

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

Librarians' social responsibility in public libraries  
dimensions and actionsFernanda Bernardo Ferreira<sup>1</sup>  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1135-5141>Sandra de Albuquerque Siebra<sup>2</sup>  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0078-6918><sup>1</sup>Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, PE, Brazil / e-mail: [nandabernardo@yahoo.com.br](mailto:nandabernardo@yahoo.com.br)<sup>2</sup>Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, PE, Brazil / e-mail: [sandra.siebra@ufpe.br](mailto:sandra.siebra@ufpe.br)

## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Social responsibility consists of the professional's performance and commitment to provide services and perform actions aimed at the needs of its users and the production of results that benefit the entire target community. **Objective:** The general objective of this article is to analyze the dimensions and actions related to social responsibility developed by librarians in public libraries. **Methodology:** It is characterized as a descriptive, qualitative, bibliographic and documental research. Data were also collected in three public libraries in the city of Recife, using a questionnaire sent to the librarians of these libraries via e-mail. Additionally, activities and services offered remotely were mapped, through the use of the libraries' social networks, during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the suspension of the activities, starting in March/2020. Content analysis was applied to the collected data. **Results:** The result was the mapping of the dimensions and actions of the social function of libraries related to social responsibility, based on the theoretical framework, on document analysis and on the analysis of the questionnaires applied to the libraries studied. **Conclusion:** It is concluded that most of the mapped social responsibility practices are already part of librarianship and that the ethical, political, educational and cultural dimensions contemplated in librarianship activities are covered in those dimensions and actions. Therefore, it is notorious the social responsibility of the librarian and also of the public library as a space conducive to the promotion of reading and citizenship, the encouragement of culture, and social and digital inclusion.

## KEYWORDS

Library services. Public libraries. Librarian's social responsibility. Promotion of library use. Social inclusion.

A responsabilidade social dos bibliotecários em bibliotecas públicas  
dimensões e ações

## RESUMO

**Introdução:** A responsabilidade social consiste na atuação e no compromisso do profissional em proporcionar serviços e realizar ações voltados às necessidades de seus usuários e à produção de resultados que beneficiem a toda comunidade alvo. **Objetivo:** O objetivo geral deste artigo é analisar as dimensões e ações relacionadas à responsabilidade social desenvolvidas por bibliotecários em bibliotecas públicas. **Metodologia:** Caracteriza-se como uma pesquisa descritiva, quali-quantitativa, bibliográfica e documental. Também foram coletados dados em três bibliotecas públicas na cidade do Recife, usando um questionário enviado aos bibliotecários destas bibliotecas através de e-mail. Adicionalmente foram mapeadas atividades e serviços ofertados remotamente, por meio do uso das redes sociais das bibliotecas, durante o período da pandemia do Covid-19, que provocou a suspensão das atividades, a partir de março/2020. Aos dados coletados foi aplicada a análise de conteúdo. **Resultados:** Como

resultado foi realizado o mapeamento de dimensões e ações da função social das bibliotecas relacionadas à responsabilidade social, com base no referencial teórico, em análise documental e na análise dos questionários aplicados às bibliotecas estudadas. **Conclusão:** Verifica-se que a maioria das práticas de responsabilidade social mapeadas já fazem parte do fazer bibliotecário e que as dimensões ética, política, educacional e cultural contempladas nas atividades biblioteconômicas são abrangidas naquelas dimensões e ações. Logo, a partir dos resultados obtidos, considera-se que é notória a responsabilidade social do bibliotecário e, também, da biblioteca pública enquanto espaço propício à promoção da leitura e da cidadania, ao incentivo da cultura, e à inclusão social e digital.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**

Serviços de biblioteca. Bibliotecas públicas. Responsabilidade social do bibliotecário. Promoção do uso da biblioteca. Inclusão social.



JITA: DC. Public libraries.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The library, according to Milanesi (2013), emerged with the intention of contributing to the organization of what was produced and the knowledge stored. Still according to the author, the function of the library's existence is to facilitate the search for what one wants to find in the organization proposed in these informational environments, ensuring efficiency in the offer of its services.

Given the social and technological transformations that mark the current society, the library has increasingly needed to adapt to enhance and offer innovative, appropriate and quality services and products, aiming at an effective service to its users (BERNARDINO; SUAIDEN, 2011). And, in the implementation of these services and products, a key feature is the social responsibility (SR), which consists of the performance and commitment of the professional librarian to provide actions aimed at improvements and produce results that benefit everyone (MORAES; LUCAS, 2012), especially the community served. What becomes relevant especially for public libraries that are, according to Barros (2002, p.129), a "public space that has the function of democratizing and stimulating culture in society, a place where citizens socialize their knowledge and exchange experiences". This is complemented by Bernardino and Suaiden (2011, p. 31), when they state that "the social role of the public library is permeated by access to and availability of information". Thus, the public library should be seen as a place conducive to the construction of knowledge, information and knowledge; and to promote debates about the social demands present in its surroundings. This may provide the library to become a truly dynamic and attractive space, with free access to reading and information, which may lead to knowledge and social and cultural actions. | 3

In this scenario, this research started from the following question: what are the Social Responsibility practices performed by librarians, working in Public Libraries, considering the ethical, political, educational and cultural dimensions performed in Librarianship activities? The general objective was to analyze the dimensions and actions related to social responsibility developed by librarians in public libraries.

This research fits into the context of Information Science (IC) because, according to Saracevic (1996, p. 41), IC is seen as a field that encompasses "both scientific research and professional practice, because of the problems it proposes and the methods it has chosen over time to solve them". More specifically, it is consistent with the social dimension of IC, highlighted by, among other authors, Saracevic (1996), Le Coadic (2004), Araújo (2009) when they explain the practices aimed at access, dissemination and effective use of information in different situations and contexts, as a way to contribute to the inclusion, socialization and scientific and social development of society.

