

# Library Resources & Technical Services

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**Manager Perspectives on the Prevalence, Impact,  
and Management of Work-Related Burnout in  
Academic Library Technical Services Workers**

*Sean P. Kennedy, Melanie J. McGurr,  
and Kevin R. Garewal*

**More Inclusive Collection Development:  
Considering the Information Needs of Researchers  
from Outside the Subject Area of Communication**

*Lisa Romero*



**Core** LEADERSHIP  
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FUTURES



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# Editorial

## Embracing an Open Future

Rachel Scott and Michael Fernandez

As alluded to in our last few editorials, there are some exciting changes on the horizon for *Library Resources & Technical Services*, beginning with our move to being fully open access starting in 2023. A good deal of work has been happening behind the scenes to bring this move to fruition, both among the *LRTS* editors as well as in conjunction with the editors at our Core sister publications (*Information Technology and Libraries* and *Library Leadership & Management*) and the Core Executive Board. While there is still much work to be done at this stage, we hope to be able to share more information with our readers soon, so watch this space as well as other Core information channels such as ALA Connect. In anticipation of kicking off the next year as a fully open access publication, we are happy to devote this editorial to a call for papers devoted to the impacts of open access on technical services work.

The editors of *Library Resources & Technical Services* invite submissions on the topic of open access to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the journal moving to zero-embargo open access in January 2023. Submissions may deal with any aspect of open access relevant within the scope of *LRTS* to publish research focused in the areas of collections, scholarly communications, acquisitions, and cataloging. Welcome topics include, but are not limited to:

- Negotiation of transformative agreements
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- Leveraging open access materials to diversify collections
- Best practices for cataloging open access materials
- Optimizing the discovery of open access materials
- Partnerships outside of the library to support open access
- Advocacy for open access publishing options

Manuscripts should be prepared according to the author guidelines and submitted via the journal's OJS system. Manuscripts received by July 7, 2023, will be considered for the special issue; those received after the deadline may be published in a later issue. All studies will undergo double anonymous peer-review. Essays, interviews, and shorter format submissions are welcome; editors reserve the right for these to be peer or editorially reviewed. Please email Rachel Scott (rescot2@ilstu.edu) and Michael Fernandez (michael.fernandez@yale.edu) with any questions.

In this issue of *LRTS*:

- Sean P. Kennedy, Melanie J. McGurr, and Kevin R. Garewal share findings from a survey that investigates “Manager Perspectives on the Prevalence, Impact, and Management of Work-Related Burnout in Academic Library Technical Services Workers.” The authors highlight the negative impacts of burnout on both employees and organizations and offer research-supported practices that may mitigate and prevent work-related burnout.
- In “More Inclusive Collection Development: Considering the Information Needs of Researchers from Outside the Subject Area of Communication,” Lisa Romero demonstrates how librarians might consider the research needs of those outside of a given discipline or subject area via citation analysis. Romero makes the case for inclusive approaches given the increased interest in and practice of interdisciplinary research.
- Book reviews

# Manager Perspectives on the Prevalence, Impact, and Management of Work-Related Burnout in Academic Library Technical Services Workers

Sean P. Kennedy, Melanie P. McGurr, and Kevin R. Garewal

*Work-related burnout has been studied for decades across multiple industries, including librarianship. However, few studies have evaluated burnout in technical services workers. This study surveys academic library technical services managers to learn their perspective on the prevalence and impact of burnout on technical services workers. Managers observed a high incidence of burnout in their direct reports. The negative impacts of burnout on employees (e.g., personal health) and the organization (e.g., performance decline) are discussed. Managers' typical practices are evaluated through the lens of burnout prevention and mitigation. Documentation of the typical practices of academic library technical services managers is provided to assist current managers in self-evaluating their practices with peers. Overall, technical services managers are using thoughtful and research supported practices that can have a positive impact on the mitigation and prevention of work-related burnout.*

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Several surveys and studies have been published recently on the topic of work-related burnout in libraries. Despite the growing coverage of burnout in libraries, a study focused on the impact of burnout in technical services departments has not been published. Research exists on burnout in public services, reference services, and the general feeling of burnout in academic libraries, but studies about technical services are mainly represented by articles specifically about cataloging, stress, and/or burnout.<sup>1</sup> The present study aims to leverage current findings about work-related burnout in libraries and apply it directly to technical services through an analysis of academic library technical services manager's observations, beliefs, and practices related to burnout.

