A MULTINATIONAL STUDY ON COPYRIGHT LITERACY COMPETENCIES OF LIS PROFESSIONALS

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1. Introduction

Copyright competencies are getting more crucial for information professionals because managing and meeting copyright related challenges and trends will play a key role in shaping the future of the profession. Having known the necessity of *copyright competencies* for information professionals, one can pose a question of whether or not LIS professionals are equipped with these essential competencies. The aim of this paper is to present results of a multinational survey on copyright competencies of LIS professional and address the gap in the literature.

2.1. The Aim

The main goal of the **survey "*Copyright Literacy of Specialists from Libraries and Other Cultural Institutions*"** is to investigate actual copyright competency levels of LIS professional in different countries. In this paper, the following research questions are explored:

- to what extent LIS professionals are familiar with copyright related issues;

- to what extent they are aware of copyright policies and practices within their country and institutions they work for;

2.1. The Aim

- what their opinions are in regard to the inclusion of copyright-related issues in LIS education and training;

- to what extent there are differences among countries.

Findings of this study are expected to highlight gaps in copyright literacy competencies of LIS professionals.

2.2. Background

This study is carried out as part of a scientific project with international participation *Copyright Policy of Libraries and Other Cultural Institutions*, funded by the National Science Fund of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science.

- First phase of the project - thematic bibliography which includes about 3200 records, titled as *Copyright Publications*, was prepared and published;

- Second phase of the project - survey instrument was developed and a multi-national survey was conducted.

2.2. Background

Bulgaria, Croatia and Turkey were involved in the project at the beginning and surveys were conducted in these countries during July-October 2013. In 2014 France joined in the project and the same survey was conducted in France during January-March 2014.

The survey garnered 622 totally complete responses: Bulgaria - 148 (24%); Croatia - 82 (13%); France - 311 (50%); Turkey - 81 (13%).