The results of this research enable reflections about ethics, social responsibility and the social role of libraries, as well as present possibilities of actions and activities to be developed in public libraries for the benefit of culture, ethics, education, citizenship and social welfare of the community they serve. This may provide librarians with the opportunity to go beyond the professional/technical functions they perform, actually inserting themselves in the reality of the community of which the library is part.

## 2 THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The term social responsibility (SR) has its first appearance in a publication in the United States, having as author Howard Bowen, in the 1950s, in the post-war period (ASHLEY, 2003). From the 1950s on, companies expanded their vision around the effective practice of SR, relating it to providing improvements to existing problems. Lourenço and Schroder (2003) see SR as responsibilities towards society, where the corporation develops not only its legal and economic obligations, but participates in all processes that involve the company, employees and customers.

The increase in the application of SR occurred due to numerous factors, such as: globalization and technological advances, which enabled the knowledge about the decisions developed by organizations. And, also, by the various types of exclusion, unemployment, environmental factors and social inequalities that have become evident, especially in less developed areas and forgotten by the rulers (ABNT, 2010). Thus, the concept of social responsibility has become comprehensive, allowing subjects to understand the presence of ethics and morals in ethical and socially responsible actions. As a consequence, the SR embraced diverse environments of society, no longer circulating only in business environments and became part of the educational spheres, entering the space of libraries and, consequently, in the activities of information professionals.

### 2.1 Social Responsibility and Ethics

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For Vijesh and Mohanan (2018, p. 82) "SR is an ethical framework that suggests that an entity, be it organization or individual has an obligation to act to benefit society at large." Thus, considering that we are all responsible for ethical conduct and conscious behaviors. What is endorsed by Du Mont (1991) when he defines SR as an ethical concept, responsible for changes, and that prioritizes human needs and how to meet them. For the author, SR refers to the ethical and legal commitment and fulfillment of activities. Therefore, the relationship between ethics and SR aims to contribute to the improvement of actions, allowing it to encompass not only moral values (FERREIRA, 2015). Thus, SR involves modifications regarding human needs, of different types, that must be met, emphasizing "a concern with the social dimensions of information service that has to do with improving the quality of life" (VIJESH; MOHANAN, 2018, p. 82).

In 2010, it was published by Brazilian Technical Standards Association (ABNT) published ISO 26000 (2010) which aimed to establish itself as a guide for organizations that want to develop responsible actions. This standard aims at actions with ethical behavior that aim to guide organizations of all types on responsible practice. It values SR, by emphasizing its actions, besides legal issues and its obligations, involving the ethical and moral values present in society. The ABNT ISO 26000 (2010) establishes principles that guide organizational activities, taking into account the cultural, political, economic, and social diversities of each community, so as to nurture uniformity with international standards.

2.2 Dimensions of Social Responsibility

According to ABNT ISO 26000 (2010), socially responsible companies are those that seek a comprehensive look at the diverse aspects that compose it. Thus, the so-called corporate social responsibility (CSR), is defined by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) as the ongoing commitment of the company to behave ethically and, at the same time, both contribute to the economic development of its region and to the improvement of the quality of life of employees, their families, the local community and society in general (FLAHERTY, 1998; COOK; GELDENHUYS, 2018). Dahlsrud (2008) stated that CSR is a social construct and, when studying the similarities and differences between the various definitions existing at the time, pointed out that they basically refer to five dimensions: environmental, social, economic, stakeholder-oriented, and volunteerism. These dimensions, which were later adapted and described by Cook and Geldenhuys (2018), are summarized in Table 1.

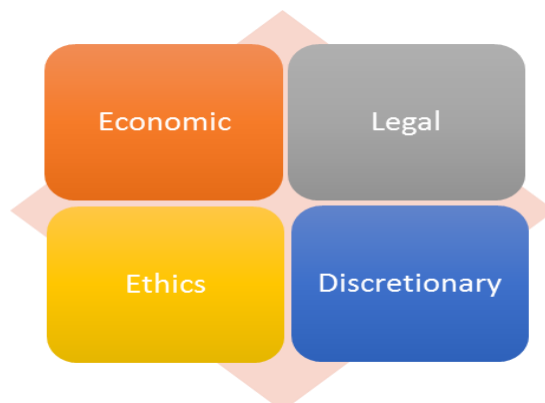
Table 1. Dahlsrud's Five Dimensions of CSR

Dimension	Description
Environmental	It refers to the idea of environmental impact, of a clean environment, of the use made of natural resources.
Social	It refers to the relationship between the company/institution and society, with a focus on contributing to a better society, integrating social concerns into business attitudes/actions.
Economic	It covers socio-economic or financial aspects with a focus on contributing to the company's economic development, aiming at profitability.
Stakeholder-focused	It refers to the need for interaction with and between stakeholders; to how the company interacts with employees, suppliers, users/customers, and the community.
Volunteering	It refers to the company going beyond legal obligations, based on ethical values.

Source: based on Cook; Geldenhuys (2018).

Carroll (1979) and Machado Filho (2013) highlight the social dimensions of corporate social responsibility and expand the vision to its practice in all areas of society. According to these authors, the concept of SR encompasses four dimensions: economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1.. Dimensions of Social Responsibility



Source: Based on Machado Filho (2013).

According to Carroll (1979) and Machado Filho (2013), the economic dimension is the most important of the dimensions, focusing on the responsibility of producing goods and products aimed at society for profit. The SR leads changes, but can collaborate with a strategist vision of its visibility, a competitive advantage that favors its good image in the organizational environment (PAULA, 2011). The legal dimension refers to the responsibility that articulates the laws and regulations present in the institutions, being its execution carried out simultaneously. The laws are included in the life of society and of the companies with the intention that, being accepted, standards of conduct are established and followed, contributing with the security and integrity of the actions performed (FERREL, 2001). The ethical dimension promotes reflection and understanding of values for society, for the company, and also for everyone who makes up the institutions. According to Carroll (1979), there are behaviors and activities that are not presented in the regulations that govern companies and societies, but that are expected by the members of the institutions and the community. Carroll (1979, p. 500) reports that "there are societal expectations for companies to assume social roles," which is highlighted by the discretionary dimension, which is focused on philanthropy. We understand, therefore, that economic and legal responsibilities are linked to a company's obligations to generate profit for shareholders and to comply with established laws and regulations. Ethical and discretionary responsibilities, on the other hand, cover the commitment of company resources to initiatives in order to improve the community (CARROLL; SHABANA, 2010).

