

Status and Placement Options: The Dilemma of Librarians in the Colleges of Education in Ghana

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Abstract

Academic libraries continue to play critical roles in institutions of higher learning. The objectives of the study were to identify the different types of libraries that constitute academic libraries; explore the qualifications, status, and role of the librarians in the colleges of education; and establish the career options of the academic librarians in institutions of higher learning. The research approach was qualitative and employed a phenomenological research design with a purposive sampling approach. Data collection was by telephone interviews and document analysis using content analysis. 38 out of 46 college librarians were interviewed. The documents analysed included the harmonised statutes, scheme of service, and policy statements and letters from the Ghana tertiary Education Commission. The study found that college libraries, polytechnic libraries, university libraries, and research libraries attached to institutions of higher learning constitute academic libraries. The study also found that the qualifications of librarians in the academic space are similar to those at the faculties and other librarians of the technical and traditional universities. The study revealed that, while the role of a college librarian seemed the same across the colleges, the recognition and status of the librarian varies from college to college. The conclusion of the study is that the qualification, status, role, and career options of academic librarians should be the same across all higher institutions to ensure parity and minimise brain drain.

It is recommended that academic librarians should be fairly and equitably treated across all tertiary institutions to curb librarian turnover from the colleges of education to the traditional and technical universities.

Keywords: *College Librarian, Statutes, Qualifications, Staff Turnover, University*

Introduction

In recent decades, librarianship training and practice has undergone considerable evolution to include other domains like Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), Journalism, and Management. This has largely been driven by a series of political, economic, social and technological forces (Cox, 2020). The new social and technological environments have created conditions for widening the form and scope of library operations, particularly in the institutions of higher learning. Hence, academic librarians continually work to serve students and faculty in meaningful and responsive ways (Hess, 2019).

Academic librarians' play the role of overseers of repositories of valuable and relevant knowledge that aligns with academic institutions' educational programmes (Gabbay & Shoham, 2017; Plockey & Pwadura, 2018). They play both administrative and academic roles and are dedicated to serving all sorts of people by helping them access timely and accurate information. Librarians acquire, organise, and disseminate knowledge in a variety of formats. According to Adams (2024), the role of the librarian in the formal education system has been conspicuously visible in the overall knowledge engagements of colleges, polytechnics, and universities in the present dispensation. This has been done through the demonstration of certain qualities like management and leadership skills, competency, research and contribution towards the profession and information communication and technology skills (Abban & Saah, 2021). It is obvious that the work of the academic librarian is the fulcrum on which both faculty and students undertake their learning and research activities.

Despite the overwhelming acceptance of the academic librarian in the overall knowledge transfer chain, the recognition, treatment, and career opportunities of academic librarians continue to suffer unjustifiable variations. Veles, Graham, and Ovaska (2023) support this situation by arguing that institutional spaces and boundaries, as well as professional identities, are profoundly contextual and constructed, enacted and interpreted in multiple ways. Though this could be true, it defeats the principle of equality and equitability for people within the same industry, same qualifications and performing the same job functions. For example, whereas Ghana Tertiary Education Commission

(GTEC) recognises academic librarians as academic staff, the treatment and recognition of these professionals have remained varied. The academic librarians of colleges of education continue to be labelled and treated as non-academic staff despite the many correspondences from Ghana Tertiary Education Commission clarifying and restating the positions of academic librarians in all higher institutions of learning as academic staff. These discrepancies in treatment, even though, academic librarians across institutions of higher learning have similar qualifications and job descriptions, according to Abban and Saah (2021), is as a result of the lack of understanding and appreciation of the work of librarians, particularly, those at the colleges of education. The differences in the status and recognition of academic librarians at the colleges of education to their counterparts in the other analogous tertiary institutions may also be as a result of the long-held perception that, the colleges, just like the polytechnics, now technical universities, were seen as second option to the traditional public universities, leading to low enrolment and resources (Akanpaadgi & Mumuni, 2021).

