

CENSORSHIP IN SCOTTISH SCHOOL LIBRARIES

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Abstract

Censorship is a problem that has existed for centuries and goes against the core principles of librarianship. It is a tool used by some in society to restrict others' access to certain information, and, in some cases, the motives behind censorship are to protect vulnerable groups such as school children. Much research has been conducted on the topic of censorship through book challenges within school libraries in the United States of America, however little exists in respect of censorship in UK school libraries.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the numbers of book challenges made to books in Scottish school libraries over the period 2006 – 2011; how the challenges were resolved and whether school library policies are in place that provide a stance on censorship as well as procedures for dealing with book challenges. The method used was survey sent via Freedom of Information requests to Scottish local authorities.

It was found that 43 book challenges were received across 17 local authorities. Most book challenges were successful with 40% being resolved by relocating the book and 37% resulting in the book being removed from the library completely.

Ten local authorities provided school library policies, with eight containing some form of anti-censorship statement. Only one school library policy received provided guidance on the procedure to be followed in the event of a book challenge being made.

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1. Introduction

This study will investigate to what extent censorship is an issue within Scottish school libraries. There has been much debate within the Information and Library profession in the UK about censorship and the implications it has on the provision of public library services. The same cannot be said for school library services. The school library has a key role to play in the development of children into lifelong learners and readers, but this can be undermined should they fail to provide access to books and resources that the pupils find interesting and stimulating and that meet their information needs. Censorship is often used by one group of society to control or protect another, such as adults and children. However, it can be dangerous to restrict access to books that contain ideas or information that is considered controversial (for example, sex, sexual orientation, teenage pregnancy, family breakdown) as it robs children of the opportunity to explore the issues for themselves in a safe way and prevents them from developing skills in judging the relevance and quality of information resources. Furthermore, censorship in school libraries can lead to children missing out on the fun and enjoyment that can be found in reading a good book.

As the children's author Judy Blume states:

[I]t's not just the books under fire now that worry me. It is the books that will never be written. The books that will never be read. And all due to the fear of censorship. As always, young readers will be the real losers. (Judy Blume On the Web website)

1.1 Background

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) states that:

'The school library equips students with life-long learning skills and develops the imagination, enabling them to live as responsible citizens.' (IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto, 1999).

In the UK, the School Library Association states that the purpose of a school library is:

'To provide a wide range of books and multimedia resources to support teaching and learning throughout the key stages, and foster a reading and information culture that promotes independent motivated readers and learners for life.' – (SLA Position Statement, 2009)

This viewpoint, of school libraries being of key importance to the development of pupils into lifelong learners and readers is echoed by the American Association of School Libraries (AASL) which highlights the role of school libraries in equipping pupils with the skills to make value judgements on information resources:

'[T]he school library program encourages a critical stance as it encourages students to examine the authority of authors and the bias of sponsors; to assess the importance of currency of information to the topic at hand; and to determine the scope and relevance of information to meet their needs.' AASL, (2012).

Therefore, it can be seen that school libraries play a significant role in supporting children's education both in terms of the school curriculum as well as equipping them with skills that will enable them to become lifelong learners and readers.

Achieving these aims can however, be problematic as in order to support children's education and personal development, school libraries need to provide information which is of interest and relevance to the pupils at all stages of maturity and ability.

As discussed by Everhard (2005) there is a difficult balance for school librarians who wish to provide open access to information and materials on all topics, including fiction and non-fiction to school pupils and the obligations put on them by outside groups such as parents and funders. This can result in school librarians shying away from stocking 'controversial' materials or imposing access restrictions such as age bandings. These approaches are forms of censorship.

Attempts to censor in libraries are currently widely debated in North America with the American Library Association (ALA) running a widely publicised anti-censorship campaign (Banned Book Week) during which they highlight titles that have been challenged in libraries within the United States of America. The American Association of School Libraries (AASL) also takes part in the Banned Book Week campaign and provides data on challenges received in school libraries. As there is no corresponding campaign in the UK, and little written on the topic, it is not known to what extent censorship is a problem for school libraries in this country.

1.2 Research Objectives

Whilst there is a good deal written on the topic of censorship in school libraries in the United States of America, little exists from a UK perspective. The aim of this study is to address this gap by exploring the issue of censorship in school libraries in Scotland. Whilst the ALA is very vocal and runs a high profile campaign that raises awareness of the issue of censorship in all library sectors, the same is not true for professional bodies in the UK. There is a need for research to ascertain the situation regarding book challenges in school libraries here. CILIP do not perform the same level of discussion and promotion on the topic of censorship as their counterparts in the United States (ALA) but it is not clear why this is the case. Does the lack of promotion of the issue mean there is no such problem in UK school libraries? This study aims to provide a current picture of how censorship affects school libraries in Scotland today.

In particular, the project seeks to learn the numbers of challenges to books, as well as the reasons given for those challenges and any action that was taken to resolve the challenge. As the literature review highlights the need for school libraries to have a selection policy in place, this study determines whether Scottish school libraries have policies in place that address the issue of stock selection and how any attempts to censor will be managed.

In order to address the research problem identified above, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How many book challenges did school libraries in Scotland receive over a five year period (2006-2011)?
2. On what basis were the book challenges made?
3. What action was taken by the school library as a result of the book challenges?
4. Do Scottish local authorities have a school library policy that covers stock selection and censorship?

In the literature on the topic of school libraries, many terms are used to refer to the library service provided within schools, such as learning resource centre, information centre and school media centre, however, for consistency this study will use the term school library throughout.

2. Literature Review

This literature review seeks to form a picture of current thinking within the Information and Library profession on the topic of how school libraries deal with the unique challenges they face when ensuring that school pupils gain access to the information and books that will help them develop into lifelong learners and readers. The issue of censorship of controversial material within a school setting will be explored as will self-censorship and the extent to which it is a factor influencing the selection of materials for school library collections. The strategies that school libraries have at their disposal to ensure that book challenges are effectively answered and satisfactorily resolved will also be explored.

There is much written on the topic of censorship and book challenges in school libraries in United States of America, however, the same is not true for the UK. Therefore, this literature review will, by necessity, be based on an international perspective of the issues under discussion, although the research in this study has been conducted in Scotland. This only serves to highlight the need for the Information and Library profession in Scotland to explore the issue of censorship and self-censorship in school libraries in order to formulate robust strategies and policies for handling such issues.

2.1 School Libraries

School libraries are a key component of the school and, as Carmichael (2007) states, are ‘as necessary to the school as the canteens and guidance offices’. According to the School Library Association (SLA), the purpose of a school library is:

‘to provide a wide range of books and multimedia resources to support teaching and learning throughout the key stages, and foster a reading and information culture that promotes independent motivated readers and learners for life.’ - SLA Position Statement, 2009)

As the purpose of school libraries is to support pupils’ education and provide young people with the skills to enable them to become life-long learners and readers, their importance in

providing resources to pupils to help them achieve these goals should not be underestimated.

School libraries need to provide information and opportunities to learn from a whole host of topics in order for them to help develop well-rounded individuals that are ready to operate in the real world when they leave school. This includes arming them with the tools to form their own opinions about information including what is appropriate, useful and reliable. In order to achieve this, school library collections should contain materials on all kinds of topics and the library should provide opportunities for pupils to discuss some of the more controversial or challenging books in order to help them make sense of them and form their own value judgements. As the American Association of School Libraries (AASL) states:

'The school library program provides learning opportunities in multiple literacies that enable students to become efficient and effective in the pursuit of information.

Further, the school library program encourages a critical stance as it encourages students to examine the authority of authors and the bias of sponsors; to assess the importance of currency of information to the topic at hand; and to determine the scope and relevance of information to meet their needs.' AASL (2012)

In order to develop these skills in engaging effectively with information it is important that pupils feel comfortable in the library and view it as a place where they can learn answers to the questions that occur to them as they develop into young adults. Carmichael (2007) views the school library as the 'living room of the school'; a place that is inviting and that pupils want to socialise and spend time in so encouraging them to regard it as a place in which they are free to be themselves. This can be achieved by creating a welcoming learning environment which houses a collection that helps students deal with their anxieties and to find answers to their questions, including the tough, controversial ones. This is especially important in a secondary school setting as secondary school is a time of self-discovery and exploration when pupils are seeking answers to questions on a whole range of topics, some

of which it may be difficult to find reliable information on, such as sexuality, sexual health or family relationship matters. The AASL echoes this opinion and asserts that school libraries have a role beyond providing curricular support in providing a place where pupils can explore 'questions that arise out of individual curiosity and personal interest' (AASL, 2012). Carmichael's article (2007) provides 'tips and tactics' in creating a school library that provides pupils with their own space and the facilities and resources to help create 'readers for life'. It provides a good depiction of what a school library should be and is a motivational piece that presents ways in which school librarians can engage with and enthuse pupils. She recognises that as well as a comfortable space with a positive atmosphere a key component of the school library is a collection that 'helps pupils deal with life's anxieties' (*i.bid*) but that some school librarians may not wish to stock anything controversial. The inquisitive nature of teenagers and their desire to learn more about everything can be one of the best things about working with teenagers in a school library setting (Carmichael, 2007), however providing information that satisfies these inquisitive pupils' queries can be difficult. Carmichael's article fails however, to explore the pressures that school librarians can face when trying to provide the ideal school library service, with a collection that meets all of the pupils' information needs.

This issue is recognised by Everhard (2005) who acknowledges that there is a difficult balance for school librarians who wish to provide open access to all material to school pupils and the wishes of others who would seek to control what is on the library shelves. These may be parents, funders or other groups with a particular interest in influencing school library collections. Pressure from these external sources can result in school librarians shying away from controversial materials or imposing access restrictions, such as age bandings, on books. Both of these strategies are forms of censorship.

There is much written about the pressures that school librarians often come under to remove or restrict access to certain books (for example Schrader, 1996; Cooper, 2010; Juozaitis,

2007) and it is recognised that school librarians experience far higher levels of pressure to censor than those in public libraries (Schrader, 1996). Whilst they wish to provide access to materials that will stimulate their readers and motivate them to learn it can be difficult to achieve due to the conflicting demands of pupils and those who wish to censor the school library collection. Different from public libraries in that the community they serve is totally made up of minors in an educational setting, the school library has a duty of care towards the school pupils. Cooper (2010) recognises that school libraries face unique challenges relating to intellectual freedom and censorship. She makes the point that children are restricted in many areas of life, for example, alcohol, tobacco, driving, voting and are also under the responsibility of parents/ guardians. Therefore school librarians need to provide students with free access to information whilst at the same time sticking to the laws about what they can access and respect parents' concerns. This can be difficult to achieve and it is understandable why some school librarians may wish to avoid confrontation by avoiding certain books. However, Cooper (2010) outlines ways in which school librarians can limit restrictions placed on information access. She advocates implementing collection development and selection policies that forbid restrictions on materials apart from on age-appropriateness and have procedures to be followed when challenges are made. Cooper also suggests that school libraries form a 'libraries friends' group that can read any challenged material, form an opinion on it and meet with the person making a complaint to try to resolve the issue. Parents should be informed about the library policies and given the the option to limit their own children's access to certain materials but also giving them information on the benefits of intellectual freedom. Cooper (2010) stresses the importance of the school library in helping students use their own judgement when selecting materials and states that this can be achieved through teaching them information skills.