In the understanding of Dantas and Garcia (2013, p. 4) "the functions performed by the library contribute to the construction of the evidence of SR in IC and its theories and practices". Thus, in this research the consideration fell on SR in the context of public libraries, considering that as well as companies that are socially responsible, public libraries include in their actions the economic, legal, ethical, and discrete dimensions, which are explored in the next section.

### 3 THE PUBLIC LIBRARY: A SPACE FOR SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

According to the Manifesto of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), prepared in 1994, the public library is defined as "[...] the local gateway to knowledge - it provides the basic conditions for continuous learning, for independent decision-making, and for the cultural development of individuals and social groups" (IFLA, 1994, p.1). In this sense, the library has a fundamental and necessary role, for covering diverse audiences

and also for contributing to different uses of the information found there. Thus, it is in line with the thought of Ranganathan (2009), when he states in his fifth law that the library is a living and growing organism, which highlights its social and active role, that with such vivacity allows it to be present in numerous areas: social, cultural, economic and historical.

The social and technological changes that occur in today's world reflect significantly in public libraries, because, as Bernardino and Suaíden (2011, p. 31) state, "the social role of the public library is permeated by the access and availability of information" and these have been changing over time. And in this dynamic scenario, the social role of the public library and its relevance, according to Tello (2013), is not present only in its collection, but in the growth and enrichment of society through the many services it offers.

### *3.1 Dimensions of the Social Function of the Public Library*

Among the dimensions presented by Ferraz and Dumont (2018) as essential in the public library, as fundamental to fulfill its social function are: the **collection**, the **services offered**, the **encouragement of reading**, the **preservation of memory**, the **availability of information**, the library as a **place of learning**, the **access to technologies**, the **knowledge of the community**, the **interlocution with it**, the library as a **meeting place**, the **construction of citizenship**, and finally the **importance of the librarian profile**.

Romero- Sanchés, Gómez- Hernández and Hernández- Pedreño (2019) present the dimensions of the library's social function characterizing them according to its main objective, encompassing **access, cultural actions and sustainability**. Another strong social dimension of the public library is in the **informational dissemination**, which allows the **encouragement of reading, citizen participation, use of space, knowledge of their duties and rights, preservation of local memory** and their own history. What is endorsed by Machado, Elias Junior and Achiles (2014, p.124) who consider it necessary to "take into consideration all the constituent elements of this social, political, economic and cultural configuration" when thinking about the public library in the information society.

Reflecting on the social dimensions that govern public libraries makes us consider the various social and external elements that constitute them, in addition to the social function they perform with the main objective of enabling improvements and growth to their users. In fact, Barros (2002) corroborates with the contribution of the libraries' role in the expansion of the meanings and actions in the social life of all players involved, favoring the growth and understanding about the countless situations in society. Furthermore, its public character ensures free access and it is characterized mainly by serving and including all types of public, which favors inclusion in the diversified contexts, whether cultural, informational, technological, and physical. It also highlights the role played by libraries in relation to the environmental issue, the awareness of its users for a sustainable environment, which allows the ethical construction in diversified points.

### 3.2 Public Libraries, Social Responsibility and Librarian Ethics

In view of the conceptualization about SR and public library, authors such as Romero-Sánchez, Gómez- Hernández and Hernández- Pedreño (2019) and Bernardino and Suaiden (2011) define the social responsibility present in public libraries by conceptualizing their actions related to digital inclusion, information dissemination, culture, sustainability and knowledge about the social dimension of the library and about the social function of the librarian and the library.

There are countless contributions of public libraries that are present in the context of society and become important in the transformation process of the communities they serve, where reading, cultural activities, socialization, inclusion and the offer of adequate services favor the critical and citizen development. However, it is necessary to insert activities according to the needs of the community being served, which must be a work built daily and together with community representatives, in order to build a relationship of delivery and openness. This perception broadens the view of the social role and the SR of libraries. Moreover, opening the library to the community and mapping its needs, besides the already mentioned benefits, allows an environment of violence prevention and also of awareness that the space belongs to everyone.

Discussing the social relevance of the public library today allows the expansion of its practices, as well as the re-signification of this environment in the eyes of professionals and users who frequent it. Thus, it is necessary to reflect on the librarian's role in this context of social responsibility of public libraries. For, according to Pajo and Lee (2010), one of the ways in which institutions/companies can demonstrate their social responsibility is by encouraging and supporting the involvement of their employees in programs and actions that involve the community. | 8

According to authors Mischiati and Valentim (2005), numerous changes may occur in the community served, depending on the reality and characteristics of each one, and the professional librarian is responsible for the practice and relevance of ethics and SR in human coexistence and in their conducts, observing the transformation of ethics and values according to the time. Thus, it can be seen that ethics seen as an orientation for acting in society is also taken to the professional sphere, which allows for the reflection of librarianship ethics expressed in daily librarianship activities.

In this perspective, ethics, as stated by Du Mont (1991), underlies the performance of information professionals with SR practices, where it permeates all professions and is also present in library practices. It is a primordial basis in the construction of activities that promote both social welfare and the improvement of labor relations, becoming an inseparable means of responsible practice, which contributes to the search for better strategies and policies to be adopted. At this point, it can be stated that "social responsibility is a posture that should permeate the activities of any professionals, among them, the librarian" (MORAES; LUCAS, 2012, p. 114).

It is noteworthy that, as stated by Moraes and Lucas (2012), the practice of social responsibility of librarians (SRB) is not recent, since the very care for the collection is a responsible action.