When working with a construct like work-related burnout, it is important to establish an understanding and definition of the phenomenon being measured. Burnout is a construct that has been operationalized in different ways by researchers throughout the years. Brenninkmeijer and VanYperen define burnout as “a state of mental exhaustion resulting from chronic stress in the working situation.”<sup>2</sup> Christian states that burnout is “a prolonged exposure to workplace stressors that often drain an employee’s vitality and enthusiasm, and lead[s] to less engagement and productivity.”<sup>3</sup> This study uses the definition of burnout put forth by Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, and Christensen who define work-related burnout as “the degree of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion that is perceived by the person as related to his/her work.”<sup>4</sup> This definition is based on the operationalization of work-related burnout in the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory. This specific view of burnout is preferred over other significant burnout measures (i.e., Maslach Burnout Inventory, Forbes Burnout Survey, and Staff Burnout Scale for Health Professionals) due to it being used extensively in the research of burnout in libraries. This definition of burnout was provided to study participants to create uniformity among responses by eliminating the use of individual understandings of what is meant by the term “burnout.” While this study does not utilize the Copenhagen Burnout Inventory, future planned studies in this line of research will use the tool to quantitatively measure burnout in technical services workers.

## Literature Review

The construct of burnout has been studied for decades and measured across many industries, especially the service and helping professions. A 1981 study by Maslach and Jackson, creators of the Maslach Burnout Inventory, and a later study led by Maslach in 2001, found three main components lead to burnout: “Overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment.”<sup>5</sup> These three components are common causal factors referenced across the burnout research.

Causes of burnout are unique to each individual, but research repeatedly unearths similarities in the overall general causes of work-related burnout. Many of these causes can have cascading effects and lead to downstream consequences. For example, budget cuts at an institution have been cited as a cause of burnout and these cuts can lead to changes in the workplace like decreasing resources and reductions in force.<sup>6</sup> The reductions in force can lead to heavier workloads when the same amount of work needs to be accomplished with fewer employees. Heavier workloads can be a cause of burnout when library employees

feel overwhelmed when given increasing levels of responsibilities that are often not accompanied by a pay raise.<sup>7</sup> Relatedly, academic library employees are often expected to become “a multitasking, boundless expert.”<sup>8</sup> Changes in technology, an almost constant in technical services, is another cause of burnout.<sup>9</sup> The term for the pressure to keep up with rapidly changing technology, technostress, also appears in burnout studies.<sup>10</sup> Some studies have reviewed the burnout literature to identify causes and posit solutions to the problem of burnout in libraries. Caputo’s book, *Stress and Burnout in Library Services*, covers how to recognize, combat, and address burnout from the staff and manager’s point of view.<sup>11</sup>

The teaching demands of librarians are at the center of several articles about burnout in academic libraries. Affleck found that instructional librarians experiencing burnout felt they were not adequately prepared to teach coming out of their library school programs.<sup>12</sup> Nardine’s research on occupational burnout of liaison librarians concluded that burnout may be mitigated by the high match in the personal values of liaison librarians with the values of institutions.<sup>13</sup> Baer’s study of academic instruction librarians found susceptibility to burnout due to stressors such as overload, role ambiguity, and role conflict, but concluded that instruction librarians often have the flexibility and individual agency to make changes to their practices and improve their overall situation.<sup>14</sup> Sheesley looks to former studies to gauge burnout in academic teaching librarians and emphasizes librarians need help from their administration to reduce burnout.<sup>15</sup>

Closely related to these studies are investigations into stress and burnout in reference librarians. Smith and Nelson found that job challenges for academic reference librarians were not leading those individuals to experience burnout.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to those findings, Haack, Jones, and Roose surveyed attendees at a conference on reference services and found 42% of their sample were experiencing or nearing burnout.<sup>17</sup> However, these studies on reference librarians are dated.