The departments and specialisations within libraries represent the librarians' dedication in locating and organising materials that are beneficial to users within the academic space to enhance scholarly activities (Eckwright & Bolin, 2001). However, unlike the teaching departments, heads of departments or units within the library domain do not get the same status recognition, career development opportunities, and remuneration. The lack of parity in remunerations among academic heads and the librarians of other tertiary institutions like the universities, and the college librarians, and the absence of opportunities for career advancement to professorial ranks, have compelled many college librarians are to consider moving to traditional and technical universities. These challenges could be because of the absence of a harmonised scheme of service for all tertiary institutions. For example, whereas the librarians at the University of Ghana and Cape Coast could rise to associate and full professorial status after satisfactory service and satisfying other requirements including publication of scholarly works at the senior assistant librarian grade, the same cannot be said of the colleges of education and some other universities, even though, they mostly possess the same qualifications.

Available research indicates that most people, particularly in the African context, know very little about librarianship and do not consider it to be a viable career path. According to Kanyika (2022), most students, even after studying information management and related courses only choose to become librarians after being turned down for positions in other fields. It seems that many people view librarianship as a means of achieving their goals. As a

result, many librarians now lack the glitz, respect, and status that people in other professions seem to love and appreciate (Kanyika, 2022).

The status of academic librarians has received some level of upgrade and appreciation in Ghana and beyond. For example, academic librarians at certain universities still face several difficulties despite the profession's increasing stature, prominence, and influence in higher education. In comparison to their counterparts in other tertiary institutions, academic librarians generally do not receive the same level of appreciation and value. This could be the result of numerous systemic institutional failures brought by the inconsistent higher education statutes and the negative attitudes of institutional managers toward librarians stemming from their ignorance of the nature and importance of librarianship in colleges of education. An interest in examining these issues has been sparked by college librarians' predicament regarding their credentials, status, and career options in Ghana's educational system. In view of this, the study seeks to answer three research questions:

1. What are the different types of libraries that constitute academic libraries?
2. What are the qualifications, status, and role of the librarians in the colleges of education?
3. What are the career options of academic librarians in institutions of higher learning?

Literature Review

Overview of academic libraries

Academic libraries are those associated with postsecondary educational institutions, such as colleges, universities, and polytechnics (Bawack, 2019). Sanker and Sanker (2022) classify these libraries as school, college, and university libraries because they are in learning environments. These libraries are a part of a larger academic institution and are purposefully designed to meet specific goals and user needs (Gabbay & Shoham, 2017).

According to Arthur, Brafi and Kuranchie (2013), the subject coverage of other libraries like a public library may be more diversified than that of an academic library. This is because, academic libraries' general goals are to meet the needs of the academic community, offer reference materials at the proper levels, give users study spaces, offer a lending service suitable for the various user types and offer an active information service that might reach out beyond the institution to the community's business and industry. Their primary goals are to preserve and make resources accessible, in addition to supporting the parent organisation's educational and research activities (Bawack, 2019). According to Bawack (2019), academic libraries have enormous responsibilities that go along with their privileged status within the academic

setting. By giving customers access to need-based information resources, they are expected to support the research projects that their parent universities or colleges are conducting and to contribute to the push for information that will advance scholarly activities (Bawack, 2019). Within the parameters of their parent institutions, they carry out their duties by facilitating the academic community's access to information from distant or nearby locations (Plockey & Pwadura, 2018).

However, according to Hotsonyame (2023), it is impossible to satisfactorily explain, though, why academic libraries are still relevant in the twenty-first century due to the notable modifications that are still occurring in higher institutions of learning. In the dynamic academic space, academic libraries face the challenge of proving their worth and significance to funders, governing boards, and institutional stakeholders to justify ongoing funding. With an emphasis on the abilities and responsibilities involved in producing and disseminating digital content, libraries are playing a significant role in fostering digital literacy among students outside the physical spaces (Cox, 2020). Academic libraries have shifted away from their traditional roles as bookstores and are now expected to do more with less. According to Cox (2020), beyond physical locations, libraries are playing a significant role in fostering digital literacy among students, with a focus on the abilities and responsibilities associated with producing and disseminating digital content. Academic libraries are now under pressure to expand their operations and abandon their conventional responsibilities as book storage facilities.