## 4 METHODOLOGY

This research is characterized as descriptive, quali quantitative, bibliographic and documentary (KAUARK; MANHÃES; MEDEIROS, 2010). The bibliographic survey was conducted in books, dissertations and theses (retrieved from institutional repositories), as well as in articles retrieved from databases such as Information Science Database (BRAPCI) and Scientific Electronic Library Online (SCIELO). The document analysis included documents related to the laws and norms that addressed the study theme, as well as the normative documents and description of the activities of the libraries selected for the study.

For a better perception of the practice of SR in public libraries, data were collected in three public libraries in the city of Recife, including 1) the only state library, the Biblioteca Pública Estadual de Pernambuco (BPE) located in the neighborhood of Santo Amaro, which was created in 1841 and inaugurated on May 5, 1852 (BPE, 2020). And two municipal: 2) the Popular Library of Casa Amarela Jornalista Alcides Lopes, located in the neighborhood of Casa Amarela was founded in the year 1949 and renovated in the year 2016. It is part of the Peace Libraries Network belonging to the Urban Security Secretariat of the Recife City Hall. 3) the Popular Library of Afogados Jornalista Ronildo Maia Leite, located in the Afogados neighborhood and inaugurated on January 12, 1955. It is also part of the Peace Libraries Network. A strong issue of the public libraries of this network is in the partnerships established for the performance of its actions, as well as the bond that is strengthened when it allows the community to be a partner in its space (RECIFE, 2020).

The data collection was carried out in the period from March 2020 to July 2020, through the analysis of documents and regulations of the libraries, the observation of the services offered remotely (because of the context of the COVID-19 pandemic that brought the need for social distancing and, consequently, suspension of the face-to-face activities of the libraries) and the use made by the selected libraries of the social networks. Besides the application of a questionnaire, sent via email after telephone contact, applied to Librarians working in the libraries of the study. The research subjects were identified with the letter B plus a numeral (01, 02, ...) in sequential order from 01 to 12, corresponding to the total number of questionnaire respondents, thus, B01, B02, etc. | 9

For the analysis of the data collected we used the content analysis, defined by Bardin (2009), which allowed the categorization, for it favors the individual and group subjectivity becoming a useful tool for the interpretation of the social reality present in the research.

The following phases were performed for the analysis (FRANCO, 2005; BARDIN, 2009):

In the **pre-analysis** phase, it was carried out from floating readings of texts, articles and dissertations related to SR, SR dimensions and social function of the public library and librarian ethics, focusing on points that were related to the research objective. These readings sought to identify the dimensions of the social function of the public library that could give rise to the initial categories of analysis.

The **definition of the categories of analysis** were based on the readings of the complete texts at the end of the literature review and on the results of the documentary analysis. The initial dimensions of social responsibility and social function of the public library existing in the texts of Romero-Sánchez, Gómez-Hernández and Hernández-Pedreño (2019) and Ferraz and Dumont (2018) were taken as a basis. The categories defined in this phase contributed to the construction of the questionnaire used for data collection, which facilitated the process of analyzing the answers that were fitted into the categories created. When the answers given did

not fit into a previously existing category, a new category was created, giving rise to a new dimension or action, which can be visualized in the results and discussion section.

The last phase was **the treatment of the results and the interpretation of the data obtained**, where tables, graphs, and figures were created in order to allow a better visualization of the analysis results. In the sequence, these elements were discussed in the light of the theoretical framework. In some moments, the speeches of the research subjects that endorsed the discussion were highlighted.

## 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In total, 12 librarians participated in the data collection. Nine (9) were female and three (3) were male. The predominant age range was 30 to 50 years. As for education, eight (8) librarians had only undergraduate degrees, and four (4) had specialized degrees. Regarding the length of service as a librarian, 9 people have worked as librarians for between 5 and 10 years, and the other three have worked as librarians for more than 20 years. In relation to the employment relationship, only two have a commissioned position, and the others are all permanent librarians.

The first question in the questionnaire was related to the librarians' understanding of the concept of social responsibility. The respondents referred to the transforming and social role that librarians play, as identified in the statement "It is related to being a transforming agent of society and promoting the citizen's access to information" (B06). And they mainly highlighted the relationship with the inclusion of citizens, be it social or digital inclusion, as endorsed in the following lines: "Social responsibility refers to including the citizen in the information society through library services" (B02). "It refers to favoring and contributing to information being a tool for social inclusion"(B07). This endorses the statement by Moraes and Lucas (2012) that SR is present in numerous library functions. Librarians also praised the respect for differences, and pointed out the benefit of this practice in society, as highlighted in the statement "Social responsibility refers to respecting individual and collective differences" (B01). This is related to ethics and citizenship and is in line with Du Mont's (1991) statement that ethics is the basis for SR actions in order to guarantee rights and duties.

Another question verified that 92% of the librarians have or do attend people with disabilities. Which brings us back to the issue of accessibility in its most varied contexts, and this is one of the functions of the SR and the public library: to promote information, access, culture and leisure to all, regardless of limitations, as pointed out by Romero-Sánchez, Gómez-Hernández and Hernández-Pedreño (2019). Accessibility is linked to SR, which relates directly to public policies and the ethical dimension present in both SR and library social responsibility. The assistance to people with disabilities needs to be present in different segments of library activities: in the way information and collections are made available; in the preparation for adequate service (for example, service in Brazilian Sign Language -LIBRAS); in the adaptation of the physical structure (e.g. width of doors, elevators, entrance ramps, etc.) and in the digital platforms adopted (e.g. website with digital accessibility) by the library to meet this public.