Research on work-related burnout of individuals working in public libraries has also been completed. While public libraries differ in many ways from academic libraries, these studies provide additional insights about burnout among the broader profession of librarianship. Lindén, Salo, and Jansson studied burnout in Swedish public librarians and found the burnout factors of cynicism and emotional exhaustion were predicted by high workload, low quality social interactions, and conflicts between the values of the librarian and their organization.<sup>18</sup> Smith, Bazalar, and Wheeler studied California public library employees and found that patron issues were the biggest work stressor and workload was the predictor most discussed with burnout.<sup>19</sup> Salyers et al. surveyed public librarians in Indiana concerning their levels of

stress and burnout and re-visited 70 of those respondents six months later. The authors used a variety of scales to measure and correlate burnout, autonomy, role clarity, coworker support, work pressure, and attitudes about technology. Their six-month check-in with participants showed that only changes in role clarity helped improve employee burnout.<sup>20</sup>

Articles on burnout in public services and reference far outpaced technical services in the 1980s and 1990s. That trend still holds true today. The authors did not find articles solely focused on technical services and burnout, but have reviewed articles on catalogers, stress, and job satisfaction. Leysen's research on job satisfaction among catalogers at ACRL libraries showed that a majority of catalogers were satisfied with their current position and comfortable with their changing roles within the library.<sup>21</sup> However, this study preceded both a major change in cataloging standards (i.e., RDA) and developing workforce issues such as relying on temporary labor in cataloging departments. Leung evaluated stress from a technical services perspective and directly discusses burnout and three main categories of stressors: stressors that come with the job (e.g., workload and time pressure), the individual's relationship to their work (e.g., role conflict and workplace politics), and the organization and work climate (e.g., communication and involvement in decision making).<sup>22</sup> Leung provides many strategies for coping with job stress including working to improve yourself (e.g., seeking training to help with self-identified stress areas) and reflecting on the work environment to better understand unique stressors and how to address them.<sup>23</sup> McClellan surveyed catalogers who moved from basic cataloging to more advanced cataloging and created a measurement for work stress, but does not focus on burnout.<sup>24</sup> Colon-Aguirre and Webb's analysis includes all roles in academic libraries, including technical services, but they did not find that technical services staff were impacted by burnout in a significant way.<sup>25</sup>

Although research has been steadily published on the overall burnout trends in libraries, causes of burnout, recognizing burnout, etc., few studies have followed through on how to mitigate and prevent burnout. Qualitative studies sharing experiences, ideas, and opinions on how to prevent and mitigate burnout in libraries are much more common than quantitative approaches. This study aims to better understand the incidence and negative impacts of work-related burnout on academic library technical services workers from the perspective of their managers. The observations and firsthand experiences of managers provide a unique lens to view how burnout is impacting academic libraries. Technical services manager's beliefs and opinions related to burnout and other work stressors will be collected to understand how library managers approach these issues. The typical management practices of managers will also be collected and analyzed. These practices will be compared

to the existing burnout literature to evaluate any successes, or needed changes, within library management practices to help prevent or mitigate burnout. Information about management practices from technical services managers is also intended to achieve the pragmatic goal of helping managers understand the practices and techniques deployed by their colleagues across the United States. This information can help managers gain new ideas and/or reinforce their current management practices.

