list of services, quality assessment reports, or annual reports, codes of ethics, in addition to those that appear in the general presentation pages of the library. Given the communicative nature of values, both internal and external, it is recommended the literal term be used in the link where they are located, in addition to doing so in the

mission and vision statements. In conjunction with these, a more complete image of the library be conveyed, following the example of many organisations.

The list of collected values shows that they cover a wide range, with a predominance of timeless ones. Most are common to other professions (continuous training, professionalism) and only a few are more related to this work environment (information literacy). There is also a combination of traditional values (professionalism, universal access, etc.), which are dominant, along with other modern values, values open to change and in clear harmony with the business world (innovation, leadership). In both groups the professional, democratic and ethical value types coexist. Based on their greater presence in the group, it can be stated that librarians agree to have innovation, cooperation and collaboration as their main guidelines, as well as the quality of the services they provide and their continuous improvement. All except one (continuous improvement) are included by those that display professional associations related to university libraries. Continuous improvement, despite its affinity with quality, is the only one that is not included in the aforementioned associations (*ACRL*, *SLA* and *Rebiun*).

> Most values are common to other professions (continuous training, professionalism) and only a few are more related to this work environment (information literacy)

Most of the values assumed by the librarians of these libraries are present in the code of ethics of Spanish professionals (*Fesabid*, 2013) although some have less presence than expected. The most frequent matching values in the set (innovation, professionalism, social responsibility, quality of service and loyalty to the organisation) combine tradition and modernity. The presence of other timeless values closely linked to this profession such as confidentiality, copyright and intellectual property, conservation and preservation is scarce.

University libraries are recommended to have explicit and declared values, with their definition and communication being, together with the mission and vision, elements of great strategic and communicative interest, both internal and external, because they provide advantages to any organisation. It is a way to be transparent and allow identification with their target audience. Values symbolise and represent them, differentiating them from others.

Annexe. List of universities whose libraries values were located on their website
Query made in January 2019

Universidad Autónoma de Madrid
http://biblioteca.uam.es/sc/mision_vision_valores2010.html

Universidad Complutense de Madrid
https://biblioteca.ucm.es/data/cont/docs/60-2015-01-26-PLAN%20ESTRATEGICO%20enero%202015.pdf

Universidad de Alcalá
http://biblioteca.uah.es/biblioteca/documentos/plan_2015-2017.pdf

Universidad de Burgos
https://www.ubu.es/la-biblioteca/sobre-la-biblioteca/q-bub-calidad-y-biblioteca/mision-vision-y-valores

Universidad de Cádiz
http://biblioteca.uca.es/mision-y-valores

Universidad de Cantabria
http://web.unican.es/buc/Documents/Normativa_formularios_varios/plan_estrategico_15_18.pdf

Universidad de Córdoba
http://www.uco.es/servicios/biblioteca/eyc/BIB-CS.pdf*

Universidad de Extremadura
http://biblioteca.unex.es/informacion-general/presentacion-y-normativa.html

Universidad de Granada
http://biblioteca.ugr.es/pages/biblioteca_ugr/evaluacion/efqm-500/memoria5002016renovacion/%21

Universidad de Jaén
http://www10.ujaen.es/conocenos/servicios-unidades/biblio/vision-mision-valores-usuarios

Universidad de La Laguna
https://www.ull.es/servicios/biblioteca/evaluacion-y-calidad/#mision-vision-valores

Universidad de Málaga
https://www.uma.es/publicadores/biblioteca/wwwuma/PlanEstrategicoDeLaBiblioteca_2013_2016.pdf

Universidad de Murcia
http://www.um.es/web/biblioteca/contenido/informacion/conocenos/vision

Universidad de Sevilla
https://bib.us.es//sites/bib3.us.es/files/pe_2020_def.pdf

Universidad de Zaragoza
http://biblioteca.unizar.es/conocenos/plan-estrategico-2013-2016-una-red-tu-servicio

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Universidad de Oviedo
http://buo.uniovi.es/descubrenos/compromisocorporativo/normativa

Universidad de Valladolid
http://biblioteca.uva.es/export/sites/biblioteca/1.informaciongeneral/1.7.sistemasdegestiondecalidad/1.7.04.misionevaluacionyvalores/index.html

Universidad Miguel Hernández
http://biblioteca.umh.es/files/2011/01/MEMORIA-2015.2016-BIBLIOTECAS.pdf

Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED)
http://portal.uned.es/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/UNED_MAIN/BIBLIOTECA/TRANSPARENCIA/PLAN16_20.PDF

Universidad Pública de Navarra
http://www2.unavarra.es/gesadj/servicioBiblioteca/Carta_de_Servicios.pdf

Universidade de Santiago de Compostela
http://www.usc.es/export9/sites/webinstitucional/gl/servizos/biblioteca/descargas/plan-estratexico.pdf

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
http://www.uab.cat/web/coneix-les-biblioteques/gestio-1345725892258.html

Universitat d´Alacant
https://rua.ua.es/dspace/bitstream/10045/12832/1/plan_estrategico_SIBID_07_09.pdf

Universitat de Barcelona
http://crai.ub.edu/ca/coneix-el-crai/estrategia-qualitat/missio

Universitat de les Illes Balears
https://biblioteca.uib.cat/digitalAssets/175/175405_693_carta_serveis_SBD-SGQ-D001__4_.pdf

Universitat de Lleida
http://bid.udl.cat/ca/biblioteca/estrategia-i-qualitat/pla-dactuacions

Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya
http://bibliotecnica.upc.edu/info/planificacio-estrategica*

* This url is no longer operational.

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