There is clearly a need for school librarians to be given guidance on how to deal with the conflicting demands of professional ethics and worries of parents over exposing children to 'unsuitable' material. In the UK both CILIP (Barrett & Douglas, 2004) and the School Library

Association (SLA, 2011) hold position statements on the rights of children to have access to school libraries with, amongst other things, high quality resources. However, neither provides clear unambiguous statements such as that of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL):

“Students in America have the right to choose what they will read, view, or hear and are expected to develop the ability to think clearly, critically, and creatively about their choices; rather than allowing others to do this for them.” (AASL, 2012).

As has been discussed above, some school librarians resort to forms of censorship in order to avoid facing challenges to materials within their library collections.

2.2 Censorship

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) believes that “commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession” and urges librarians to “ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views”. (IFLA, 1999).

The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) statement on Intellectual Freedom, Access to Information and Censorship states that:

“Access should not be restricted on any grounds except that of the law. If publicly available material has not incurred legal penalties then it should not be excluded on moral, political, religious, racial or gender grounds, to satisfy the demands of sectional interest.” (CILIP, 2005).

These policy statements make it clear that censorship in libraries is not justifiable on any grounds; however there are those in society who use various factors in attempt to censor. Hannabus and Allard (2001) discuss the main societal factors that affect censorship such as responsibility, tolerance and morality. The paper provides good discussion and thinking

points about censorship and explores the information professional's role as an intermediary between those who seek to censor and their role to provide free access to information. The paper also points out that some will seek to justify censorship on the grounds that vulnerable groups of people should be protected from harm. This point is relevant when considering books that are made available to children in a school library. This 'third party' censorship is further discussed by Magnuson (2012) who studied the discourse of a community during a high profile book challenge in order to understand the motives of those who challenge books and those who argue against censorship. The book in question *When Tango Makes Three* is a children's book about two real-life male penguins who formed a couple and after being given an abandoned egg, successfully hatched it and raised the baby. The book has been either the most or second most challenged book on the ALA's banned book list each year since it was published in 2005. Magnuson found that 'third party censorship' is a key motivating factor for those who seek to ban books whilst the right to freedom of speech is often used by those who oppose censorship. Magnuson's methodology of analysing articles published about the book during a high profile book challenge was successful in identifying the reasons given by those who seek to censor and those who oppose it. Another paper that seeks to identify the characteristics of censorship is from Boyd & Bailey (2009) who use metaphors to describe censorship i.e. as barbed wire; as a patina and as a dangerous tightrope. The authors are of the opinion that as censorship is an 'old' topic that has been well-debated there is a danger that people might forget that it is still prevalent today. The paper is written with teachers in mind and whilst it does mention libraries, the dilemmas are described in terms of teachers' professionalism being undermined. The metaphors are striking and are a useful tool to communicate the harmful, controlling, aggressive nature of censorship but the paper adds little to the debate of how to tackle censorship in a school library setting.

The overriding voice amongst library professionals and the guidance provided by professional bodies is that censorship should not be practised as it is against their codes of

ethics. Oppenheim and Smith (2004) discuss the ethical issues of censorship in libraries and raise two key questions. Should censorship exist or not and if it should exist, then what should be censored and how? The authors do concede that there are occasions where there are conflicting views that need to be resolved such as between school librarians and parents. This conflict is also apparent when thinking about collection development. The paper's comprehensive literature review gives a good discussion on the issues around censorship and goes on to explore how collection development policies can protect against censorship. The paper also discusses the differences between the ALA and CILIP regarding freedom of information and censorship. The ALA is much more vocal in this area than CILIP with highly publicised campaigns such as Banned Book Week that creates awareness of instances of attempted censorship. The paper concludes that CILIP is "passive and unobtrusive" on the issue of censorship and recommends that they address this and be more active on the subject, particularly in helping librarians to develop policies regarding intellectual freedom.

It has been shown above that within the information and library profession the default position towards censorship is opposition. In reality, however, it is the case that there are those who seek to censor what information is freely available to certain groups such as school age children. School-age pupils enjoy reading about someone else that is experiencing the same things as them and can explore controversial topics in books without suffering any of the consequences. As Mires (2003) recognises, such books can often include swearing and moral dilemmas but teenage readers may engage with the books more readily if they feel it reflects their own life. If school librarians were to remove all such books from their collections or avoid purchasing them it may lead to those pupils not developing an interest in reading at all. Books portraying controversial topics such as teenage pregnancy, drug use or family breakdown can be used as a springboard for discussion. Rather than removing the power from pupils to form their own beliefs about moral issues, the school library has a role to play in facilitating discussion of difficult topics in order that pupils can

reach their own conclusions on what is appropriate. As one of the roles of a school library is to develop the critical skills of pupils, censorship of materials undermines the achievement of this remit and so undermines the role of the school library itself. The mixed message censorship sends to pupils needs to be considered as on the one hand school libraries encourage children to read, but on the other hand say but not these titles. Moody (2010) raises a thought provoking question regarding censorship of children's literature. 'At what point does censorship conflict with education?'

2.3 Self-censorship

Whilst open censorship is against the ethics of library professionals and has a high profile, secretive or self-censorship is a recognised issue within the library profession that is more difficult to tackle. Self-censorship can be defined as the removal or censor of items that librarians personally judge to be controversial or unacceptable (Rickman, 2010). It is the most complicated but least understood form of censorship and differs from other forms of censorship, such as book challenges, in that no records are kept of it happening and so it is difficult to measure how often it occurs. Attempts at open censorship through book challenges can lead to discussion of the issues raised in the book which can result in the complaint being successfully resolved. However self-censorship that takes place during stock selection prevents such discussion from happening as the controversial book has not been purchased. This type of censorship is unseen. Lau Whelan (2009) discusses this issue and states that self-censorship is a "dirty little secret" that no one wants to admit to practising. A survey conducted by the School Library Journal in the USA that found that 70 per cent of school librarians avoid purchasing a controversial title in order to avoid confrontation with parents (Lau Whelan, 2009). This suggests that self-censorship is widespread amongst school librarians in the United States. Lau Whelan concludes that in order to protect themselves, libraries should have a written selection policy that also addresses coping with written book challenges. The article provides several author accounts

of their experiences of censorship but this is not balanced with corresponding discussion with school librarians on the conflicting demands they face.

In contrast to Lau Whelan's findings, Rickman's 2006 study of self-censorship by school librarians in Arkansas, Delaware and North Carolina found that although self-censorship did exist in the survey population, it was not prevalent amongst the school librarians surveyed. Rickman found the practice to be more common among respondents who were aged 60-69 or were not in possession of a qualification in librarianship, as well as those who were in the early years of their career. For reasons discussed above, however, the prevalence or otherwise of self-censorship is difficult to ascertain and further study on school library catalogues in this country is required in order to determine whether 'controversial' titles are in school library collections.

Whilst self-censorship is often a conscious decision on the part of the school librarian in order to avoid controversy, in some circumstances the censor may not be aware that they are censoring. This type of censorship is discussed by Moody (2004) who raises an interesting point that some forms of censorship can be unconscious and the individuals are unaware that they are censoring, such as a librarian who is unaware of their own biases. Self-censorship may also be practiced in order to fit in with recognised community norms. It is understandable why such unconscious self-censorship is practiced considering librarians can experience high levels of stress when faced with a book challenge and pressure to remove a book can affect their job satisfaction. If they try to defend their decision to have the offending item kept in the school library collection, then their careers can be harmed. This is especially true in the USA where religious and conservative groups have been known to target school libraries, demanding that certain titles are removed. Hill (2010), reports on an instance when a group representing the 9-12 Project asked that three titles were removed from a school library. Not only did the pressure group want the titles removed, but they wanted to know who had bought them. Such challenges put school librarians in the position of having their professional judgement as well as their ethics brought into question. Hill

(2010) cites a *School Library Journal* survey from 2009 that found that 70% of school librarians who were interviewed gave the possible reaction of parents as a reason for not purchasing a book. This is a clear indication that in the USA self-censorship is a common practice among school librarians. Hill's article was written for an American journal and therefore does not report on the situation within the UK, however, it is reasonable to assume that school librarians in this country are subject to similar pressures.

Moody (2004) acknowledges that in terms of children's literature it is ethically difficult to refuse censorship through labelling. For example, if a book includes 'distressing' content such as death or violence it may be appropriate to put a warning label on the item. However, there are issues around who decides what is distressing and at what age a young reader is mature enough to cope with reading about such topics. This idea is discussed by Mires (2003) who highlights the difficulties in trying to pre-empt what books will be challenged. Some parents challenge books that are too violent, feature cruelty to animals or unruly children, or in other words, they want to protect their children from anything too 'real' that will steal their innocence. Other parents challenge books that don't depict 'real life' for example, flying animals, wizards etc. Therefore, if school librarians were to try to keep everyone happy their collections would be small and limited in the range of material available. This point is also made by Schrader (1996) who discusses the techniques that school librarians often use in an attempt to 'censor-proof' their collections. These techniques include practicing 'very careful selection' (Schrader, 1996) by avoiding titles that have been given warnings in reviews; noting titles published on challenged book lists or restricting access to books by authors whose previous titles have been challenged. Schrader asserts that these practices are not only dangerous because they give staff a false sense of security, but they are also pointless. This is because each text is open to several interpretations as each reader brings with them their own experiences, reading history and values. Therefore attempting to predict what will be found offensive by all library users or stakeholders is impossible.

Rather than trying to predict what books are likely to be challenged, school librarians should implement strategies to deal with them effectively. As well as a selection policy that includes statement on intellectual freedom, Schrader (1996) recommends staff training; public information programmes; complaint policy and mission statement. Schrader's paper develops strong arguments against self-censorship and also provides examples of strategies to cope with book challenges. Rickman (2006) further proposes that on-going professional development around best practices in collection development, intellectual freedom and censorship be instigated to allow professionals to reconnect with other school librarians and keep their knowledge and professional practices up to date.

It is clear that the issue of self-censorship amongst school librarians is of concern in the United States and Canada, but there is a lack of corresponding opinion pieces in the UK. Rohrer (2010) reports on high levels of attempts to ban books in school libraries in the United States. The article questions why this does not appear to be the case in the UK. A statement from the School Library Association suggested that in the UK parents rarely challenge books perhaps because the UK is a less 'religious' society. This study aims to establish whether this assertion that book challenges are not a factor in UK school libraries is correct by conducting a study of instances of book challenges in Scottish school libraries.