Libraries are becoming more widely recognised because of the significant changes to their primary functions over the past few decades. Since sharing resources or systems administration is essential to their operations, it is the most sensible approach for disseminating data assets among academic libraries in the twenty-first century (Hotsonyame, 2023). A very dramatic shift from manual to computerised libraries has occurred in academic libraries as they have all moved toward the robotisation of information frameworks. As such, they do more than just provide the traditional services of the past; for example, they provide professional advice on copyright issues. Moreover, they manage institutional outputs in the form of institutional repositories, address metadata issues, and act as technology specialists to facilitate access to electronic resources (Plockey & Pwadura, 2018).

Choosing a career as an academic librarian

Choosing a career is a difficult process that is impacted by several variables. It requires careful consideration because it determines a person's aptitude, values, and level of success in the future. Given a variety of factors, including ignorance, peer pressure, advice from friends and parents, and—perhaps most

importantly—the stigma attached to particular occupations in the absence of appropriate occupational assistance and counselling, many people in developing nations end up choosing careers for which they are only partially or entirely unsuitable. In the same vein, a lack of knowledge about potential career paths, particularly in the field of libraries, influences the decisions made by many individuals in developing nations.

A career in libraries has many facets. Depending on what area of library work they specialise in, librarians at different types of libraries go by different titles (Chimah, Uhegbu, & Nwokocha, 2012). Those employed in the library industry were thought of as little more than bookkeepers who sat and kept an eye on documents. Many people have been discouraged from choosing academic librarianship as their career path by this misconception. Chimah, Uhegbu, and Nwokocha (2012) observe that people have frequently chosen this job because they enjoy reading books and helping people, while others who have chosen careers as librarians in educational institutions have done so because they require a secure job, opportunity for intellectual growth, room for career advancement, and flexibility in their work schedules.

According to Abban and Saah (2021), librarianship is the mother of all professions, protecting culture and advancing scholarship. This claim is based on the intricate, significant, and varied services that librarians provide as well as the position of librarianship in relation to other professions. Most library science professionals are employed in academic, public, and school libraries today, but job opportunities for information specialists are expanding most rapidly in corporate, consulting, and information broker settings as well as in environments involving Internet-based information. Pre-tertiary institutions employ school librarians, central or public libraries employ public librarians, and hospitals, law firms, and special agencies employ librarians of special libraries or information centres (Chimah, Uhegbu, & Nwokocha, 2012).

It goes without saying that individuals who aspire to become academic librarians must obtain postgraduate degrees in library and information science in addition to work experience. Programmes for master's and doctoral degrees are typically created to give highly qualified and driven individuals in a professional education in preparation for careers as librarians, information specialists, library educators, or researchers. One can pursue a career as an academic librarian in the field of librarianship by working in a college or a university (Chimah, Uhegbu, & Nwokocha, 2012). However, the concept of academic librarianship encompasses the method and processes used in the acquisition, organisation, preservation and dissemination of intellectual resources within the academic space. In contrast to professions like medicine, law, and accounting, academic librarianship, like other librarianships, still

faces challenges in becoming well-known because of public perception (Abban & Saah, 2021).

Although academic librarianship is a respectable profession, it is important to note that academic librarians have not adequately positioned themselves within the academic community. Cox (2020) claims that the research that is currently available sheds light on the variety of tasks vying for their time, such as publication, teaching, research, and administration. Despite the uncertainty and disagreement regarding the classification of librarians at universities and colleges of education as professional or academic staff members, this could be because of the academic environment's recent changes in pace (Cox, 2020). As a result, all employees' roles, responsibilities, spheres of influence, and professional identities are constantly evolving; sometimes, they keep up with these global changes, and other times, they fall behind them (Veles, Graham & Ovaska 2023).

Many working librarians concentrate on the daily running of their libraries or library systems rather than making contributions to the field of library and information studies scholarship. These individuals are frequently referred to as members of the professional class of librarians. Although the term "professional staff" has not consistently been applied in the tertiary education sector worldwide, it refers to a broad community of university staff members who carry out administrative, student services, financial, technical, and numerous other roles essential to institutional operations (Veles, Graham, & Ovaska 2023). However, some practising librarians—especially those in academic libraries—conduct original, scholarly research in the field of library and information studies and support the academic end of the profession (Chimah, Uhegbu, & Nwokocha, 2012). These professionals (librarians) are called academic librarians (Ifijeh, Yusuf & Owolabi, 2021).