Another point approached was the adequacy of the formation of the public library collection for the target audience (its community/users), which is configured as one of the fundamental functions of the library and requires attention from the institution, since the collection must meet not only the informational, but also the educational and leisure needs of the community it serves. It is worth mentioning that this point was considered a challenge, due to the heterogeneity of the public that attends public libraries, besides the different contexts and financial resources to acquire the collection, besides the fact that some materials/acquisitions

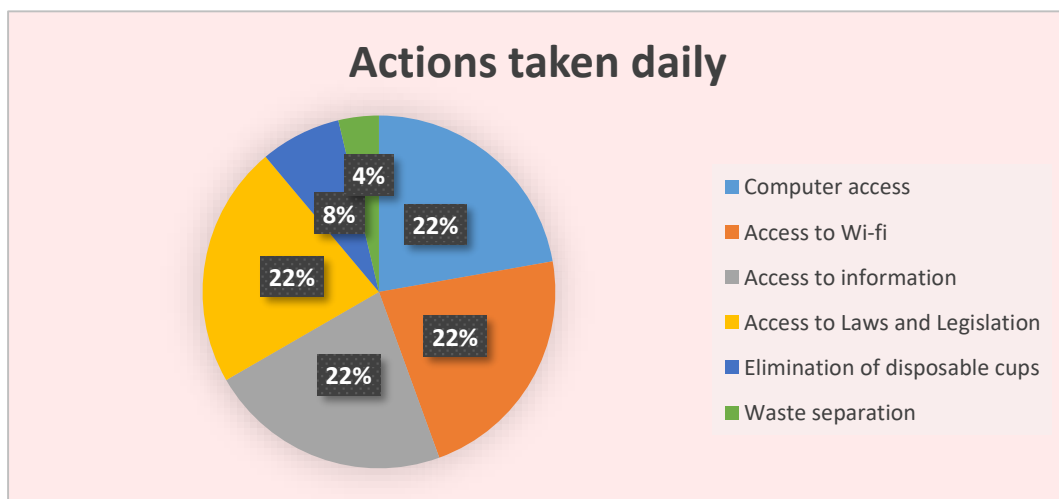
are received by donation. Thus, all librarians mentioned that, not always, the existing collection is really adequate to the community they serve. Respondent B09 also emphasized the lack of public policies to update and modernize the public library collections (including the availability of remote access digital library) as one of the obstacles to have a sufficient and appropriate collection to serve the community. This may harm the function of the public library which, according to Milanesi (2013) is to provide access for all and contribute to the process of information dissemination.

It was also sought to know the partnerships, collaborations and strategies used by libraries to carry out activities and make their space more dynamic. All the libraries studied had some kind of partnership. It was verified that, depending on the sector and on the actions to be developed, partnerships are established. It was registered the partnership of some libraries with the community in which it is inserted (e.g.: local producers, community leaders, local artists, etc.), with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), universities, consulates (Germany, France and China), museums and cultural spaces, in addition to public and private schools and several publishers. Seeking partnerships is part of the library's social function, which is endorsed by Vijesh and Mohanan (2018, p. 83) when they state that "a library that is a social institution maintains relationships with diverse audiences and sectors." The formation of partnerships provides the financial resources or the staff required to carry out some actions, such as socio-cultural activities, or even the material for courses, workshops, and events, constituting alternatives for the development of various activities.

*5.1 Social Responsibility and the Dimensions and Actions of the Social Function of Public Libraries* | 11

In the questionnaire there were some questions to map activities performed daily, weekly, monthly and annually by librarians in the public libraries in which they work. Among the daily activities listed, as can be seen in Graph 1, access, in its most diverse ways, is pointed out. Whether it is access to computers, Wi-Fi, information and/or to laws and legislations through the internet, books or magazines. The environmental issue was also pointed out as a form of awareness and educational practice, with the implementation of actions such as the elimination of daily disposable cups in the library and the correct separation of waste.

Chart 1. Categories of actions performed in libraries on a daily basis



Source: Prepared by the author, 2020.

Table 2 presents the activities developed by the librarians in their respective libraries on a weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.

**Table 2.** Weekly, monthly and yearly activities held in the libraries

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES MONTHLY	ACTIVITIES ANNUAL/PERIODIC
Story time	Reading Wheel	Computer classes
Reading Wheel	Lectures and/or conversation rounds about several themes	Mini-course or Courses (handicrafts, professional training, academic subjects, etc.)
Mini-course or Courses (handicrafts, professional training, academic subjects, etc.)	Events (seminars, round tables, etc.);	Theater Presentations
Preparatory courses for ENEM and/or Vestibular	Social campaigns (winter clothes, floods, Christmas, etc.)	Dance Presentations
Citizenship actions (orientation about and/or issuance of documents, legal orientation, etc.)	Musical Presentations	Music Performances
Awareness actions towards the Environment (e.g.: selective garbage collection, correct disposal of oil, etc.)	Preparatory courses for ENEM and/or Vestibular	Awareness actions towards the Environment (e.g.: selective garbage collection, correct disposal of oil, etc.)
Guided tours	School reinforcement	Gathering of players (e.g. RPG, online games, etc.)
Samples / Exhibitions (books, objects, poetry, book excerpts, synopses, etc.)		Book Exchange

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

As can be seen in Table 2, among the weekly activities highlighted by librarians are the Story time, the reading rounds, the samples and exhibitions, and the preparation for National High School Exam (ENEM), besides the mini-courses or courses of short and medium duration. The citizenship and awareness actions and guided tours were also highlighted. Among the activities developed on a monthly basis, according to the libraries' planning, most of the respondents highlighted the reading rounds, lectures and/or conversation rounds, events of different sizes held in the space the library makes available for this purpose, social campaigns, musical performances and ENEM preparations. Belonging to the libraries' annual practice and pointed out by most of the respondents are activities related to computer classes, mini-courses or courses on various topics, as well as theater, music and dance performances. There are also among the activities the players' meetings, a playful way of socializing and using the space, in addition to the reading incentive activity called book exchange. It is noteworthy that some of these activities are not exactly annual, they are held sporadically, as it was possible to notice both in conversation with the library managers and in their documentary records. These activities have an interval of months, and are performed, on average, from one to three times a year. It is assumed that, for this reason, they were included by librarians as annual activities.