2.4 School Library Policies

The role of the school library is to encourage children to analyse and critique material and develop the skills to judge for themselves whether an item is suitable and appropriate for them. The freedom to think and inquire is a paramount goal for school libraries to instil in their users. Censorship removes this from pupils and so leaves the library open to those who would question its presence. It is important therefore that school libraries develop strategies for minimising the damage that can be done to their collections through book challenges. As many of the papers discussed above recognise, one such strategy is to have a selection policy in place that includes a statement on intellectual freedom and a complaints policy that outlines the procedure in the event of any challenges to books. O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan

(2007) also stress the importance of stock selection policies. In their experience the Intelligent Design movement tried to gift books to their school library, however as the librarians followed their district policy they were able to explain their reasons for rejecting them and demonstrate that they didn't meet the selection criteria. Without a policy in place it would not have been possible for them to logically explain and defend their decision not to accept the gifts. Therefore it can be seen that without stock selection policies in place school libraries leave themselves open to criticism and no means to defend and explain choices of material included in or rejected from the collection. O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan (2007) also raise the point that it is important to consider who should decide what is included in the school library collection. They conclude that professional librarians, in consultation with teaching staff, should decide what materials should be included that support the teaching of the collection rather than special interest groups who provide materials that do not agree with the taught material. O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan's paper provides a good argument for ensuring that selection policies are in place. Similarly, Mires (2003) stresses the importance of developing procedures aimed at preventing confrontations and responding to those that continue to arise. If librarians do not fight to retain any item that they had decided was appropriate for inclusion in their collection then personal and professional ethics are compromised. As demonstrated by O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan (2007), stock selection policies are an important tool to help librarians in doing just that.

The importance of stock selection policies in combating censorship in school libraries has been outlined above. However care should be taken within the stock selection process that censorship doesn't occur as a result of publisher bias. This notion is underlined by Moody (2004) who points out that relying on publishers' lists and acquisitions outsourcing can inevitably lead to some form of vendor bias. McMenemy (2008) also raises concerns about selection of materials being taken out of librarian's hands. As book sellers are not required to uphold the ethical standards that librarians adhere to, it could be the case that the materials they select for distribution to libraries have some form of bias or are chosen on the basis of

cost and don't lead to a well-rounded collection representing all viewpoints and cultures within society. It could also be those publishers who are preferred by the distributor who get more titles chosen. The range of sources available to the librarian are reduced which places a lot of trust in the selection processes of the company.

Stock selection and complaints policies should form part of the overall school library policy. According to Turner (2006) the school library policy is the 'foundation of a professionally managed library resource centre'. As such it underpins other library policies such as development plans and is a key tool in effective strategic management. Therefore its importance for the management of school libraries should not be underestimated. As school library policies are such vital management tools it is expected that every school library in the UK will have one in place. This was not the case in Turner's 2006 study of school library policies in England and Wales, which found that many schools had not formulated a school library policy. Turner (2006) concludes that as libraries continue to develop into more proactive multimedia resource centres with a focus on supporting the curriculum and supporting the teaching and learning of pupils, so the need for school library policies is increasing.

Throughout this literature review it has been widely recognised that collection development or stock selection policies, with a clear statement on intellectual freedom, that contain a procedure for handling complaints or challenges about items should be in place within school libraries. Therefore one of the aims of this study is to determine what policies are in place within school libraries in Scotland and what procedures for handling complaints are followed.

Other strategies may be information events for parents and other library stakeholders, staff training and awareness raising programmes for teaching staff as well as pupils. These strategies may not stop challenges but will reduce uncertainty in how to resolve them and the temptation to stock material that is deemed 'safe'.

This literature review has reviewed texts on the topics of school libraries, censorship, self-censorship and school library policies. It has been shown that there is much evidence of book challenges and self-censorship practices being prevalent in school libraries in the USA. However, there is little written from a UK perspective. Therefore this study seeks to address the balance by researching the issue of censorship in school libraries in Scotland.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Objectives & Questions

As the literature review above shows, censorship in school libraries is a topic on which much has been written from a North American, Canadian and to some extent Australian perspective. The same volume of work does not exist from a UK or Scottish point of view and so the issue is not widely debated among the information and librarian profession in this country. It is not clear whether the challenges our colleagues in North America face in coping with attempts to censor in school libraries are mirrored here.

This paper seeks to establish:

- to what extent censorship is an issue in Scottish school libraries by determining how many challenges school libraries have received;
- what kinds of materials are most frequently challenged;
- who the book challenges are made by.

It is also hoped to review the policies that are currently in place within the school library sector in Scotland that help school librarians in dealing with challenges and ensuring they are satisfactorily resolved.

In order to ascertain the answers to the research problem outlined above, both quantitative and qualitative methods could be applied. A quantitative approach is most suited to determining numbers of book challenges received by school libraries and categorising the basis on which they were made, as well as the complainants and actions taken to resolve the challenges. Quantitative comparison techniques can also be used to compare the numbers and types of challenge in different school libraries. Whilst a qualitative approach can be used to examine and compare the contents of school library policies. Further qualitative research methods could be undertaken once the quantitative data analysis was

complete. For example, interviews with school librarians could be conducted in order to ascertain their opinions about book challenges, censorship and self-censorship and the impact that these issues have on the school library, including their impact on collection development. The stress that school librarians suffer as a result of receiving book challenges could also be explored.

Due to the time constraints of this study and the fact that it has been conducted during the school holiday period, therefore restricting access to school librarians and their collections, it was decided that rather than take a purely qualitative approach, this study would use a mixed methodology incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methods. As Creswell discusses, mixed methodology studies have increased in popularity over recent years. This is because a mixed methodology study uses both quantitative and qualitative methods and so can gain a fuller understanding of the research problems than if either are used in isolation (Creswell, 2009,p.203).

In terms of this study, the benefits of using a mixed methodology are that the quantitative data will provide an overview of the situation in relation to numbers of instances of book challenges in school libraries across the whole of Scotland, which is currently not recorded elsewhere, whilst the qualitative data will allow a closer study of the contents of school library policies in place in Scotland, and so give an indication of the strategies currently practiced in order to guard against censorship and the guidance that school librarians receive in dealing with book challenges.

3.2 Freedom of Information

The data collection method used in this study was survey via Freedom of Information requests sent by email or, in one instance, by online form to each local authority's data controller.

The terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act, 2002 state that the organisation, in this case local authorities, must acknowledge receipt of the request and confirm that they will

respond within 20 working days. This makes Freedom of Information request a viable, quick method to gather the data to inform this study. As the information requested is a matter of public record and will be processed by data controllers, who are public servants, there is no need for this study gain ethics approval. If school librarians or school pupils were being surveyed directly there would be an obligation to ensure that ethics approval was gained prior to contacting individuals. This would be essential to ensure that the study operated with 'honesty and dignity' (Denscombe, 2007, p.141) and that the rights of those who participated in the study were respected and so ensure the integrity of the research.

Ross and Whitaker (2007) reported an overall positive experience of using the Freedom of Information Act to research their study, although they recognised possible drawbacks, including, that local authorities may cite high costs of processing as a reason for not completing the request. As they state however, the fact that they received a high number of complete or almost complete responses indicates that the costs do not necessarily have to be excessive if the authority is well organised (Ross & Whitaker, 2007, p.68).

This method of survey to Scottish local authorities has been proven to be successful in the past by others such as Brown and McMenemy (2012) and Taylor and McMenemy (2012) and therefore is a viable method for surveying local authorities in Scotland to gain data for this study.

As government bodies are legally required to respond to Freedom of Information requests, it is hoped that this method will provide a high response rate. The requests have been sent electronically, rather than by post and so it was thought that the responses would be quickly obtained. Whilst a high response rate was expected, the possibility exists that the local authorities may not hold the information requested and so refuse to provide the data on that basis. It could also be the case that as each local authority has a number of schools, most of which will have some school library provision, they may state that there is too much information to gather and so to answer the information request would be prohibitively costly

for them. Under the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act if the cost to the local authority exceeds £600 then the organisation is not obliged to provide the information.

One other possible drawback in using Freedom of Information requests to gather data from local authorities is that some local authorities have created charitable trusts that operate as private limited companies. These local authorities have transferred responsibility for cultural and heritage services to these companies which are not bound by the terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act as they are no longer public bodies. Therefore it was thought likely that the local authorities who have done this, such as Glasgow and Highland Councils, would refuse to answer the request on the basis that they no longer provide library services.

Should the research method fail to provide sufficient material, a more in-depth examination of the topic of self-censorship will be conducted to find out if there is evidence that self-censorship occurs in school libraries in Scotland. A discussion on the tension between professional ethics and self-censorship could be informed through a review of both academic papers and popular writing such as newspaper articles, library blog posts and social media. This would provide a clear picture of current thinking around the topic of self-censorship and how library professionals balance the ethical requirements of their profession with the need to provide material that is appropriate to their community of users (in this case school age children).

Having taken all of the potential drawbacks into consideration, it was concluded that by using Freedom of Information requests, a good sized sample that is representative of the whole of Scotland, rather than a sample population, could be surveyed quickly with an anticipated high response rate.

A short survey was sent by email to the data controllers of 31 of the Scottish local authorities and 1 was submitted via online information request form. As it was expected that the data controllers receiving the information requests would pass the survey on to the appropriate library service staff, terminology that would be understood by library professionals was used.

Rather than use the term censorship which can be contentious it was decided to use the more neutral term 'challenges to books' which it was thought, due to the high profile of the ALA's book challenge campaign, would be understood by library service staff. This proved to be the case, with only two requests for clarification of the term 'challenge' requested, both of which were requested by the authorities' information officers before passing the information request on to their colleagues in the library service.

The survey consisted of four questions which were designed to provide data that could be analysed and compared across the survey population. The objective of questions 1 to 3 is to determine the numbers of book challenges, the motives for them, who they were made by and where records of challenges are held. The objective of question 4 is to ascertain whether school libraries in Scotland hold such policies as the literature review above highlighted as necessary. The questions posed in the survey were:

1. How many challenges to books or materials in school libraries has the local authority received over the period 2006-2011 inclusive?
2. For each instance:
 - a. What was the title of the book or material that was challenged?
 - b. On what basis was the challenge made?
 - c. Which category of library user/ stakeholder made the challenge? For example, Parent, Staff member, Pupil, School Governor, Not Specified.
 - d. What action was taken by the school library to resolve the challenge?
3. Where are records of instances of challenges to books or materials held? For example, centrally by the local authority or by individual school libraries?

4. Please provide a copy of the local authority's school library policy covering stock selection and complaints procedure including the procedure to be followed in the event of a challenge to books or material held within the school library.

Whilst it is thought that these survey questions will provide both quantitative and qualitative data that will give a good indication of the situation regarding censorship in Scotland at the present time, other questions could have been posed to give a different perspective on the topic. For example, school library book stock lists could have been requested as well as policies. This would have provided data on what titles are commonly held within school library collections and could have been analysed to ascertain whether the more controversial titles are being avoided. This in turn may have been an indication of whether self-censorship is being practiced by school librarians in Scotland. This method is similar to that which proved to be successful when used by Coley (2002) who searched school library OPACs in the USA to determine whether the titles within the collection gave any indication that self-censorship was being practiced.

As Rickman in her study (2010) found that those librarians with professional qualifications are less likely to practice self-censorship, the qualifications of school librarians in Scotland could also have been requested. Again this would have given the study greater scope in examining the issue of self-censorship. However, it was decided that as the principal aim of this study is to provide data on censorship in order to form a picture of the situation in Scottish school libraries and to stimulate debate on the topic then the questions outlined above would stand. Depending on the data received, the issue of self-censorship may be a viable topic for future study.