Hess (2019) noted that academic libraries are always striving to provide faculty and students with meaningful, responsive services in the context of the evolving higher education system. Academic librarians began teaching information literacy because of the growing diversity of sources and new formats for information resources. As a result, the duties of an academic librarian extend beyond those of a traditional librarian, who is responsible for gathering, organising, preserving, and sharing information resources. According to Ifijeh, Yusuf, and Owolabi (2021), it comprises fundamental academic pursuits like research, scholarly publishing, and involvement in academic discourses and presentations at conferences, seminars, and workshops.

Despite the advancements and changes, the field of academic librarianship has endured and still endures mistreatment and malignment. As a result,

individuals who selected the profession did so because it was their only remaining option (Ifijeh, Yusuf & Owolabi, 2021). Others, however, passed on other career options and went into librarianship. In addition, those who chose to pursue the profession did so with regret in some cases. Some choose to stay in the field because they want to help clients by providing solutions (Fasae & Nwaifo, 2024).

In any organisation, including libraries, employee productivity is increased by motivation, whether it comes from internal or external sources. Consequently, an optimistic and demanding attitude would result from the academic librarian's general work environment, including the status and recognition of his office (Fasae & Nwaifo, 2024). Conversely, research indicates that highly motivated academic librarians can create teacher identities that impact their professional identities and enable them to support information literacy instructors and instruction more successfully (Hess, 2019). Similarly, it is widely accepted that librarians' motivation for their job could affect how productive their research is.

Abban and Saah's (2021) study aimed to determine the respondents' interest in pursuing a career in librarianship. The majority of 278 (85.3%) respondents who had their interest in becoming librarians after school said they would not consider pursuing this career path, according to data analysis. Just 48 (14.7%) people would consider becoming librarians as a career. Students cited a lack of knowledge and comprehension of the library profession as one of the main causes. Their comments also demonstrated a lack of regard for the profession, which might be related to the state of the school libraries.

Qualifications and status of academic librarians

Even though academic librarians play a critical role in the research community, their contributions seem to go unappreciated in the so-called information age, and they continue to lack the glamour and prestige of other professions (Abban & Saah, 2021). To stop this, there have been differing views expressed regarding the necessity of doctoral degrees for academic librarians to hold specific positions in both developed and developing nations (Ifijeh, Yusuf, & Owolabi, 2021).

According to Veles, Graham, and Ovaska (2021), there is still terminological inconsistency in relation to titles, which is evident in the diversity and organisational complexity of universities across different nations. It is therefore critical for academic librarians to develop professional practices that help staff members make sense of their identities, as this has an impact on their work and career trajectories, given the constant creation of new professional identities and the restructuring of old ones (Veles, Graham & Ovaska, 2021).

Academic librarians at academic libraries are said to have the same academic standing as their classroom counterparts for a considerable amount of time. In literature, the term "academic staff" has been defined in a variety of ways (Ifijeh, Yusuf & Owolabi, 2021). In certain countries, it is synonymous with "faculty" and "teaching staff," but these terms may have different meanings. It is evident from the definition given above that the term "academic staff" refers to more than just the role of a teacher. Service and research are crucial elements of the idea and academic. According to Ifijeh, Yusuf, and Owolabi (2021), librarians have long maintained that one of their primary responsibilities is to support teaching, learning, and research through the provision of academic resources and services.

Cursory observation, however, reveals that librarians employed by academic libraries only have a lite academic status because they are not eligible for some benefits associated with faculty membership. Teaching employees and students how to use library resources effectively and efficiently is a responsibility of librarians. Additionally, it has been proven that librarians are acknowledged as members of the Technical University Teachers Association and the University Teachers Association of Ghana, and that they are promoted based on the same standards as academic staff. Despite this, there are still certain differences in terms of titles, statuses, and acknowledgment.