It was possible to identify that the actions carried out by librarians are aligned with the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary dimensions, previously identified, since there is the

performance and practice of activities that highlight public policies, citizen development, social issues, ethical commitment, among others. From the librarians' statements it is possible to observe that the activities developed in libraries contribute to the cultural, intellectual and citizenship development of their users, as they bring reflective and learning moments, and also leisure and culture. This is quite relevant for the community and contemplates what is pointed out by IFLA (1994) and by Bernardino and Suaiden (2011), that the library space must be willing to promote diversified interactions, through the stimulus to knowledge, culture, memory and free access, which was observed in the practice of the libraries studied. Moreover, with these practices, the librarian can contribute, mainly, in the construction of ideas, in the formation of conscious citizens and in the development of society, allowing the user to be benefited in several ways, in relation to their rights and duties, as well as through the implementation of activities that collaborate in their quality of life, showing a complete view of the individual (FERREIRA, 2015). This is part of the social role of Information Science. It is worth noting that the reality of each library and each librarian has its own particularities. Thus, depending on the context of the library and the sector in which the librarian was inserted, the way of performing the actions is modified.

It is considered that, to carry out the activities mentioned above, the user and the community served must be seen as the center of the planning, so that, besides their effective participation, the creation of a close and positive relationship with the library also occurs. This is highlighted by authors who address SR and librarian ethics, such as Moraes and Lucas (2012) and by the Federal Council of Librarianship (2018), when emphasizing that the librarians' actions should be based on the mission of providing services according to the demands of the community. That is, they seek to meet the needs and expectations of the community in relation to the library.

After mapping the actions indicated by librarians, it was found that many of them are in line with the actions mapped from the literature review and the documentary analysis, bringing some additions to the previously identified categories. Thus, considering: 1) that for Romero-Sánchez, Gómez-Hernández and Hernández-Pedreño (2019), the social function of public libraries is to be by "social essence", since its main mission is to promote the dissemination and access to information to all without restrictions; 2) that the aforementioned authors explicitly punctuate dimensions of the social function of the library, textually in their article, characterizing them according to their main objective; these authors were taken as a basis for the elaboration of Figure 2. In it, social responsibility is related to the dimensions of the library's social function. In the creation of the figure, each DIMENSION is represented in capital and bold letters, and it was verified that some dimensions in the literature could be placed below others and were characterized more as actions within that dimension. For example, the ACCESS dimension has below it the actions Access to the Collection and Access to Technologies. The actions were represented only with initial capital letters.

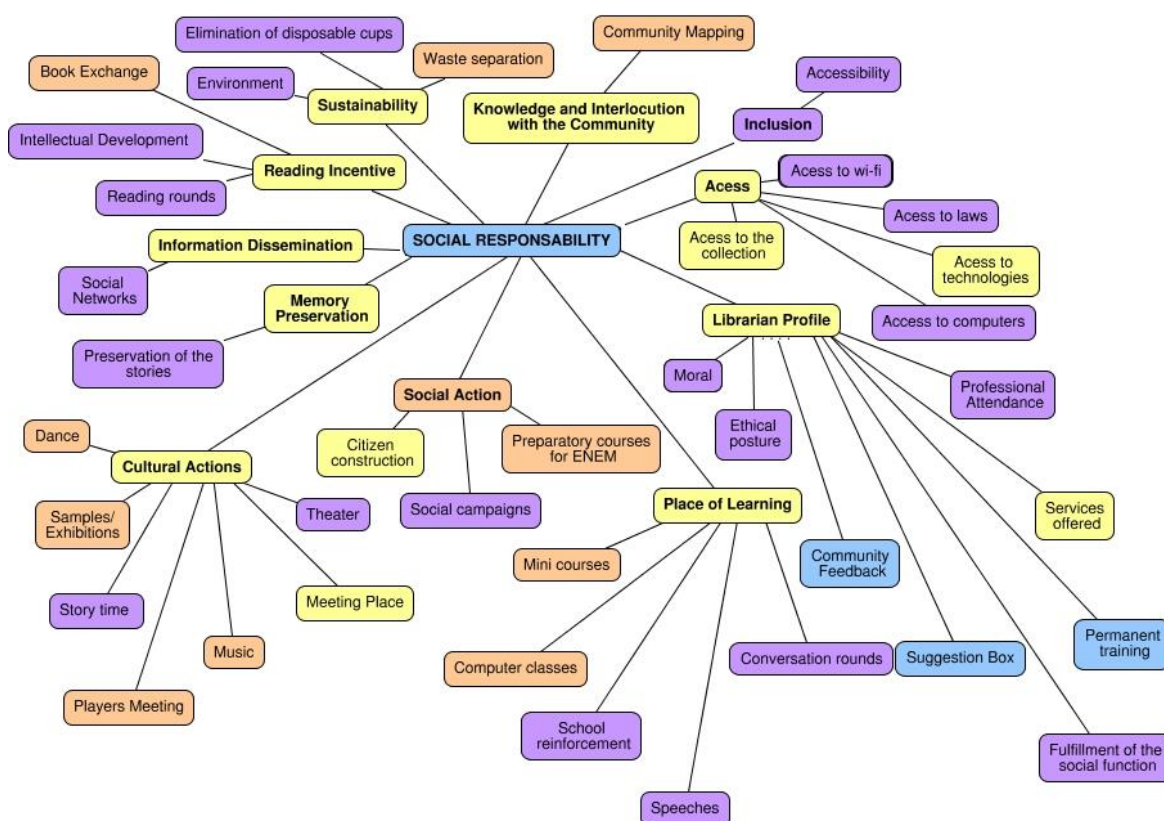
Thus, in Figure 2, in yellow are the dimensions presented in the work of Romero-Sánchez, Gómez-Hernández, and Hernández-Pedreño (2019) organized into DIMENSIONS and Actions. In purple are the DIMENSIONS and Actions added from the bibliographic survey and document analysis, having used authors such as Almeida Junior (2013), Alvin; Calixto

(2013), Araújo (2009), Barros (2002), Bernardino and Suaiden (2011), Cook; Geldenhuys (2018), Cunha (2003), Cunha; Cavalcante (2008), Dahlsrud (2008), Du Mont (1991), Ferraz; Dumont (2018), IFLA (1994), Milanese (2013), Moraes; Lucas (2012), Ranganathan (2009), Tello (2013), and Valls (2013).