## Methodology

Participants were invited to take part in this online study during the summer of 2021 through email distributed to eight academic library and technical services listservs (ALA Core, ACRL Tech Srv, ACRL ULS, AUTOCAT, EriL-I, OCLC-CAT, OVGTSL, and Core Metadata). Complete data was collected from 126 participants. Study participants were made aware of their rights, given IRB information, and provided informed consent before starting the survey. All 126 participants confirmed they are currently an academic library manager who supervises employees within traditional technical services roles. For the sake of clarity, traditional technical services roles were defined as including, but not limited to, cataloging, acquisitions, collections, electronic resources management, and preservation.

## Participants

To evaluate the representativeness of this study's population to the overall librarian profession, the race, gender, and age of participants (who consented to providing demographic information) has been compared to the most recent demographic report on membership from the American Library Association Office of Research and Statistics.<sup>26</sup> This comparison can be found in table 1. The racial diversity of the study population is fairly representative of the profession although there is a notable lack of African American or Black and American Indian or Alaskan Native participants. The population also has an elevated percentage of females. The age of participants in this study is significantly older than the profession's average but this is not unexpected due to the participants being managers. In general, managers are more advanced in their career and likely older.

Participants work in an academic library at both public (62.7%) and private (37.3%) institutions. A strong majority of participants are employed by a four-year institution that offers doctorate degrees (71.43%), followed by four-year institutions that offer graduate degrees (17.46%), four-year undergraduate only institutions (7.94%), and two-year institutions (3.17%). The academic librarian experience of participants ranges from 3 to 40 years with a mean experience



**Table 1.** Study population demographics compared to the 2017 ALA Demographic Study.

| Variable   | Present Study   | ALA    |
|--|-----------------|--------|
| <b>Race</b>                                      |                 |        |
| African American or Black                        | 1.71%           | 4.40%  |
| American Indian or Alaskan Native                | 0.0%            | 1.20%  |
| Asian  | 3.42%           | 3.60%  |
| Hispanic or Latino or Spanish origin of any race | 0.85%           | n/a    |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander        | 0.85%           | 0.20%  |
| Two or more races                                | 4.27%           | n/a    |
| White  | 88.89%          | 86.70% |
| Other  | 0.0%            | 4.0%   |
| <b>Gender</b>                                    |                 |        |
| Female   | 87.27%          | 81.0%  |
| Male   | 12.73%          | 19.0%  |
| <b>Age</b>                                       |                 |        |
| Range  | 24–70 years old | n/a    |
| Mean   | 49.41 years old | n/a    |
| 45 years old or older                            | 82.24%          | 59.0%  |

of 18.34 years. The participants' number of years in their current supervisory role ranges from 1 to 30 years with a mean years in the current supervisory role of 8.17 years. The number of technical services employees supervised by participants ranges from 1 to 38 employees with a mean of 5.83 employees supervised.

### Measures

This study's accepted definition of work-related burnout was provided to all participants to ensure a uniform burnout construct was being used while responding to survey questions. Participants were told the core underlying attributes of work-related burnout are fatigue and exhaustion. Burnout was fully defined based on Kristensen et al. as "the degree of physical and psychological fatigue and exhaustion that is perceived by the person as related to his/her work."<sup>27</sup>

Participants were instructed to answer all questions about their typical management practices. This is an important distinction as data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many new stressors and changing work arrangements have arisen during the pandemic. This study features librarian observations and management practices during typical times (i.e., pre-pandemic). Certain data points in the study (e.g., workforce attrition) have certainly been influenced by the pandemic and may have created new permanent changes for academic libraries.

The survey questions used in this study were developed by the authors. The goal of the survey is to understand the

level of work-related burnout observed by technical services managers, the characteristics of that burnout, managers' attitude towards burnout, and management practices that impact burnout. The survey questions are informed by the existing literature on work-related burnout and developed to further the understanding of the impact of burnout in academic library technical services departments.