With some inconsistencies, it is assumed that policymakers in the education sector have had a significant impact on the standing and recognition of librarians in Ghana's higher education institutions. This is mostly because of the government's increased accountability and its covert meddling in higher education, which has led to political sentiment on many campuses (Cox 2020). Additionally, it seems that Ghana's higher education administrators have concluded that librarians are not qualified for certain academic roles, such as Associate Professor, which is comparable to Deputy Librarian and requires a doctorate and publications. Although there are numerous known university statutes that specify that a doctorate and professorial status are prerequisites for appointment, colleges of education do not demand doctorate qualifications to fill library vacancies. However, with the pending migration of staff of the Colleges of Education into the salary structure of their affiliate universities, it appears that the colleges are also going in the same direction, noting that doctoral degree would be a requirement or added advantage for individuals applying as heads of libraries. There is however no clear directive in this regard from the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission.

As was previously mentioned, librarians received full academic status and recognition at several universities in Ghana, including University of Mines and Technology, University of Cape Coast, and Accra Technical University.

This is the case because in Ghana, promotion to teaching class grades equivalent to their own requires that the academic librarians possess the same qualifications as the faculty and fulfil all additional requirements. Academic librarians are ranked on level 25L of the single spine salary structure, the same as professors. For instance, University of Cape Coast recognises that full professors and university librarians must meet the same standards for academic staff to be promoted (University of Cape Coast Criteria for appointment and promotions of senior members, 2021). In contrast to University of Ghana, where the university librarian usually holds a professorial position, University of Cape Coast maintains the use of the library staff's professional ranks, even though they are all regarded as academic staff. This substantiates the claims made by Ifijeh, Yusuf, & Owolabi (2021), that even though university librarians have been officially granted academic status, there are still marked differences in their working environments, duties, and benefits.

In a confusing move that resembled what happened in Nigeria in 1975 regarding the removal of the academic/faculty status of librarians, which was later reversed in 1993, the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission attempted to change the status of academic librarians in Ghana in a letter dated June 12, 2024, with reference no; KA16/7/0/KAP/1/01 and likened them to the staff members of audit and finance. This letter aimed to reclassify academic librarians as professional staff. Consequently, the Technical University Teachers Association and the University Teachers Association of Ghana were strongly against this. At the end, the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission had to confirm in another letter dated on July 12, 2024, with reference number HK42/1/01 that all librarians in higher education institutions are academic staff members. This was an unfortunate turn of events. However, some faculty members and principals of the colleges of education continue to be opposed to librarians having full academic standing because of their ignorance and lack of appreciation of the responsibilities of college librarians. Ifijeh, Yusuf, and Owolabi (2021) contend that if it weren't for the inconsistent actions of governmental entities, such as the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission, there would never have been a discussion regarding the academic standing of librarians. The issue may also stem from variations in university statutes and principals' selective implementation of the harmonised statutes of college of education.

Ifijeh, Yusuf, and Owolabi (2021) state that there are several ramifications when academic status is granted to librarians. The most important of these is the requirement for a legitimate explanation because particularly in privately owned institutions, the status is frequently threatened by faculty, administration, and governing councils. Additionally, the necessity for

academic librarians to publish scholarly works or face extermination as a prerequisite for advancement has complicated their work because it calls for juggling research with the librarian's regular responsibilities, which include collection development, cataloguing, information literacy, and reference services. Furthermore, there is a lack of clarity on the placement of academic librarians after the end of their tenure, compared to the other principal officers, such as the Vice Chancellor who remain professors and return to classroom after their tenures.

A thorough analysis of 54 publications by Veles, Graham, and Ovaska (2023) from the first two decades of the twenty-first century, covering both the Global North and Global South, on the evolving identities and roles of professional staff members as well as the spaces where they interact with others within the university community. The study discovered that professional staff members were constructing their professional identities differently, feeling more empowered, and collaborating with academic staff members. Similar findings were made by Rawayau (2019), who examined the impact of employers' and users' unfavourable perceptions of librarianship on the job performance of Nigerian graduates. He discovered that one of the things discouraging most of the staff is the lack of recognition of the profession is discouraging fresh graduates from seeking librarianship related roles and even those employed in the field are seeking opportunities elsewhere.