Subsequently, from the content analysis of the questionnaires applied, new actions were added to Figure 5 in orange. And finally, the authors felt the need to insert the actions: "Permanent Training", "Feedback from the Community", "Suggestion Box" (presented in blue), since, as mentioned by Ferraz and Dumont (2018), to perform their activities well and fulfill their social function the librarian needs to be attentive to keep up to date, either by taking courses (mini courses, extension courses and training, etc.), as improving their academic training (specializations, master's degree, doctorate), in addition to being up to date as to the public policies that affect their daily work or the circumscribed community.

When observing the categories of actions effectively carried out, it is possible to notice that they corroborate with the actions mapped out in the literature and the documentary analysis expressed in Figure 2 and fit well within the dimensions identified there.

Figure 2. Social Responsibility and the Dimensions and Actions of the Social Function of Public Libraries - after analyzing the results



Color Key:

- Central Axis
- Dimensions and actions by Romero-Sanchés; Gómes- Hernández; Hernández-Pedreño (2019)
- Dimensions and actions added from the bibliographic survey and document analysis
- Actions taken from the analysis of the questionnaires
- Action inserted by the authors

NOTE: In bold capital letters are represented the DIMENSIONS, the other rectangles are Actions.

Source: Based on Almeida Júnior (2013), Alvin; Calixto (2013), Araújo (2009), Barros (2002), Bernardino e Suaiden (2011), Cook; Geldenhuys (2018), Cunha (2003), Cunha; Cavalcante (2008), Dahlsrud (2008), Du Mont (1991), Ferraz; Dumont (2018), IFLA (1994), Milanese (2013), Moraes; Lucas (2012), Ranganathan (2009), Romero– Sanchés; Gómes– Hernández; Hernández– Pedreño (2019), Tello (2013), Valls (2013).

We emphasize that Figure 2 is a contribution of this research, in as much as it illustrates all the possibilities of actions, in their respective dimensions, that can be taken by libraries in order to fulfill their social function, consequently assuming their social responsibility. This is also detailed in Chart 3.

Table 3. Dimensions and Actions of the Social Function of Public Libraries

DIMENSIONS	ACTIONS
<b>Access</b>	Access to the collection Access to various technologies Access to Wi-Fi Access to computers Access to laws and norms
<b>Inclusion</b>	Accessibility Promotion
<b>Knowledge and Interlocution with the Community</b>	Community Mapping Community Feedback Gathering Suggestion Box
<b>Information Dissemination</b>	Use of Social Networks Miscellaneous Disclosures (e.g.: new items in the collection, events, service announcements, database announcements, etc.) Creation of tutorials or step-by-step (guidelines for users)
<b>Memory Preservation</b>	Preservation of the stories of the community itself and of the library Preservation of photographs and videos (community and library)
<b>Reading Incentive</b>	Book Exchange Promotion of Intellectual Development (e.g.: indication of readings) Reading rounds
<b>Sustainability</b>	Actions towards the environment Waste separation Elimination of the use of disposable cups
<b>Librarian Profile</b>	Professional Attendance Quality of the services offered (library activities) Fulfillment of the social function Permanent training Ethical posture

	Moral
Social Action	Conducting social campaigns (e.g.: food collection) Promotion of citizen construction
Place of Learning	Conduction of lectures Organization of conversation rounds Promotion of School reinforcement Preparatory courses for ENEM (Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio - National Examination Exam) Offering computer classes Offering mini courses
Cultural Actions	Cultural Actions Meeting Place Theater Samples/Exhibitions Dance Music Players Meeting Story time (a dramatized storytelling)

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

The librarians were asked about the perception of the appreciation of the actions/services offered and it was mentioned as a response that the appreciation was noticeable through the increasing and visible occupation of the library's social space, the use of the services offered, the gradual increase in participation in events held, as well as the feedback given by users to professionals through conversations and comments. Additionally, all librarians admitted that the implementation of social actions enables not only satisfaction on the part of users, but also favors the visibility of library practice and enhances the strengthening of the social role of the library and librarian. In addition to bringing librarians closer to their users and the context where they are inserted, enabling the provision of more appropriate services.

However, for the implementation of the actions, difficulties were also reported by librarians. And, even some of these difficulties prevent the development of some categories of actions in the library. Among these obstacles is the issue of physical space as one of the obstacles to the practice of social and cultural actions. Also pointed out as difficulties were: the limited staff, the lack of strategies by the managers to enable the execution of actions, the lack of community articulation, the lack or limitation in the planning of actions and events, in addition to the work overload.

Finally, when asked about which activities of the daily practice of librarianship they thought could be considered SR practices, the librarians answered that all daily actions developed involve SR: the act of cataloging, classifying, informing, making various services available, disseminating information, meeting the needs of the community can be considered activities with a social nature, especially if they are carried out ethically and with a focus on users. In fact, the effective service and the execution with ethics and responsibility of the different services and actions developed contribute to the effectiveness of the social role of the library, as explained by Bernardino and Suaiden (2011), besides having the potential to attract the community and create a bond with it.



## 5.2 Performance of Public Libraries during the Covid-19 Pandemic Period

The pandemic caused by Covid-19 was identified in China in December 2019, and was declared as an epidemic in January 2020 and pandemic in March 2020. In Brazil, the first case occurred in the city of São Paulo, on February 26, 2020.

In view of this, the Ministry of Health (MH), in order to protect the population, adopted several measures, among them the social distancing, which caused the suspension of the operation of several types of establishments such as schools, universities, stores, malls, factories, libraries, among others. Only those services considered essential were maintained, among them: pharmacies, supermarkets, hospitals, grocery stores, etc. In this way, the whole world was surprised by the social, economic, political, and world health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic (OLIVEIRA *et al.*, 2020).