The survey was sent electronically to all 32 Scottish local authorities at the end of June and it was expected that the responses would be received by mid to late July.

3.3 Data Analysis Methods

Initially, in order to organise the emailed responses to the information requests, when they were received they were separated into folders for no challenges received, information not held and those who had received at least one book challenge. This allowed the information to be quickly sorted into rough categories before being studied in more depth.

As the study uses quantitative data techniques it was decided that the most efficient tool for analysis and comparison of the data received was spreadsheet. A spreadsheet was created in Microsoft Excel onto which responses were added as and when they were received. The spreadsheet comprises pages detailing which local authorities have received challenges and how many; the basis for the challenge; who made the challenge; what action was taken by the school library after the challenge; where records of challenges are held and what book titles were challenged. The spreadsheet also has a page showing whether local authorities provided copies of their school library policy and how complaints regarding school libraries are dealt with.

In order to allow easy presentation and comparison of data, unambiguous categories of response to questions 1 to 3 of the survey were devised.

In order to categorise the basis on which book challenges have been made, the ALA categories of book challenges have been used. This allows a like for like comparison with the findings of the ALA and will show whether the same types of books are challenged here as in the USA. Each challenge recorded was put into one of the following categories:

Abortion, Anti-Ethnic, Anti-Family, Drugs, Homosexuality, Inaccurate, Insensitivity, Occult, Offensive Language, Other, Political Viewpoint, Nudity, Racism, Religious Viewpoint, Sex Education, Sexism, Sexually Explicit, Suicide, Unsuitable to Age Group, Violence.

Categories of complainant were also added to the spreadsheet. These are: Parent, Member of Staff, School Governor, Pupil, Other, Not Specified.

Categories of the action taken by the school/ librarian after the challenge are: Item removed from library; Item relocated; Item kept in stock; Alternative title given; No action taken.

In relation to where records of book challenges are held the two categories are by Local Authority Centrally or School librarian.

One of the objectives of the study outlined above is to ascertain whether Scottish school libraries have policies in place that outline their stock selection criteria, stance on intellectual freedom or censorship and a procedure to be followed in the event of book challenges. As only 10 local authorities provided any school library policies, the method for analysing the content was straightforward. The school library policies received were read to determine what guidance is given on the issues of censorship and stock selection. A table was then constructed in Microsoft Word, into which relevant sections from the school library policies were entered. This gives a clear overview of the information contained within the policies and shows whether there is consistency between local authorities across Scotland.

Charts were created in Microsoft Word showing the breakdown of information relating to each of the survey questions. This allowed the data to be presented in a clear visual format.

3.4 Reflections & Limitations

Whilst it was thought that the methodology for the study would result in gaining sufficient data to form a picture of the current status of censorship within school libraries in Scotland and the policies in place to help school librarians to deal with challenges to the materials within their collections, there are some limitations to the method.

First of all, as the method does not incorporate a strategy to interact with school librarians it is difficult to gauge their opinion on the prevalence of censorship in school libraries and whether they see it as a problem that impacts the service that they provide. It would also be advantageous to gain access to school library catalogues in order to determine whether it is commonplace for controversial titles to be stocked in school libraries in Scotland, which may

indicate whether self-censorship is a factor within Scottish school libraries. Finally, the study relates to possible censorship of material provided to school pupils, but omits any method for ascertaining how pupils themselves are impacted by censorship practices in their school libraries.

4. Findings

The survey was sent to all 32 local authorities in Scotland, all of which acknowledged receipt of the request and stated that they aimed to provide a reply within the 20 working days required by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

31 of the 32 local authorities (97%) did respond to the information request, although Edinburgh City Council did not respond within the 20 working day limit. Only 1 council failed to respond to the information request. That was Glasgow City Council, whose library services are run by Glasgow Life which is a limited company with charitable status.

Therefore it is assumed that they failed to provide any information as Glasgow Life is not a public body and so is not bound by the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act. Similarly, Highland Council Library Services are now operated by High Life Highland, which is also a limited company with charitable status. High Life Highland did confirm that the information sought is not kept in written format and so they would not be able to answer the survey questions. They did, however, advise that any relevant information would be held at an individual school library level. They also provided a copy of the stock selection policy for High Life Highland Libraries which pertains to all public and school libraries in the Highland Council area.

The survey results are presented below with each section relating to each question posed; in the order they were asked.

4.1 Numbers of Book Challenges Received

Out of the 31 local authorities who did respond to the survey, 3 (9.7%) stated that they did not hold the information requested, 17 (54.8%) confirmed that they had received at least one book challenge and provided further details of the challenges and 10 (32.3%) stated that they had received no book challenges during the 5 year period in question (2007-2011). One local authority (East Ayrshire Council) failed to answer the first 3 questions of the survey on the grounds that the costs involved in asking each school to check their records would be

approximately £750 and so they were not obliged to supply the information. Edinburgh City Council provided a partial response, stating that there are no centrally held records regarding book challenges in school libraries. They also stated that to retrieve the information from individual school libraries would cost approximately £735 and therefore they are not obliged to meet the information request.

The breakdown of responses is shown in Chart 4.1 below.

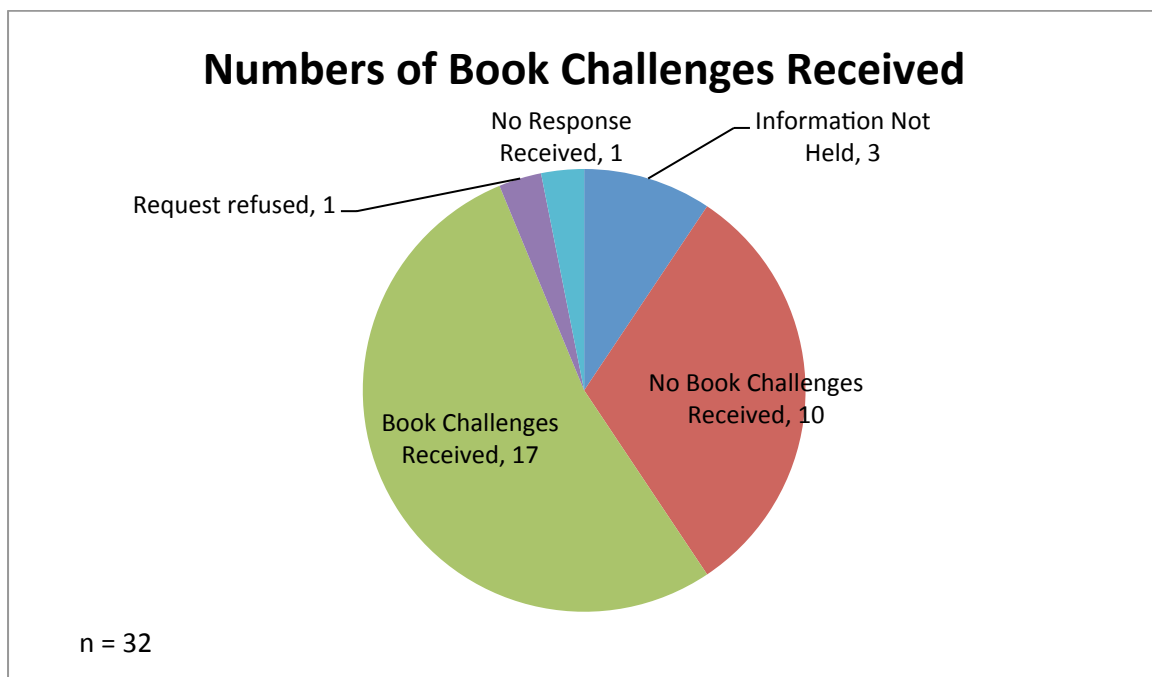


Chart 4.1 – Numbers of Book Challenges Received

It can be seen that out of 32 local authorities in Scotland, 17 (53%) have received at least one book challenge across their school library service over the past five years (2007-2011). That figure could be as high as 22 (69%) if the Councils who did not supply the data are taken into account. Therefore an initial conclusion can be made that the majority of Scottish school libraries have received attempts to censor books within their collections in the past five years.

4.2 Breakdown of Challenges per Local Authority

In total, across 17 local authorities, 43 book challenges were received in Scottish school libraries during the past five years. Chart 4.2 below shows the breakdown of challenges by local authority:

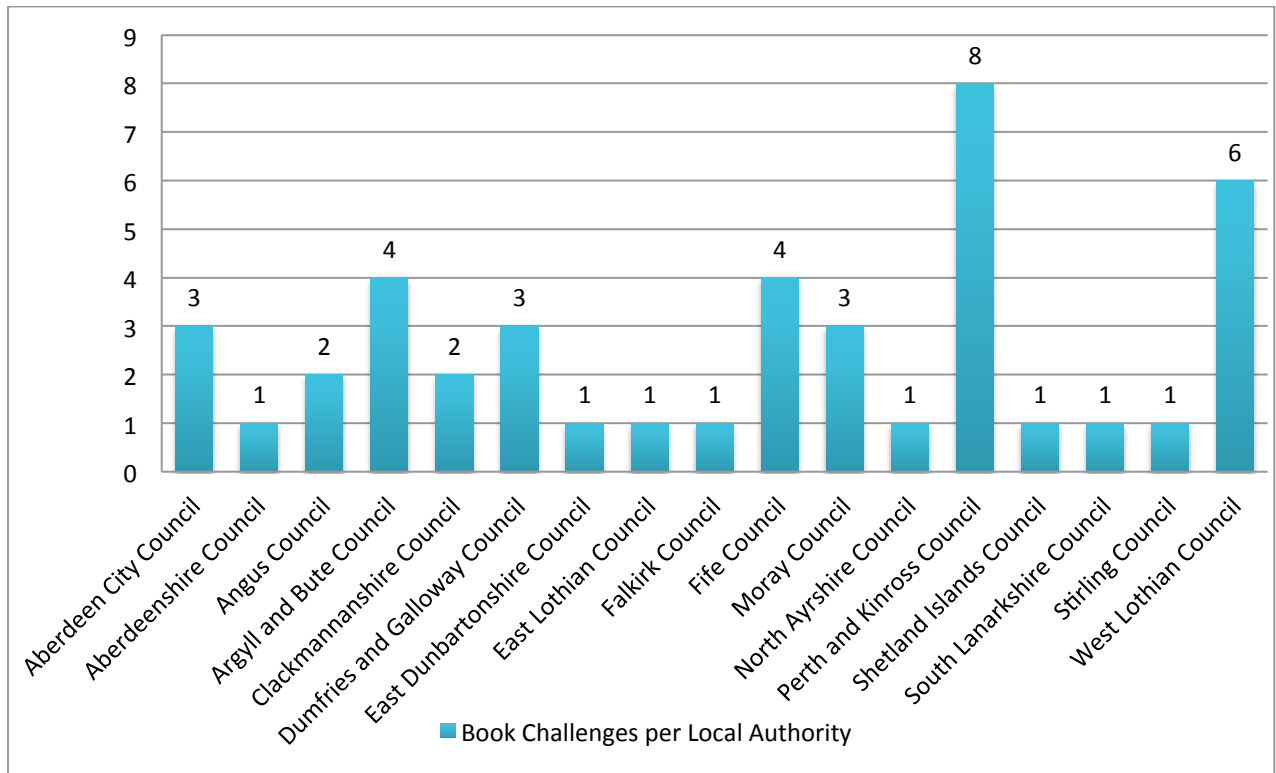


Chart 4.2 – Challenges per Local Authority

As can be seen, out of the 17 local authorities that received book challenges, the highest number (8) was received by Perth and Kinross Council whilst 8 of the local authorities Aberdeenshire; East Dunbartonshire; East Lothian; Falkirk; North Ayrshire; Shetland Islands; South Lanarkshire and Stirling Councils received 1 challenge each over the five year period.