2.3   Methodology

An online survey instrument was developed by the authors in order to collect data from professionals who work in cultural institutions such as libraries, archives and museums, regarding their familiarity, knowledge, awareness and opinions on copyright-related issues. **LimeSurvey was used for on-line data collection.**
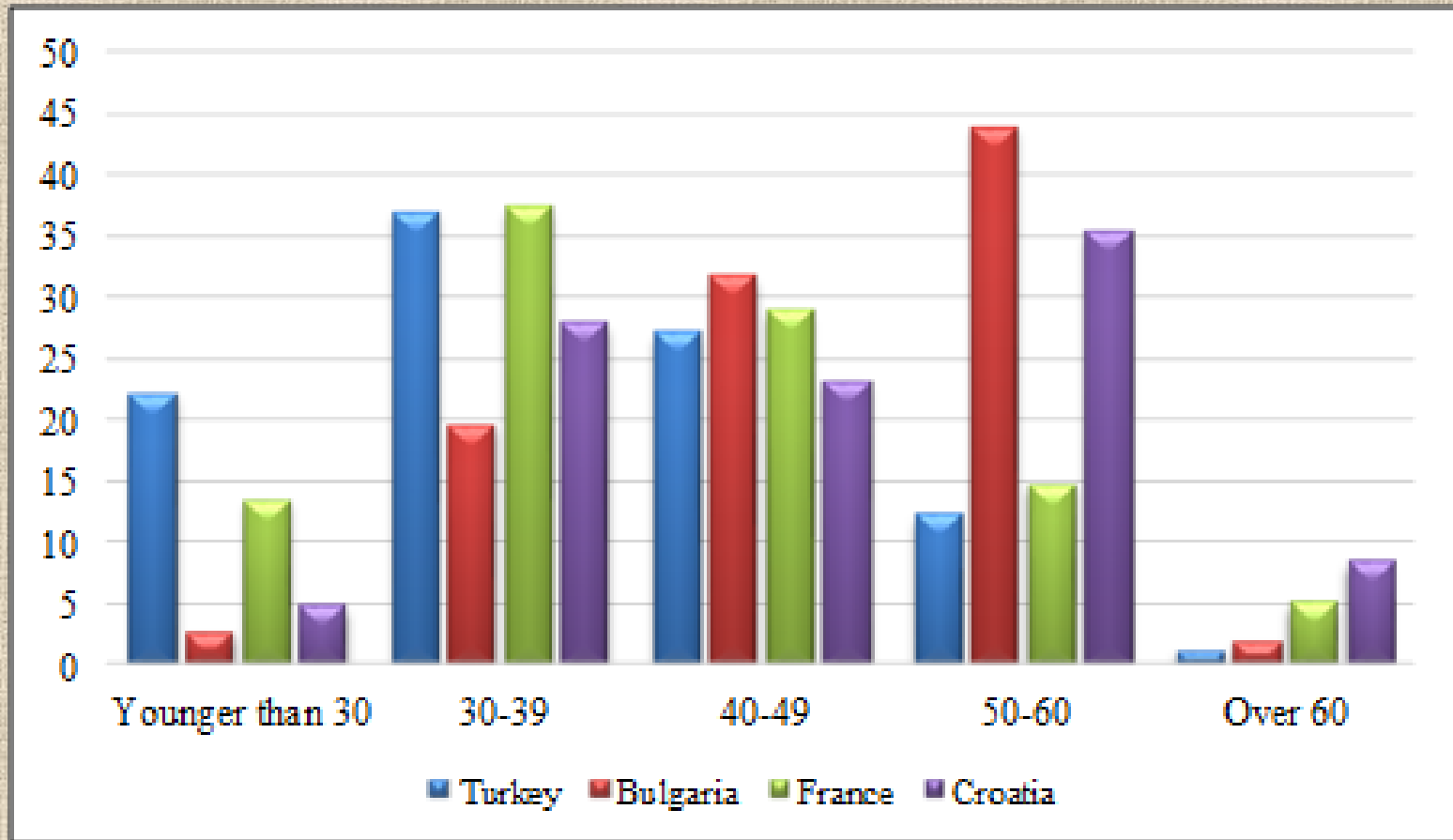
Survey data was processed by the statistical package SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for Windows 21.0. Descriptive statistics were mainly used for data analysis. Chi-square test was run to test correlations between certain variables.

3. Findings

Fig. 1. Age distribution by country

3.1. Demographics – gender, ages, degrees, specialties, institutional affiliation, work experience of respondents

3.2. General Knowledge and Awareness Regarding Copyright Issues

The first part of the survey is designed to collect data about the knowledge and awareness of respondents on issues related to copyright.

The first 18 questions are on various aspects of copyright, analyzed together.

Responses to these questions required responses on a 5-point Likert scale, in which 1 corresponds to *not at all familiar* and 5 corresponds to *extremely familiar*.

The first 18 questions:

- national copyright legislation (Q1);

- international copyright legislation (Q2);

- national copyright institutions (Q3);

- international copyright institutions (Q4);

- collective rights management organizations in the country (Q5);

- clearing rights (Q6);

- licensing for information sources (Q7);

- licensing conditions in respondent's institutions (Q8);

- copyright issues regarding the development of institutional repositories (Q9);

- copyright issues regarding virtual services within e-learning practices (Q10);

The first 18 questions:

- Creative Commons Licences (Q11);

- copyleft (Q12);

- open access, open data, open educational resources (Q13);

- fair use (Q14);

- copyright issues regarding digitization (Q15);

- copyright issues regarding materials from public domain (Q16);

- copyright issues regarding out-of-print works (Q17);

- copyright issues regarding orphan works (Q18).