The survey includes standard response choices provided to all participants (results expressed as a percentage of total participants) and the ability to provide additional information via open text boxes (results expressed as count of total incidences). Open text box answers were reviewed, coded, and standardized into discrete themes. Any broader themes that emerged from standardized response data (e.g., performance decline) are accompanied by the common responses within the theme (e.g., missing deadlines, presenteeism, carelessness, and loss of creativity).

## Results

### Burnout Incidence and Observations

The observation of work-related burnout in technical services employees was common among managers with 73.02% indicating they have observed burnout in the individuals they supervise. These participants were provided with an open-ended response box to share the characteristics of burnout they have observed. These answers were standardized and coded. The most frequent observation was disengagement (e.g., motivation decline, lack of motivation, off-task behaviors, lack of interest, lack of participation in meetings/committees/activities, boredom, and apathy), followed by performance declines (e.g., missing deadlines, presenteeism, carelessness, and loss of creativity), and frustration (e.g., anger, quick to anger/short temper, impatience, irritability, overreacting to minor issues, and crying at work). A full list of burnout observations can be found in table 2.

Participants were asked if they have observed a difference in burnout incidence based on demographics or group membership of the employee (e.g., age, work experience, underrepresented or minority status, etc.). Only 23.02% of participants observed this type of difference and all observations related to increased burnout incidence. Participants were provided with an open-ended response box to indicate the differences observed. The most frequently observed difference is older employees experience more burnout. The second highest group difference observed

**Table 2.** Manager observations of burnout’s impact on employees.

| Count | Burnout Observation  |
|-------|--|
| 39    | Disengagement (e.g., motivation decline, lack of motivation, off-task behaviors, lack of interest, lack of participation in meetings/committees/activities, boredom, and apathy) |
| 34    | Performance decline (e.g., missing deadlines, presenteeism, carelessness, and loss of creativity)  |
| 32    | Frustration (e.g., anger, quick to anger/short temper, impatience, irritability, overreacting to minor issues, and crying at work)   |
| 21    | Physical health manifestation or illness (e.g., headaches, fatigue, and tiredness)   |
| 15    | Concentration issues (e.g., forgetfulness and lack of focus)   |
| 14    | Overwhelmed (including task prioritization issues)   |
| 11    | Absenteeism  |
| 10    | Feeling mistreated   |
| 10    | Low morale (e.g., unhappiness)   |
| 9     | Negative attitude  |
| 8     | Cynicism   |
| 8     | Increased usage of paid time off   |
| 7     | Mental health manifestation or illness (e.g., anxiety, sadness, and depression)  |
| 7     | Exhaustion   |
| 4     | Stress   |
| 4     | Passive aggressiveness   |
| 3     | Separation from the organization   |
| 2     | Isolation  |
| 2     | Aggression   |
| 2     | Insubordination  |

was younger employees experience more burnout. No participant mentioned multiple group memberships (e.g., minority status and millennial) as part of their observation. A full list of observed burnout incidence increases based on demographics or group membership of employees can be found in table 3.

### Burnout Attitudes and Management Practices

Participants were asked to share their beliefs about causes of work-related burnout with both a standard set of criteria and the opportunity to provide additional criteria. The following beliefs about burnout causing criteria were reported: 73.02% reported low pay, 70.64% reported loss of positions within the library, 67.46% reported bureaucracy or “red tape” at the institution, 58.73% reported budget cuts, 57.94% reported lack of advancement opportunities,

**Table 3.** Observed burnout incidence increases based on demographics or group membership of employees.

| Count | Group Difference Observations                                 |
|-------|---|
| 14    | Older employees   |
| 4     | Younger employees   |
| 2     | People of color   |
| 2     | Parents with young families                                   |
| 2     | Employees who feel marginalized                               |
| 1     | Technical services workers                                    |
| 1     | Workers with repetitive work duties                           |
| 1     | Underemployed individuals                                     |
| 1     | Individuals with health challenges                            |
| 1     | Individuals lacking advancement opportunities                 |
| 1     | Millennials   |
| 1     | Professionals (in comparison to support staff)                |
| 1     | Individuals who primarily speak a language other than English |