4.3 Book Titles Challenged

Table 4.1 below shows the book titles that were challenged per local authority area.

Book Title	Author	Local Authority
The End of Alice	A.M. Holmes	Aberdeen City Council
Unknown	Chris Ryan	Aberdeen City Council
Filth	Irvine Welsh	Aberdeen City Council
Complete Encyclopaedia of Pistols and Revolvers	Unknown	Aberdeenshire Council
Horrid Henry	Francesca Simon	Angus Council
Henry Tumour	Anthony McGowan	Angus Council
Girls in Tears	Jacqueline Wilson	Argyll and Bute Council
Treasure Island	Spike Milligan	Argyll and Bute Council
Angel	Katie Price	Argyll and Bute Council
Millions	Frank Cottrell Boyce	Argyll and Bute Council
Beast	Ally Kennan	Clackmannanshire Council
Tears of a Friend	Joanna Kendrick	Clackmannanshire Council
The Northern Lights	Howard Norman	Dumfries & Galloway Council
How to Fight a Girl	Thomas Rockwell	Dumfries & Galloway Council
Superfudge	Judy Blume	Dumfries & Galloway Council
Unknown	Unknown	East Dunbartonshire Council
The Walking Dead	Robert Kirkman	East Lothian Council
Mine	Joanna Kendrick	Falkirk Council
Doing It	Melvyn Burgess	Fife Council
Forbidden	Tabitha Suzuma	Fife Council
Trainspotting	Irvine Welsh	Fife Council
Mad Dogs	Robert Muchamore	Fife Council
Losing It	Keith Gray	Moray Council
Losing It	Keith Gray	Moray Council
Before I Die	Jenny Downham	Moray Council
Truth in Science	Stephen C. Meyer	North Ayrshire Council
The Granny Project	Anne Fine	Perth and Kinross Council
Beast	Ally Kennan	Perth and Kinross Council
The Bonechiller	Graham McNamee	Perth and Kinross Council
Al Capone Does My Shirts	Gennifer Choldenko	Perth and Kinross Council

Sleepwalker	Paul Blum	Perth and Kinross Council
Beach Party	R L Stine	Perth and Kinross Council
The Boyfriend	R L Stine	Perth and Kinross Council
Werewolves	Stephen Krensky	Perth and Kinross Council
Clay	David Almond	Shetland Islands Council
Unknown	Darren Shan	South Lanarkshire Council
Forever	Judy Blume	Stirling Council
Trainspotting	Irvine Welsh	West Lothian Council
Trainspotting	Irvine Welsh	West Lothian Council
Biology Text Book	Unknown	West Lothian Council
Spells for Teenage Witches	Marina Baker	West Lothian Council
Witch Spell	Guy N. Smith	West Lothian Council
Iboy	Kevin Brooks	West Lothian Council

Table 4.1 – Book titles challenged

The most challenged author was Irvine Welsh whose books were the subject of 4 book challenges across 3 different local authorities. *Trainspotting* received 3 challenges; 2 in the same school in West Lothian and 1 in Fife and *Filth* was the subject of 1 challenge in a school in Aberdeen City. The only other author whose books were challenged in more than one local authority area was Judy Blume, whose book *Superfudge* was the subject of a challenge in Dumfries and Galloway and *Forever* was the subject of a challenge in Stirling. Other authors also received more than one challenge but from within the same local authority area. The RL Stine books *Beach Party* and *The Boyfriend* received 1 challenge each in Perth and Kinross and Keith Gray's *Losing It* was the subject of 2 challenges in Moray. In 3 instances the author was 'Unknown'. These book challenges related to a biology text book that was challenged in West Lothian; an encyclopaedia of pistols and revolvers that was challenged in Aberdeenshire and a book whose title was also 'Unknown' that was the subject of a book challenge in East Dunbartonshire. There were 2 challenges whereby the author was known but the book title was not. These related to 1 challenge of a book by Chris Ryan in Aberdeen City and 1 challenge made against a book by Darren Shan in South Lanarkshire.

4.4 Basis on Which Challenges Were Made

As discussed above, the ALA categories of reasons for a book being challenged were used to categorise the challenges received by Scottish school libraries. Appendix 1 shows the full breakdown of reasons for the book challenge by local authority area. Table 4.2 below summarises that data.

Reason For Challenge	Instances	% Total Instances
Abortion	0	0
Anti-ethnic	0	0
Anti-family	0	0
Drugs	1	2%
Homosexuality	0	0
Inaccurate	0	0
Insensitivity	0	0
Occult	1	2%
Other	2	5%
Political Viewpoint	0	0
Nudity	0	0
Racism	0	0
Religious Viewpoint	2	5%
Sex Education	1	2%
Sexism	0	0
Sexually Explicit	7	16%
Suicide	0	0
Unsuited to Age Group	20	47%
Violence	1	2%
Offensive Language	8	19%
Total Number of Book Challenges	43	100%

Table 4.2 – Reasons for Book Challenges

Table 4.2 shows that the most frequent reason for book challenges was ‘Unsuited to Age Group’ which had 20 instances (47%), followed by offensive language with 8 (19%), then sexually explicit content with 7 instances (16%).

4.5 Instigators of Book Challenges

The types of people making the book challenge have been split into 6 categories. Chart 4.3 below shows which categories of complainant instigated the book challenges.

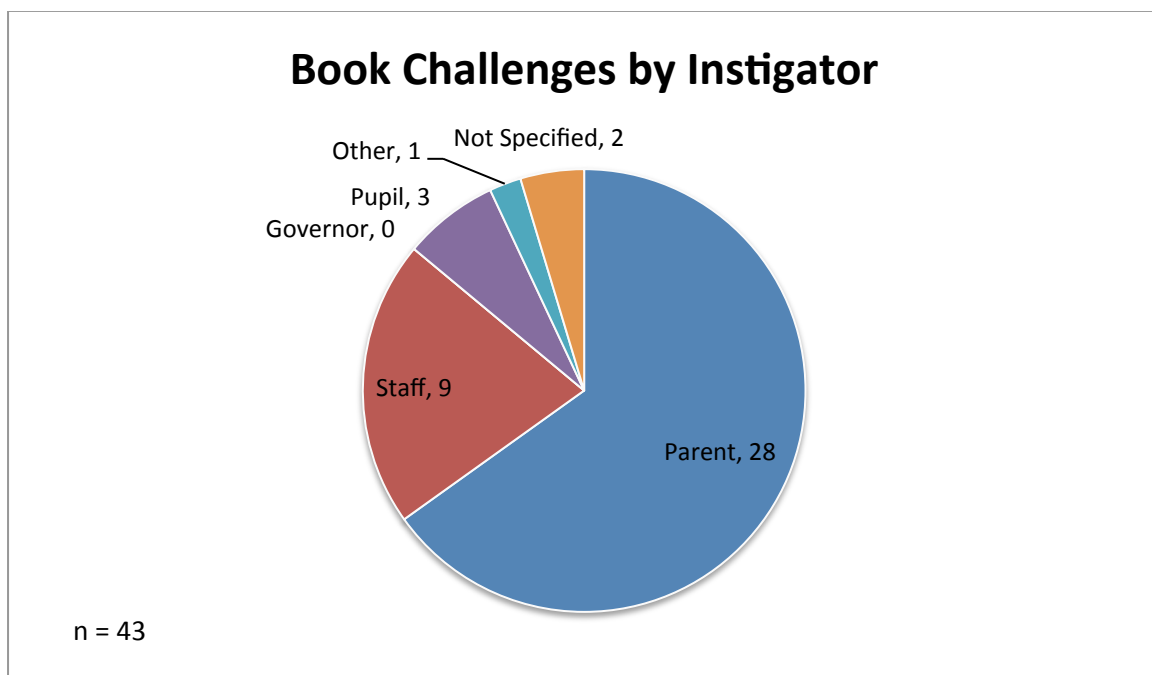


Chart 4.3 – Book challenges by instigator

Parents account for 28 (65%) of the book challenges, with staff making 9 (21%) of the challenges. 3 challenges (7%) were made by pupils and 2 (5%) were not specified. 1 complainant was marked as ‘Other’. This challenge was made by an unspecified family member.

4.6 Action Taken to Resolve the Challenge

The action taken by the school library to resolve the book challenge is detailed in Table 4.3, below.

Action taken	Instances	% of Total Instances
Book relocated	17	40%
Book removed from library	16	37%
Book kept in stock	7	16%
No action taken	2	5%
Alternative title given	1	2%
Totals	43	100%

Table 4.3 – Action taken to resolve the challenge

As can be seen in Table 4.3 the most common strategy to resolve the book challenges was to relocate the book within the library. In all instances of this strategy being used, the book in question was moved to a more senior section of the library. In 2 cases it was agreed that a parental slip would be required before the book would be loaned in future, and in 1 case a content warning label was placed on the book. The next most common strategy was to remove the book from the library completely. In 2 of these instances letters of apology were also sent to the parents who had made the complaint. There were 2 instances when no action was taken by the library staff to resolve the challenge. In 1 of those instances the complaint was made anonymously and there was no follow up action taken. In the other, the parent who had complained failed to attend a meeting that had been arranged to discuss the matter and so no further action was taken.

4.7 Records of Book Challenges

Records of Book Challenges have been categorised as Held Centrally (by local authority), Held in School Library or Not Kept. Chart 4.4 below shows where book challenge records are kept by those local authorities who responded to the survey.