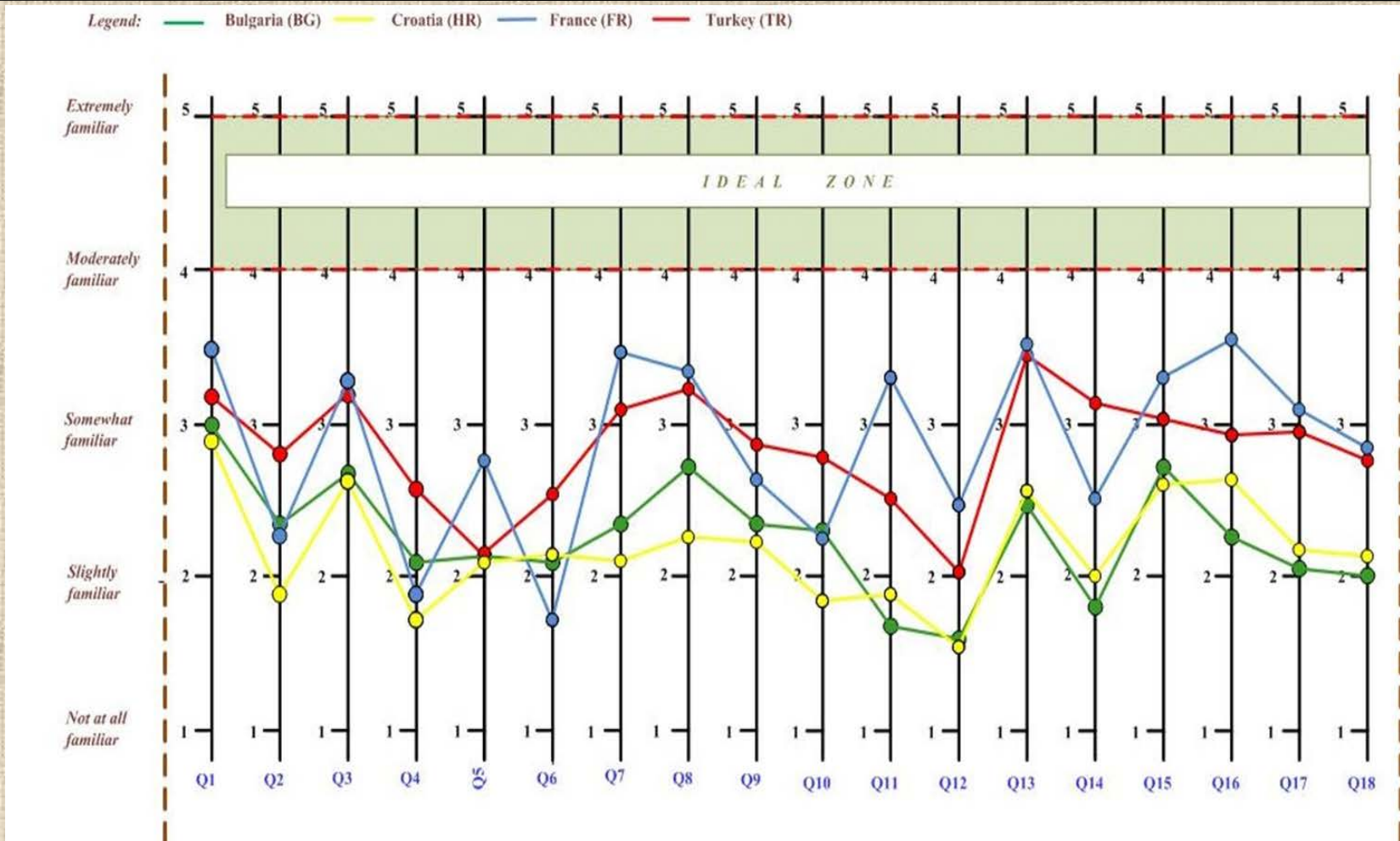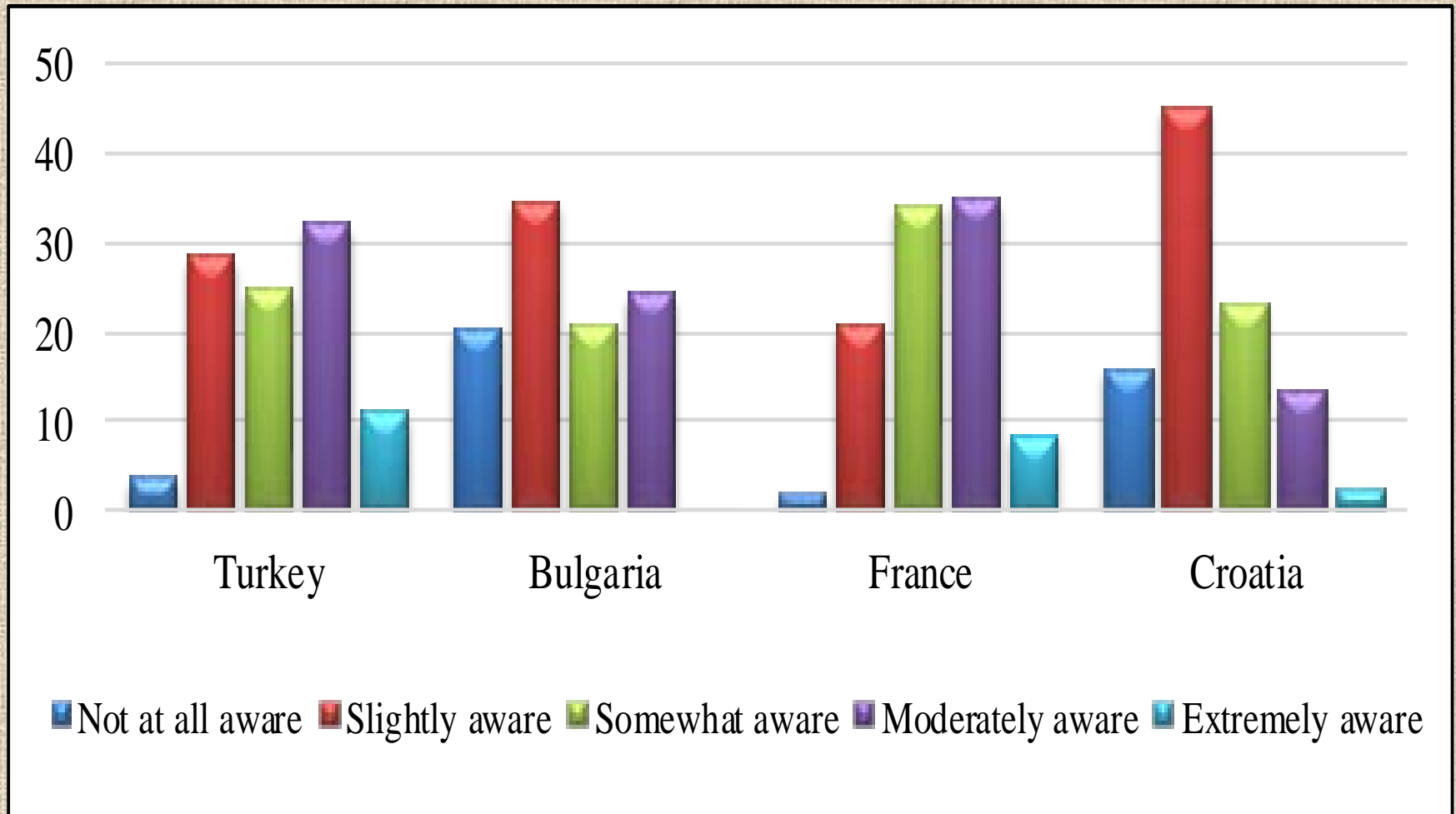## Figure 2 presents the results according to country: Bulgaria (BG), Croatia (HR), France (FR) and Turkey (TR)