Methods

Purposive sampling was used as sampling technique and a phenomenological research design was also used in this research. The study also adopted a qualitative research approach. Telephone interviews and document analysis were used to gather data. Interviews were conducted with thirty-eight out of the forty-six college librarians. Participants were conveniently selected. The choice of the convenient sampling technique was to enable the researcher to select participants based on their accessibility and availability for the telephone interview due to time constraints. Primary data was gathered directly from the respondents on the field through telephone interviews. Secondary data were acquired from Ghana Tertiary Education Commission's policy documents and letters, statutes of the University of Cape Coast, harmonised statutes of the colleges of education and journal articles. The researcher assured the participants of his strict adherence to all ethical standards in research, including anonymity and confidentiality. The data were analysed using the relational content analysis.

Findings and Discussion

Demographic distribution

Although demographic characteristics of participants have no direct relationship to any of the study objectives, the researcher deemed it necessary to establish the relationship between gender and career choices as librarians. The findings of the study indicated that out of thirty-eight participants, the majority were male (75% percent) followed by female (25%). The result of this study is dissimilar to the study by Yousaf et al. (2013). They reported that librarianship is considered a decent job for women, with the number of females joining this profession increasing every year.

College libraries as academic libraries

The study sought to establish whether libraries of colleges of education constitute academic libraries. All the participant of the study indicated that academic libraries include those found in colleges of education and universities. It is possible to conclude from the results that colleges of education libraries are widely acknowledged and accepted as academic libraries. Nevertheless, there is no explicit reference to the libraries as academic departments or units in the colleges of education in the documents that were examined, including the colleges of education statutes and the scheme of work. There is also no mention of the college library as professional or non-academic staff. College librarians have frequently been referred to as professional staff in official correspondence from the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission. However, their most recent letter clarified the commissions stand on the recognition of libraries in the universities and colleges of education as academic staff.

P13 had this to say; "...from my training as a librarian, I have always known that libraries of universities, polytechnics, and colleges are classified as academic libraries."

"In theory, yes, college libraries are academic libraries ..." [P15].

"yes, ... College libraries are part of the classification of academic libraries" [P20]

Librarians as academic staff or professional staff

Also, the study sought to establish the recognition and status of college librarian in the colleges of education. The findings indicate that most of the participants (twenty-eight, representing seventy-four percent) did not have the recognition and status of academic staff. However, ten (10) of the participants indicated that they are recognised as academic staff, and this was evidenced from their Book and research allowances computation and payments. Most of

the participants were aware of GTEC's letter of June 12, 2024, with reference no; KA16/7/0/KAP/1/01/ affirming the status of college and university Librarians as academic staff. However, most of the participants believe that such status recognition of college librarians as academic staff would remain on paper and would not be felt or seen in reality. Based on the findings, one could argue that there are variations and disparities in status and recognition among librarians in the colleges of education, despite all colleges of education using the same harmonised statutes, conditions and scheme of services.

Some of the participants had this to say:

"...I am an academic staff member, and a member of the colleges of education Teachers Association, Ghana"- [P13].

I am a non-academic staff. All correspondence from GTEC has always placed the library under the professional staff category and so, I had no reason to think that I am an academic staff... [P10] "I was a tutor before my conversion to the library and so, my status has not change. I still attend all meetings and programmes for the teaching staff, even though, my college, an affiliate of university for development studies (UDS) does not offer information literacy and so, I do not teach"[P5].

"... I am an academic staff even though nobody has told me that I am an academic staff, I know I am. I get my book and research allowance, and I am a member of the academic board of my college." [P20]

"... I am not treated as an academic staff, and so, I supposed I am not. I only take book allowance just like the college secretary, Finance and College Auditor". I know that in some universities and Colleges, librarians are treated as academic staff and enjoy the full privileges like their colleague lecturers and Tutors". [P18]

The role of the Librarians in the Colleges of Education.

The study also examined the role of librarians in the colleges of education. Aside from their information management activities, they also perform a variety of functions. All the participants indicated that they have been actively involved in the institutional and programmes accreditation and re-accreditation. Results of the study indicate that college librarians curate collections, develop education programs, manage databases, and oversee library staff.