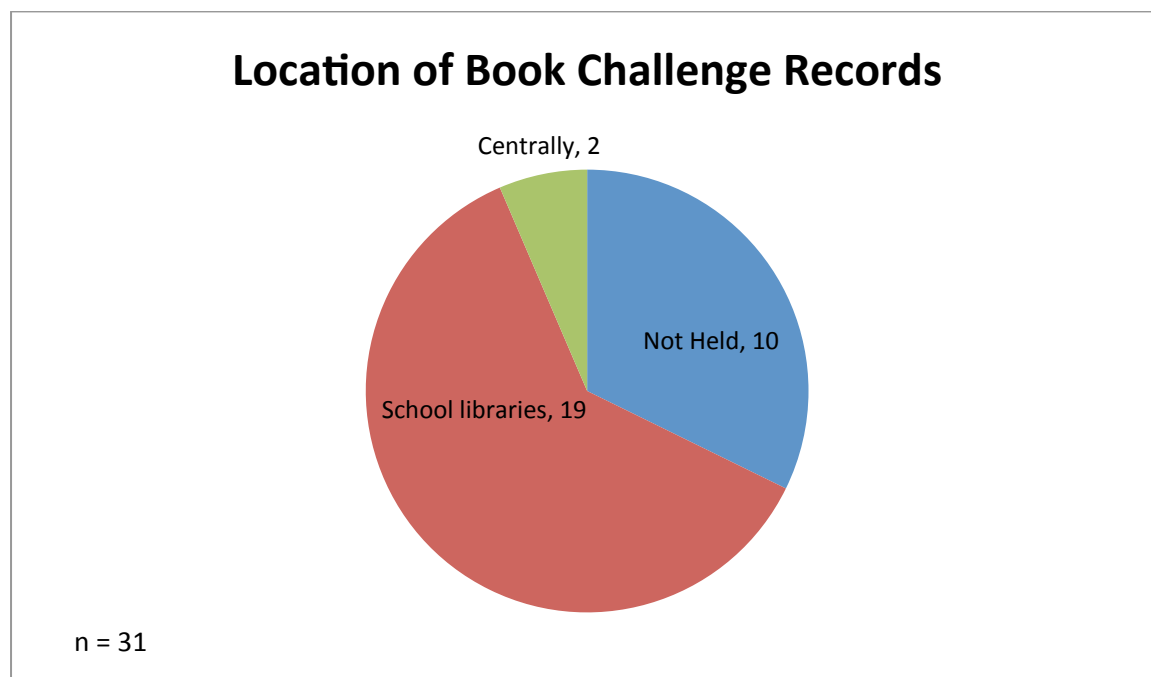


Chart 4.4 – Location of Book Challenge Records

As Chart 4.4 shows, the majority, 19 (61%) of the 31 local authorities that completed the survey advised that any records of book challenges are kept with individual school libraries. 10 (32%) advised that no records of book challenges are kept, these 10 were local authorities which had previously stated that they had received no book challenges over the period in question. 2 councils (East Renfrewshire and Midlothian) stated that although their school libraries had received no book challenges, if they did then it would be the responsibility of those individual school libraries to keep appropriate records. Only 2 (6%) local authorities stated that the records of book challenges were held centrally by the council. In 1 of those instances a complaint was made about some material held in all of the local authority's school libraries. This complaint was received via the Council's website and was not made to any school library directly. Therefore it was logged on the Council's central customer feedback system.

4.8 School Library Policies

The final question of the survey requested that local authorities provide a copy of their school library stock selection and complaints policy, including the procedures to be followed in the event of a book challenge being made to a school library.

4.8.1 Stock Selection

Of the 31 local authorities that responded to the survey, 21 (68%) did not provide any stock selection or complaints policy. Of those 21, 13 stated that no central school library stock selection policy exists as individual school librarians are responsible for stock selection whilst 7 stated that no school library stock selection policy exists. 1 local authority (Renfrewshire) advised that although the school library service does not hold a policy covering stock selection, one is currently being devised. East Lothian Council did send a document in response to question 4 of the survey, the document is a parental permission slip and not a policy. Therefore only 10 (32%) of the 31 responding local authorities provided any form of stock selection policy that is currently in use within their school libraries.

The policies received are detailed in table 4.4 below, with the relevant sections on controversial material, censorship or book challenges provided:

Local Authority	Selection Policy
<p>Aberdeen City Council</p>	<p>Each school is responsible for their own selection policy.</p> <p>3 secondary school policies were received:</p> <p>School 1: Resources are selected and edited to reflect a commitment to inclusion, racial equality, equal opportunities and additional support needs. Also Will promote reading for recreational and educational purposes. No mention of censorship/ challenges/</p> <p>School 2: States that: “Resources will not be excluded solely on the basis that they contain bad language, references to sexual relationships or other controversial issues. In developing a collection of fiction that is relevant to teenagers it is sometimes necessary to include such items. However such books will only be issued to age-appropriate pupils. Procedure for challenges: The librarian, in consultation with her line manager, will evaluate challenged materials and the outcome of the evaluation will be forwarded to the complainant”.</p> <p>School 3: Makes the same statement about resources not being excluded as school 2. Also contains the same statement regarding challenged materials.</p>
<p>Angus Council</p>	<p>Selection policy for all schools within the local authority area.</p> <p>With respect to controversial material it states: ‘<i>SLRC will contain a range of material which will not be appropriate for all of its users. Angus Council is not entering into the dangerous business of censorship</i>’. This is a very clear anti-censorship statement.</p> <p>Also recommends that students should be guided towards material that is appropriate to their age, level of maturity and purposes. In respect of controversial material the policy states that it is reasonable to require a note of parental consent.</p> <p>Includes an appendix with issues for consideration when making policy including guidelines for separating books (especially fiction) into sections – especially senior fiction – and the need for this to be clearly marked.</p>
<p>East Renfrewshire Council</p>	<p>Selection policy for all schools within the local authority area.</p> <p>No statement on their position regarding censorship. States that fiction will be classified according to their appropriateness for age and ability of pupils. A permission slip signed by parent/ carer is needed in order to borrow fiction classified for older pupils.</p>

<p>Falkirk Council</p>	<p>Selection policy for all schools within the local authority area.</p> <p>No mention of censorship or challenges/ complaints. Asserts that with regards to all library resources “Concepts and language should be appropriate for the ages, abilities and interest levels of all pupils”.</p>
<p>Fife Council</p>	<p>Each school is responsible for their own stock selection policy.</p> <p>7 out of 19 schools within the area have a policy.</p> <p>Schools 1-4 operate under the same policy:</p> <p>Access is not restricted by age or grade and items are not labelled as having potentially controversial content. Ultimate responsibility for what a child takes out is with the parents of that child who are expected to be aware of what their child is reading.</p> <p>School 5 – States that ‘items will not be excluded on moral, political, racial, religious, sexist, language or other sensitive grounds alone; collection will not be influenced by individuals, groups or organisations making representation for particular materials to be withdrawn from view or loan.’</p> <p>School 6 – There is no mention of challenges or stance on censorship</p> <p>School 7 – Holds no formal written library policy but use parental permission slips before junior pupils can borrow books kept in senior library.</p>
<p>Highland Council (High Life Highland Libraries)</p>	<p>Stock selection policy for High Life Highland Libraries pertains to all public libraries and to eight joint secondary school/public library facilities.</p> <p>Also supplied two school library selection policies.</p> <p>School 1 – No mention of challenges or stance on censorship</p> <p>School 2 – No mention of challenges or stance on censorship</p> <p>Highland Library Service Stock Collection Policy – no mention of challenges or stance on censorship</p>
<p>Inverclyde Council</p>	<p>School library stock selection and stock editing policy for all schools in local authority area</p> <p>There is no mention of challenges or stance on censorship</p>
<p>Moray Council</p>	<p>Collection Development policy for the local authority</p> <p>No mention of challenges or stance on censorship</p>
<p>North Lanarkshire Council</p>	<p>Management of school library materials policy document which provides a ‘clearly defined process for editing and selecting school library stock.</p>

	There is no mention of challenges or stance on censorship. Suggests when editing fiction books that the social content needs to be considered, i.e. current attitudes and awareness with regard to sensitive issues such as race, religion, class, disability, sexual orientation or gender?
<p>West Dunbartonshire Council</p>	<p>Each school is responsible for their own selection policy.</p> <p>Provided relevant extracts from 2 school libraries.</p> <p>School 1 – Fiction split into the following sections: Junior (available to all), Teenage (S2 onwards – though available to S1 pupils with permission letter) and Senior (S3 onwards – available to younger pupils with permission letter). Care is taken when selecting potentially controversial books and librarian’s knowledge and that of teaching and fellow library staff is taken into consideration. Any unsuitable books that make it into the collection will be withdrawn at the librarian’s discretion. With regards to non-fiction, states that it is important that library remains neutral in providing access to information which could be considered controversial e.g. drugs, abortion.</p> <p>School 2 – Outlines a thorough policy in respect of selecting resources that are in line with ‘gender and multicultural policies’. Makes no statement in relation to controversial material or censorship.</p>

Table 4.4 – Stock Selection Policies

As table 4.4 shows, of the 10 local authorities that provided school library policies 7 apply to all schools within the local authority area. The other 3 have no central policy but provided policies for those schools within their area that have devised their own. Therefore, in Aberdeen City, Fife and West Dunbartonshire there is a lack of consistency across schools with regards to the school libraries’ position on censorship and criteria for stock selection.

With regards to controversial material and censorship, 7 individual school policies make anti-censorship statements. 2 of these schools are in Aberdeen City and 5 are in Fife. The same 2 schools in Aberdeen City are the only 2 that mention a procedure to be followed in the event of receiving a book challenge.

Out of the 7 central school library policies only 1, Angus Council, makes a clear anti-censorship statement. None of the central school library policies outline a procedure to be

followed in the event of receiving a book challenge, although the Angus Council policy does include a complaints procedure which is discussed below.

4.8.2 Complaints Procedures

Of the 31 local authorities that responded to the survey, 15 (48%) advised that any complaints regarding materials within school libraries would be dealt with by the individual school, whilst 7 (23%) advised that with regards to school libraries there is no complaints procedure. 7 (23%) local authorities stated that although there was no specific complaints policy in relation to school libraries, any complaints are referred to the local authority's corporate complaints procedure. 1 (3%) local authority (Shetland) advised that complaints would be passed to the Young People's Services Librarian and 1 (3%) local authority (Highland) did not provide any information on which procedures are followed in the event of a complaint being received in a school library.

The complaints procedures outlined in the 10 school library policies received are shown in Table 4.5 below:

Local Authority	Complaints Procedure
Aberdeen City Council	Complaints are dealt with at an individual school level, in accordance with Council's Corporate Complaints Procedure (available on the Council website)
Angus Council	Complaints are handled sensitively by the school in the first instance in line with the agreed school policies.
East Renfrewshire Council	Book challenges are dealt with by Principal teacher for curriculum related materials and the librarian's line manager for fiction and then, if necessary, head teacher. Outcome of the evaluation will be forwarded to the complainant. Complaints are dealt with under LA complaints procedure (available on the Council website)
Falkirk Council	Complaints are dealt with on an individual basis. The policy doesn't state by whom.
Fife Council	Schools 1- 4 – complaints about the appropriateness of materials are to be resolved by the librarian by explaining the collection

	<p>development policy. If necessary the complaint will then be passed to the SMT.</p> <p>School 5 – no mention of complaints</p> <p>School 6 - no specific complaints procedure. All complaints are dealt with on an individual basis.</p> <p>School 7 – any challenges which the librarian does not consider valid are be passed to senior management team in the school who, in communication with the complainant, decide whether item should be retained or withdrawn from collection.</p>
Highland Council (High Life Highland Libraries)	No information provided on how complaints are dealt with.
Inverclyde Council	At present there is no complaints procedure but as a result of the information request the Chief School Librarian is considering this and will discuss this with her colleagues.
Moray Council	All complaints are dealt with under the Council complaints procedure (available on the Council website).
North Lanarkshire Council	Only stock selection policy provided. Advised via email that complaints in school libraries are dealt with informally at a local level with no records kept.
West Dunbartonshire Council	<p>No central policy on complaints</p> <p>School 1 – no complaints policy</p> <p>School 2 – Complaints policy provided. ‘Responding to Concerns’: details how to make a complaint within the school (not specifically the library), who will deal with it, by when, if still unhappy advised to contact the Council’s Education Department.</p>

Table 4.5 – Complaints Procedures

Table 4.5 shows that with regards to complaints, of the 10 local authorities that provided school library policies 5 state that complaints regarding school libraries are dealt with by individual school libraries whilst 3 refer complainants to their corporate complaints procedures. One local authority (Highland) did not provide any details on how complaints within school libraries are handled.