Fig. 3. Self-rated awareness level of respondents on issues related to intellectual property/copyright

Legend: ■ Not at all aware ■ Slightly aware ■ Somewhat aware ■ Moderately aware ■ Extremely aware

3.2. General Knowledge and Awareness Regarding Copyright Issues

Respondents also were asked to indicate their opinions regarding certain copyright-related statements.

81% of respondents agree that services offered by libraries and other cultural heritage institutions should comply with copyright legislation; 74% agree that worldwide harmonization of copyright exceptions and limitations for memory institutions is necessary; 75% agree that WIPO should better define copyright exceptions and limitations regarding digital content; 82% agree that WIPO's *Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled* is an important achievement.

3.2. General Knowledge and Awareness Regarding Copyright Issues

Although, there is a positive attitude in general (at least 75%), the percentage of negative and neutral answers (lower than 5% and about 20% respectively) should not be underestimated.

Especially concerning is an almost 20% non-positive (either negative or neutral) answer rate for a statement on the necessity of copyright compliance of services offered by cultural institutions.

3.3. Knowledge and Opinions on Institutional Copyright Policy

- The majority of respondents (84%) declared the need for an institutional copyright policy for libraries, archives and other cultural institutions. About three fourths (76%) indicated that their institution possess resources protected by copyright and related rights.
- Only 34% of respondents claim that their institution has a copyright policy; the rest (42%) claim the opposite.
- 71% of respondents claim that in their institutions there are no personnel specifically appointed to be in charge of copyright issues, while 14% are unsure and 15% claim the existence of such personnel.

3.3. Knowledge and Opinions on Institutional Copyright Policy

It is important to find out the actual reason for the low number of employees in charge of copyright issues despite its increasing importance. If it is because of the lack of knowledge and expertise, an active collaboration with LIS schools and professional associations for training could be suggested.

However, if it is because institutions find it unnecessary, this could be an important indicator for the lack of awareness at the institutional level.

A high majority of respondents (97%) agree that intellectual property and copyright subjects should be included in the curriculum of Library and Information Science and Cultural Heritage Science Education as well as in the continuing education programs.

Intellectual property and copyright subjects are included in LIS curricula in surveyed countries however in every school they are on a different depth and level (a more general level in undergraduate programs and more in-depth in graduate programs).

3.4. Opinions on Inclusion of Copyright as a Subject in LIS Education

As for the appropriate level for including copyright issues in the curricula of LIS education, most of the respondents agree that it should be included in more than one level of the 3-cycles in higher education (undergraduate, Masters and PhD). While more than three fourths (71%) of respondents claim that undergraduate curricula should cover copyright issues, the percentage of respondents who think the Masters and PhD curricula should cover the subject is relatively smaller (54% and 22% respectively).

The preferred forms – preferred by more than half of the respondents - for continuing education on intellectual property and copyright are as follows: thematic workshops (69%), training courses (56%), web sites, blogs and wikis (54%), and distance learning including online courses, videos, etc. (51%).

4. Conclusions

The main findings of this multi-national survey conducted in Bulgaria, Croatia, France and Turkey can be summarized as follows: the level of knowledge and the awareness of respondents (managers and specialists responsible for information services in cultural institutions) regarding copyright issues are far from being satisfactory.

The vast majority of respondents are in favor of including copyright-related issues in LIS education as well as in continuing education programs.
The findings highlight some commonalities as well as differences among countries.

4. Conclusions

The findings indicate a need for improvement. Measures should be taken to increase both awareness and the knowledge level of information professionals regarding on copyright issues. Both the LIS curricula and continuing education programs should be revised to include intellectual property learning content which that provides in-depth information along with case studies.

Development and actualization of training programs in different forms, including face-to-face and distance learning are needed. Training programs, conferences, and workshops can be organized in collaboration with LIS schools and professional associations.

5. Future Plans

The findings of this study indicate a need for further research and can be used to strengthen the relationship between education/training and practice by addressing the gaps in copyright competencies of LIS professionals.

Researchers from other countries continue to be interested in the survey. In the period of June - September 2014, the same survey will be conducted in Finland, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, Romania and the USA. These will give authors a chance to make comparisons more widely.

The development of the project can be followed on its website: http://copyrightlib.unibit.bg/en.

6. Acknowledgments

Thank you for your attention!

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