[P 30] *"... we organise the intellectual resources (external or internal) for the use of the college and its stakeholders".*

"We are the custodians of the academic resources of the college. We assist both students and staff to locate and access resources"[P5]

“As a college librarian, I undertake reprographic activities, referencing, indexing, abstract preparation, and general research assistance services...” [P1].

“... I manage the library staff, manage the resources of the library, and teach information literacy as one of the general courses in my college.” [P15]

Education and qualifications of Librarians in the Colleges of Education

Education and training are the processes of imbibing technical knowledge and skills in persons to perform their functions (Adams, 2024). They encompass the systematic processes through which individuals acquire knowledge and expertise, ultimately leading to enhanced organisational success (Akcer & Ozer2014). Most of the participants (36, representing 99%) held postgraduate qualifications (MA, MSc, and MPhil) in librarianship. This is not different from those of the technical and traditional universities. It is important to indicate that, there are few institutions like University of Cape Coast and University of Ghana that require individuals to possess doctoral degrees before appointment as substantive librarians.

some of the responses of the participants are as follows:

“I have an MPhil in information studies from the University of Ghana...” [P15]

“I have a background in communication and information studies. I hold an MA in communication studies, and an MPhil information studies...” [P5]

“... and I hold an MSc and PhD in information science from the Mahatma Gandhi university and University of South Africa.” [P1].

“... my highest qualification is a Master of Arts (MA) in information studies from the university of Ghana and currently pursuing an MPhil in information studies at the University of Cape Coast” [P18].

Career options for the academic Librarians in institutions of higher learning

Furthermore, the study sought to establish the career options available to librarians of the colleges of education. The findings show that most of the participants (85%) are aware of other career options, such as teaching and research fellowship roles, and are willing to take them if the treatment they receive does not improve. 19 (50%) participants saw teaching (lectureship) as an option they wish to pursue, 5 (13%) participants expressed interest in becoming research fellows, 10 (representing 26%) expressed their readiness to remain in the librarianship profession, and 4 (11%) not sharing an opinion.

Motivation, a multifaceted construct, served as the impetus for specific courses of action among individuals or groups.

[P 1], “... *I intend to convert from librarian into a lecturer. I aspire to become a professor in the very near future but that does not look possible, giving that, library staff with UDS and its affiliate colleges do not progress like the teaching staff.*”

“... *even though I teach information literacy, I don't intend to move from the library domain to full lectureship because, my progression is like the teaching staff. This is because, the analogous grade of Deputy librarian at UCC and its affiliates is Associate Professor (Level 24) with the same requirement and salary level. Once I can climb to the Professorial status, I don't intend to change my profession*” [P13]

“... *with my qualification and experience, I can work as an information officer at the ministry, embassies, and financial institutions. It is my hope to secure such jobs outside the educational sector...*” [P20]

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study concludes that, there was a dominance of males over females. The majority (24 participants, representing 55%) of the participants do not enjoy status and recognition as non-academic staff and would prefer a career as lecturers or research fellows. It was also found that while the qualifications and role of college librarians seemed the same across the colleges, the recognition and status of the librarian vary from college to college. Whilst some colleges saw and treated college librarians as non-academic staff, others were recognised as academic. The study found that some (26 participants, equivalent to 66%) librarians are willing to drift into teaching after being denied recognition as their counterparts, the teaching staff. They primarily wish to be fully recognised as academic staff, and to have the opportunity to progress to professorship, just like the lecturers and research fellows at the University of Ghana, Legon and University of Cape Coast. The study recommends that the qualification, status, role, and career options of academic librarians should be the same across all higher institutions to ensure parity and minimise brain drain. It is recommended that academic librarians be treated fairly and equitably across all tertiary institutions to curb librarian turnover from the colleges of education to the traditional and technical universities. Finally, the study recommends the conferment of Associate professors and professors on deputy librarians and librarians across all academic librarians.

Ethical Statement

The researcher sought the consent of all participants by signing the consent form designed by the researchers. The researcher conducted their research in strict compliance with other ethical standards such as anonymity, voluntariness, integrity of research, and respect for persons.

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Generative AI Statement

There was a minimal use of artificial intelligence tools for purpose of generating bibliographies and undertaking summaries. I, therefore, take full responsibility for this content of this publication.

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