Inverclyde Council advised that although they do have a school library stock selection policy, there is no school library complaints policy in place. However, prompted by the survey their Chief School Librarian is considering implementing one.

East Renfrewshire Council is the only local authority with a policy covering all school libraries in their area that details how book challenges will be addressed. Although 5 of the school libraries within Fife Council hold policies that mention challenges to the materials held within the school library, 2 do not.

4.9 Summary of Findings

As has been shown above, the mixed research method incorporating both quantitative and qualitative techniques has been successful in providing the data required to answer the research questions that this study aims to address.

It has been found that the majority of Scottish local authorities received at least one book challenge in their school libraries over the period from 2006 to 2011, with the highest number of challenges received by a single local authority being 8. Although books by some authors received more than one challenge, these numbers are low with the most frequently challenged author, Irvine Welsh, receiving 3 challenges. The majority of the challenges were made on the basis of the book being unsuitable for the age group of the reader and the person making the challenge is most likely to be a parent of the school library user.

The most common strategy used by school libraries to resolve a book challenge is to move the book to a more senior section of the library, although almost as frequently the action taken is to remove the book from the library completely.

Most of the local authorities that had received at least one book challenge advised that records of book challenges are held at a local level within the school library.

The qualitative data indicates that most local authorities in Scotland do not have a school library selection policy in place with only 7 holding one that covers every school in the

council area. This leaves 3 local authorities where some school libraries have stock selection policies and some do not. This reveals a lack of consistency not only among local authorities across Scotland but also within some local authority areas.

With regards to the selection of books that may contain controversial material, 1 central and 7 individual school library policies make clear anti-censorship statements. Only 1 of the school library policies received provides guidance on the procedure that will be followed in the event of a book challenge being received.

A similar lack of consistency exists with regards to the procedures to be followed in respect of complaints about school library services. Some local authorities state that there is no complaints procedure at all whilst others refer to their corporate complaints procedures. In most areas, however, responsibility for dealing with complaints lies with individual school libraries even though there are no written procedures for them to follow. Out of 31 Scottish local authorities that responded to the survey only 2 have policies in place that mention book challenges and how these will be dealt with by the school library.

The implications of the data presented above are explored in detail in the discussion chapter below.

5. Discussion

5.1 Numbers of Book Challenges Received

In answer to the research problems, the quantitative data presented in the findings chapter above gives the numbers of book challenges received by school libraries in Scotland during the period 2006-2011. During that period 43 book challenges were made. These were recorded by just over half (17) of local authorities in Scotland. This figure may in reality be higher as some local authorities do not keep records of book challenges or failed to provide the information requested. The local authority that recorded the highest number of challenges was Perth and Kinross which received 8 challenges over the period in question. The average across the 31 local authorities that responded to the survey was 1.39, therefore Perth and Kinross received significantly higher than average. The reasons for this finding are unclear. It could be, however, that schools within this area keep more detailed records than other. Further study would be required in order to clarify reasons for this finding. The quantitative data discussed above has shown the current situation in Scotland in respect of book challenges and censorship in school libraries and indicates that level of book challenges in Scottish school libraries is lower than the numbers in American school libraries. Over a 10 year period (1990-2010) 3659 challenges were recorded in school libraries in the USA which averages out to roughly 366 per year. This gives an average of 7 challenges per state per year. In Scotland the corresponding figure is 0.28 challenges per local authority per year, based on 31 local authorities which responded to the survey. It is however, recognised that US states are significantly larger than Scottish local authorities with much higher levels of population. The reasons for the lower book challenge rates in Scotland are, however, unclear. It could be because self-censorship is being practiced. Also it may be the case that many book challenges are made on an informal basis and are resolved there and then, without any further action being taken. As many of the local authorities in Scotland do not keep formal records of book challenges made in school

libraries it is reasonable to assume that some have slipped through the net unnoticed. This would need to be determined through further study.

Although the book challenge rates are proportionally lower than those of the USA, they are significantly higher than those made in Scottish public libraries. In a similar study, Taylor and McMenemy (2012) found that over a five year period 15 book challenges were made in Scottish public libraries. The significant difference in rates of challenges between school and public libraries may be because of the user group. As discussed above schools have a duty of care to their pupils and so there is a higher expectation that material within a school library will be 'appropriate'.

5.2 Book Titles Challenged

Apart from the majority of books being fiction, there were no significant trends amongst the book titles that were challenged. As reported by Reichman (2011), in the USA, there is a growing problem with organised groups targeting libraries in order to have specific book titles or works by certain authors removed. This study found no evidence of this being the case in Scotland as only 2 authors' books were challenged in more than one local authority area. With regards to the authors who appear on the ALA's Frequently Challenged lists, only Judy Blume, was also on the list of books challenged in this study. Another growing trend in the USA is the increase of material being donated to schools and libraries by proponents of intelligent design who present it as a scientific theory (O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan, 2006). One of the book challenges found in this study was in relation to the book *Truth in Science* by Stephen B. Meyer, which had been given to all school libraries in North Ayrshire. A complaint was made via the Council's website, which gave information about the book and its purpose as propaganda for the intelligent design movement. All of the school librarians in the area discussed the issue and agreed to remove the book from their collections. This is the only incident of this nature that was found by this study. It may however be the case that if 1 local authority received the book, then others also had it gifted to them. As O'Sullivan & O'Sullivan (2006) discuss, such cases highlight the need for school libraries to implement

policies that deal with stock selection, including gifts. If these policies are in place then the qualified school librarian makes the choice as to what material is selected and not other outside parties, such as special interest groups.

5.3 Basis on which challenges were made

In relation to the reasons behind the book challenge, this study differs from the results of the ALA which finds that the most frequent reason is on the grounds that the content of the book is sexually explicit (ALA, 2007). Direct comparison cannot be made between the ALA's data on reasons for challenges and this study because the findings of the ALA relate to all libraries in the USA, whilst this study relates only to school libraries. This study found that the most common reason for book challenges within school libraries in Scotland is that the material was unsuited to age group. As the library users in this case are children it is unsurprising that the adults making the challenge would do so if they thought the content was unsuitable. As the majority of the challenges were made for this reason, it would however, be beneficial to have more information on the reasons why the material was thought unsuitable. The second highest reason for a book to be challenged was that it contained offensive language. This was also the second most frequent reason for a book to be challenged in the USA (ALA, 2007).

5.4 Instigators of Book Challenges

The findings of this study in relation to the instigators of the challenges echo those of the ALA (2007) which also finds that the majority of book challenges are made by parents. This is one form of censorship that Hannabus & Allard (2001) discuss, whereby one group within society seek to use censorship in order to protect another from what they see as material that could harm them in some way. It is understandable that parents wish to protect their own children but they may actually be harming their intellectual development by restricting access to books that challenge their ideals stimulate debate. Arguably parents have no right to censor what other people's children read and by asking for a book to be removed from a

school library they are doing so. Another way to look at this 'protection' is as control. Juozaitis (2007) makes the point that adults often seek to control children and when that power is achieved through a child's ignorance it is threatening to them to lose this control. As happened in Mires' experience (2003) it can sometimes be the case that a parent has not actually read the books that they object to. It is arguably easier for parents to restrict what their children read rather than discuss the (sometimes) uncomfortable topics that the books they challenge address. The presence of a school library service does not mean that parents can abdicate their parental responsibilities; censorship should not be regarded as a parenting tool.

5.5 Action Taken to Resolve the Challenge

The most significant findings of this study are in relation to the action taken in order to resolve the book challenge. The most common strategy is to relocate the challenged books to a more senior section of the library with 40% of book challenges being resolved in this manner. This method of resolving book challenges is often seen by librarians as more acceptable than removing the book from the library, as although they are not as easily accessible, the controversial books are still available if requested (Curry, 2001).

Although this strategy could be seen as a form of censorship, school libraries do need to ensure that the material available within their collections is appropriate for the age group that is reading it. Some school libraries therefore choose to separate their collection into age bandings in order that more controversial books can only be accessed by older pupils who are better equipped to cope with the themes within them. One strategy that some school libraries, such as those in Angus, use is to only loan certain books once a parental permission slip has been received. This has the advantage of ensuring that the parent is aware of which books their child is reading and takes some responsibility for their own child's development. The strategy of using parental permission slips is also useful in that a parent can to some extent ensure that their own child is only reading material that they feel is

appropriate for their age, without being able to restrict what other children read by attempting to censor the school library collection by launching a book challenge.

Worryingly, this study found that almost as frequently as relocating the challenged book to another area within the library, the action taken to resolve the challenge was to remove the book from the school library completely. This method of resolving a book challenge occurred in 37% of the book challenges made within Scottish school libraries. By removing stock in such a manner, the libraries are arguably involved in censorship. As discussed in the literature review above, censorship goes against the principles of the library profession, with professional bodies such as IFLA, CILIP and the ALA all taking a strong anti-censorship stance. Intellectual freedom is one of the core values of librarianship which include 'defending the intellectual freedom of all members of our communities' (Gorman, 2000 p.27). School librarians in Scotland that remove books that have been challenged from the library could be seen as not defending the intellectual freedom of the school children.

Of all the available methods to resolve a book challenge removing the book is the most dangerous, as it results in the school library collection being censored. Carmichael (2007) discusses the need for school libraries to maintain relevant, interesting collections that help the children to develop information skills and a lifelong interest in learning and reading. By allowing such censorship to happen, school libraries could be in danger of reducing their collections and their worth and so reducing the perceived value of the library. Professional librarians should be able to stand by any materials that they have judged to be appropriate for inclusion in the collection. As Mires states, "having decided that the inclusion of an item will add depth or scope to the school's collection, there must be a commitment to fight for its retention." (Mires, 2003, p.17). To allow these decisions to be undermined is to allow their professional judgement and ethics to be questioned and so leads to their role being devalued.

For so many instances of censorship to occur within Scotland is difficult to comprehend.

There is a need for further study to determine the reasons why professional school librarians consistently remove books from their collections when they are challenged. It may be that a lack of selection and book challenge policies within school libraries in Scotland is a contributory factor. This issue is further explored below.