Due to all this context and the rapid spread of Covid-19, following the WHO guidelines, the National System of Public Libraries (SNBP) presented some measures to be adopted by libraries (NATIONAL LIBRARY FOUNDATION, 2020, p.1). In addition, social isolation measures necessary for the prevention and reduction of the spread of the virus were adopted. Thus, libraries were forced to cancel their in-person activities and close down visits to their spaces. And, with this, many had to reinvent themselves in order to offer services and perform services and actions through the digital environment, using technological resources and the Internet as their main work tools.

For libraries, as well as for several other sectors, which were not prepared for a totally remote work, many adaptations had to be made. This brought a great challenge and initial difficulties, because the performance of online activities requires planning and availability of resources (e.g. quality internet and computer equipment such as computer/notebook, camera, microphone, etc.) on the part of the employees, as well as knowledge of the handling/use of equipment, resources, applications and programs on the part of those involved. Despite all this, it was observed that the libraries studied started to make a more intense use of social networks (mainly Facebook and Instagram) to make available educational, recreational, and informative actions.

It was found that, during the pandemic period, the dimensions of the social function (Figure 2) explored by the libraries were: Reading Encouragement (e.g. storytelling, book tips), Information Dissemination, Cultural Actions (e.g. soirées), Learning Place (e.g. lives on several themes or on the performance of handicrafts), Sustainability (e.g. lives on environmental awareness and garbage separation), and Social Function (e.g. food collection campaigns). Inclusion was not practiced in the libraries, since no elements of accessibility were perceived in their social networks and websites. Additionally, the Librarian Profile dimension was being attended only partially, since many activities of librarian work were not being done remotely.

From the follow-up it is possible to mention that libraries could have used the new context to better map the needs (perhaps new needs) of their users and create a closer link with them in the digital environment. It is also worth mentioning that the digital space was not always well explored, since each social network has its own style and language, not being appropriate to use the same post, in the same format in all of them, and that there must be periodic updates to maintain the interest of users, which was not always met by librarians. These points start to need to be contemplated in the libraries' planning, since this new space in which they need to be present (the digital environment) has become increasingly relevant, requires planning (what to post, who to post, how to post, among others) and generates additional work for the librarians involved, since social networks were not part of their conventional activities. Which endorses the need to invent and reinvent the librarian and libraries themselves to have the flexibility to

adapt to social and technological changes, and to adverse and unpredictable situations, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

## 6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The social bias that permeates Information Science has been increasingly demanded and explored. This has highlighted the relevance of adaptation to change by libraries and their professionals, since the profile of users is dynamic, which gives rise to new information needs on their part. The work and actions developed by the library and by librarians have also been impacted by technological evolution, which brings new possibilities of action and action development. A clear example has been the need for libraries to be present in the digital environment through social networks, which are widely used in the current context, especially by young people. This scenario corroborates the thought of Ranganatham (2009), when identifying the library as a living organism, which must be in constant transformation, along with those who use it, highlighting the social role that is played by libraries and their librarians.

Analyzing the SR of public libraries and the social function performed by them brought the possibility to reflect about the relevance to society and, specifically, to library users, of the actions practiced by them. It also brought the possibility to observe that most of the SR practices are already part of the librarian's work; they are activities that are performed by this professional in his/her daily life and are mentioned in the literature of the IC area and in norms. Moreover, the ethical, political, educational, and cultural dimensions performed in librarianship are contemplated in the dimensions of SR mapped in this research. This is in line with the Librarian's code of ethics and their social responsibility in building an ethical society, considering the singularities and the relevant social issues. | 18

Although the mapping of actions was ample, this research is limited by the number of libraries studied and the fact that they are part of a single city: Recife. Because public libraries that have different contexts, whether from other cities or regions, may present an even broader set of actions related to SR. Even so, it is emphasized that this research brings this initial mapping of dimensions and actions related to social responsibility and the social function of the BP as a contribution, since there is no similar in the consulted literature, and the work methodology can be taken as a basis for a broader research in libraries spread throughout a region or throughout the national territory.

In addition, it is indicated as a suggestion for future work to analyze how much the librarians' curricular training prepares them for the execution of actions related to SR. For in conversation with some librarians during the research, many learned to perform the actions by performing them. However, they reported that, initially, they did not feel prepared to do so or even saw some of the actions as possibilities to fulfill the social function of their profession and contribute to the role of the public library.

Given the mapping of dimensions and actions performed in the research, it is considered that it is notorious the social responsibility of both the librarian and the public library so that it can be a favorable space for the development of reading, social and digital inclusion, and citizenship. It is also important to highlight that social responsibility is also present in the ethics of the professional librarian, when he/she performs his/her social role through different librarianship practices, performed in an ethical way, making sure that the services offered are in line with the needs of the library users where he/she works.

## CRediT

**RECOGNITIONS:** The authors would like to thank the members of the Research Group of the Digital Curatorship Center of UFPE for the discussions provided to improve this work.

**FINANCING:** This study was partially funded by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel - Brazil (CAPES), Financial Code 001.]

**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** Authors certify that they have no commercial or associative interest that represents a conflict of interest in relation to the manuscript.

**ETHICAL APPROVAL:** Because it involves a questionnaire applied to librarians, the observation of services offered remotely by the library and the use of social networks, this research was submitted to the Ethics Committee of the Federal University of Pernambuco and is registered under the PROTOCOL CAAE 21308419.9.0000.5208, having been approved on November 7, 2019.

**AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIAL:** The data sets generated and/or analyzed during the present study are available in the Institutional Repository of UFPE (<https://repositorio.ufpe.br/handle/123456789/39288>).

**AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS:** - Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis: FERREIRA, F.B.; SIEBRA, S.A.; Acquisition of financing: SIEBRA, S.A.; Research, Methodology, Project Administration, Resources: FERREIRA, F.B.; SIEBRA, S.A.; Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing: FERREIRA, F.B.; SIEBRA, S.A.; Software: Not applicable.

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Article submitted to the similarity system



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Submitted: 26/05/2021 – Accepted: 18/08/2021 – Published: 17/09/2021

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