The data has shown that the majority of book challenges (77%) in school libraries in Scotland are successful as books are either removed from the library completely or relocated to 'older' reader sections. On only 7 occasions (16%) were the challenged books kept within the library after discussion with the instigator of the complaint. This method of resolving book challenges whereby the school librarian explains the reasons for the books inclusion in the library and stands by their decision to keep it in the collection is the one that ideally should be most frequently used. Taylor and McMenemy's, 2012 study found that just over half of all books that were challenged in Scottish public libraries remained in stock with no change to their status and just 2 books (13%) were removed from the library. This is almost the opposite of the findings of this study. The differences between the findings of both studies are interesting as both refer to book challenges in Scottish libraries; one in public libraries and one in school libraries. One hypothesis for the difference between school and public libraries in the action taken to resolve book challenges in Scotland may be that public libraries have stronger stock selection and censorship policies in place. Further study would need to be conducted in order to determine whether this is the case.

5.6 Records of Book Challenges

The majority of records of book challenges are either held within the school library where the challenge is made or are not held at all. It is therefore the case that in Scotland many local authorities have no central recording system with regards to attempts to censor within school libraries. It may be that this is in order to give autonomy to the school in how the library is administered but it could be said that a side effect of this is that the local authority has no corporate control over how their school libraries are run. Therefore the school librarian could

be seen as working in isolation, without the security of knowing that any issues that arise will be addressed by the larger public body. This may go some way to explaining why books are so frequently removed from school libraries in order to resolve a book challenge; if the school librarian does not expect to receive any support then they will obviously be wary about being at the centre of a potentially public controversial incident. The stresses that school librarians can go through if they are involved in defending their collection against book challenges are well documented. For example, Hill (2010) discusses the range of emotions that school librarians who go through a book challenge can experience. These can range from 'shame, to anger, to apprehension' (Hill, 2010, p.12). Therefore without support, it can be appreciated why, rather than go through these emotions and face the criticism, some school librarians find themselves removing books that have been challenged. It can often be the case that schools have only one school librarian who is less visible than other staff in the school, for example, they have to take their breaks at different times in order to be available for pupils and so can have little opportunity to build working relationships with teaching staff (Gallagher-Hayashi, 2001).

One method that school librarians can employ to avoid feeling that they are working in isolation is to ensure they have the backing of their school's head teacher, who is often their line-manager. Therefore, as Gallagher-Hayashi (2001) advises, it is important that the school library shares the same vision as the whole school and so is considered as an important factor in the success of the school. In order to achieve this status within the school, school librarians should engage with teaching staff in devising ways in which they can help them deliver the curriculum, such as setting up a virtual learning environment or conducting research skills sessions as well as circulating newsletters on library events to all departments. By implementing such initiatives the library can become a visible and valued core component of the school with the backing of the other staff and head teacher should any challenges be launched.

5.7 School Library Policies

As this study uses a mixed methodology qualitative data has been used to expand on the findings discussed above and provide evidence of the policies and procedures that school libraries have in place with regards to censorship and book challenges. As the literature review highlights, it is necessary for school libraries to devise strong policies and procedures in order to not only protect their collections against censors but to provide clear direction to school librarians in how to handle book challenges. Disappointingly this study has found that the majority of local authorities do not hold any school library stock selection policies that provide a stance on censorship or outline procedures to be followed in the event of a book challenge being received. Only 10 local authorities were able to provide any form of school library policy, 7 of which apply to all schools within their area, with only 1 of these centrally held policies declaring an anti-censorship stance. 3 local authorities provided copies of selection policies that had been formulated by individual school libraries and so the content differed across those schools. This demonstrates a lack of consistency not only across Scotland but also within local authority areas as to the existence and content of school library policies.

The importance of school library policies encompassing collection development, stance on censorship and procedures to be followed in the event of book challenges cannot be over-emphasised. As discussed in the literature review above, the overwhelming opinion within the texts written on the topic of censorship in school libraries is that they need to develop such policies in order to have the tools to combat censorship and face book challenges. It is better to have a clear and positive selection policy rather than deal with the negative influence of censorship. As Asheim, cited by Froehlich states:

“Selection begins with a presumption in favour of liberty; censorship, with a presumption of thought control. The selector has faith in the intelligence of the reader; the censor has faith only in his own.” (Froehlich, 2000, p.269).

Whilst local authorities should ensure that each school has a school library in place, as Turner (2006) advocates, each school should develop policies that reflect the “ethos, philosophy and values of the school.” Therefore the local authorities should provide a framework for the policies with aspects that are fixed such as stance on censorship and others that each school could then tailor to their own identity.

In the US the stresses that some school librarians suffer due to book challenges, especially high profile ones that are widely reported in the media are well documented (such as that discussed by Hill, 2010). This can lead to school librarians being at the centre of a ‘witch hunt’ during which their professional and personal ethics can be brought into question. In order to protect themselves from these scenarios, school libraries need to have robust policies and strategies in place with regards to censorship and book challenges. If a challenge occurs and the policy is already in place the librarian can point to it in order to resolve the challenge quickly and effectively.

5.8 Reflections

The mixed-method approach taken in this study was thought to be the most appropriate way to form a picture of the situation in relation to censorship in Scottish school libraries. The method has succeeded in providing the quantitative data on book challenges received over the period 2006-2011. The use of freedom of information requests resulted in a high response rate to the survey, which had it been sent directly to school libraries, may not have yielded such a high response. Therefore it can be concluded that Freedom of Information requests is a viable and effective method for conducting research. There are some areas, however, that would benefit from further study.

A high number of book challenges were made on the basis that the book was ‘unsuited to age group’. Whilst this category is one used by the ALA, and so included in this survey, it would be beneficial to ascertain why the instigators of the challenge thought the books were

unsuitable. Qualitative methods could be used to investigate this further, for example, interviews with the school librarians who received the book challenge.

The most significant finding of the survey, that most book challenges in school libraries are successful, could also be investigated further. The instances whereby books are removed from the library in particular would benefit from further study to determine why this is the case. Again, qualitative methods, such as interviews with school librarians would be the most appropriate way to answer this query.

Although the qualitative data in respect of school library policies did result in some school library policies being received, the nature of freedom of information requests makes it possible that not all school policies were provided. It is possible that some local authorities did not pass the survey on to school libraries to ask for their policies, and there is no means within the methodology to check this. There would be merit in contacting school libraries directly to determine if they do have policies in place. Due to the high numbers of schools across Scotland it may be appropriate in this case to contact a representative sample of schools, for example, secondary school libraries across Scotland rather than attempt to survey each school in Scotland.

It was expected that this study would reveal low numbers of book challenges that may point to evidence of self-censorship in Scotland's school libraries. This however has not been the case. Whilst the study did expose the fact that censorship is taking place in Scottish school libraries, it does not address the issue of self-censorship in any depth. There is a large amount of writing on this topic from an American perspective, but still in this country there is little discussion about this contentious issue. It could be that as well as removing books from school libraries when challenged, school librarians in Scotland are also prone to practice self-censorship like their colleagues in the USA. Further study of self-censorship could be undertaken by reviewing media, blogs, social networking sites and interviewing school

librarians. This would form a picture of the attitude towards self-censorship within this country and highlight whether it is being practiced in school libraries here.

Overall this study has been successful in forming a picture of censorship in school libraries in Scotland, although the results have been more conclusive than was anticipated at the outset. Whether it also achieves the aim of stimulating debate among the library profession in the UK remains to be seen.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This study aimed to provide a picture of the current the situation in Scotland regarding censorship in school libraries and to stimulate debate on the topic. The findings have revealed that more than half of local authorities received at least one book challenge over the period (2006-2011), most of which are made by parents. The most significant and unsettling finding of the study is that the majority of those book challenges are successful, with books being either relocated within the school library or removed from the collection entirely. This shows that censorship is being practiced within our school libraries even though it is completely unacceptable to those within the library profession. It cannot be emphasised enough how damaging this censorship can be to the school library service. It also has potential consequences for our society, as our young people are being robbed of the ability to learn valuable skills in forming their own judgement as to the relevance, quality and value of the information sources they come into contact with. By removing controversial titles that may contain for example, swearing or depictions of drug use or teenage pregnancy school librarians are potentially alienating young people who may have picked up those books and found some resonance with them that could encourage them to read more. Furthermore, they may also never feel confident to search the school library for information that could help guide them through the process of growing up. If pupils do not trust that their school libraries provide access to resources that reflect their culture they may never develop the information skills that school libraries aim to develop.

Whilst it is recognised that school libraries face unique challenges in building collections that are appropriate for a different age groups at different levels of maturity it is important that children are given access to material that reflects all opinions and sections of society, even if these deal with some uncomfortable topics. The way to help children is through giving them the opportunity to explore these books in a safe environment and the freedom to form their

own opinions about appropriateness. More harm can come to children who are not given access to controversial topics than those who are encouraged to read. As Madden advised:

“I was a juvenile court librarian for 7 years. During that time I saw literally thousands of kids, but I never saw one who was in lock-up because of something they had viewed or read.” (Madden, cited in Schrader, 1996).

In order to provide a school library service that is free from censorship, school libraries need the support of their professional body to successfully defend book challenges without suffering undue stress. If librarians know that professional support is available then it makes a big difference to how comfortable they are in standing up to book challenges and how prepared they are (Hill, 2010).

In October 2011, CILIP launched its *Shout About School Libraries* campaign. On its website CILIP states:

‘CILIP is campaigning for school libraries and school library services as we believe they make an important contribution to society. We all benefit if the next generation is well educated, highly literate and have the necessary understanding and information literacy skills to navigate our increasingly digital world.’ (CILIP website, July 2012).

This campaign however, did not mention censorship or the importance of intellectual freedom for children.

6.2 Recommendations

As the most significant finding of this study is that censorship is being practiced in school libraries, the main recommendations are in relation to implementing strategies to combat it.

Rather than allowing books to be removed, school librarians should endeavour to work with parents and educate them by providing intellectual freedom workshops or factsheets. This may go some way to allaying parents' fears about what their children read and also encourage them to support their child in their learning and reading.

The recommendations based on the results of this study are:

- Local authorities, in consultation with school librarians, develop stock selection policies for implementation in all school libraries within their area: these policies should be able to be adapted by each school in order that their own ethos and character can be incorporated.
- Statements on censorship should be included in the school library policy as well as what action will be taken in the event of a book challenge being received.
- Each school should send a copy of the school library, stock selection and book challenge policies to parents.
- School libraries should provide information to parents on the importance of intellectual freedom.
- School libraries should form 'readers groups' made up of interested parties, such as school librarian, teacher and parents in order that any book that is challenged can be read and a decision taken as to how the challenge should be resolved.
- CILIP and the SLA should incorporate children's rights to intellectual freedom into their guidelines for school libraries.
- CILIP should take a more proactive role in providing guidance to school librarians who receive book challenges.

It is ineffective to have professionally qualified librarians in schools, as recommended by CILIP in their school library guidelines (2011) if rather than rely on their professional training and expertise when challenged, they get rid of the book instead of standing by their selections. The fact that this is happening however, indicates there is a strong need for school librarians to be given support and guidance on the best way to deal with a book challenge. The contrast between the ALA and CILIP in this respect is striking. Therefore a key recommendation of this study is that CILIP undertake awareness raising campaigns on the issue of intellectual freedom. These should run in partnership with the School Library Association (SLA) as by combining their efforts the campaigns can be much more effective.

Appendix One

Please see attached document

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