55.56% reported shifting priorities and departmental goals, 6.35% reported difficult patrons, 32.54% reported other criteria, and four participants reported not believing any of these criteria cause work-related burnout. Other criteria believed to cause work-related burnout includes library administration issues (16), increased workload (9), lack of acknowledgement for technical services contributions (4), ILS changes or migrations (3), institutional administration issues (2), communication issues (2), difficult coworkers (2), pay inequity (2), technology changes (1), reorganization (1), RTP stress (1), increased patron expectations (1), unclear expectations for technical services (1), lack of autonomy (1), job role changes (1), lack of raises (1), high turnover in technical services (1), fast paced changes within the profession (1), treatment as a minority (1), and the nature of technical services work (1).

Participants’ attitudes towards work-related burnout were evaluated by responses to seven statements using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The responses to these statements can be found in table 4.

Participants were asked to identify the negative outcomes of burnout they are concerned will impact their employees with both a standard set of outcomes and through providing additional outcomes. The following concerns about negative outcomes caused by burnout were reported: 78.57% report job performance declines, 53.18% reported job seeking / looking for another position, 50.79% reported absenteeism, 49.21% reported turnover, 16.67% reported other negative effects, and three participants reported not being concerned about any of these negative

**Table 4.** Participants’ attitudes about work-related burnout.

| Statement  | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree  | Strongly Agree |
|--|-------------------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|
| Burnout is an issue academic library managers should be concerned about.                               | 0%                | 0%       | 3.17%   | 47.62% | 49.21%         |
| Employees experience burnout due to their own characteristics and/or personal problems.                | 2.38%             | 29.37%   | 34.92%  | 26.98% | 6.35%          |
| Employees experience burnout due to organizational characteristics and/or problems.                    | 0.80%             | 1.59%    | 4.76%   | 60.32% | 32.54%         |
| Burnout is an issue for the personal well-being and health of employees.                               | 0%                | 0.80%    | 2.38%   | 38.89% | 57.94%         |
| Burnout is an issue for an employee in terms of their work quality and productivity.                   | 0%                | 1.59%    | 1.59%   | 38.89% | 57.94%         |
| Co-workers are impacted by individuals experiencing burnout in terms of work quality and productivity. | 0%                | 0%       | 5.56%   | 51.59% | 42.86%         |
| Burnout is an issue for library users in terms of quality of services they are provided.               | 0%                | 5.56%    | 15.87%  | 55.56% | 23.02%         |

effects. Other concerns about the negative outcomes of burnout included adverse health (including mental) impacts (6), retirement (5), poor attitudes (4), negative impact on coworkers (4), productivity declines (4), low morale (2), lateness (1), and forgetfulness (1).

Participants were asked if they take any steps to try and reduce the negative outcomes of burnout in their employees. The majority of participants (70.63%) reported taking such steps and shared their practices. The manager actions taken to reduce the negative effects of burnout can be found in table 5.

Participants were asked if they could fill vacated positions to better understand the potential impact of job seeking behaviors and actual turnover. In total, 64.3% of participants indicated some level of concern about filling vacant positions. An inability to fill vacant positions was reported by 38.1%. Further, an additional 26.2% reported they were unsure if they would be able to fill vacant positions.

Participants were asked if they take any steps to protect hardworking and highly productive employees from burnout. Two-thirds of participants (66.67%) indicated taking steps to protect these employees. The most common practice was increasing support in general (27), followed by monitoring workload and preventing overload (24), encouraging the use paid time off (15), advocating for them (13), increasing scheduling autonomy (8), intervening to remove stressors (8), performing kind gestures (e.g., taking them to lunch) (6), offering project/task variation (5), having one-on-one meetings (4), assisting with workload prioritization (4), encouraging healthy time habits at work (e.g., take breaks, don't skip lunch, only work 8 hour days) (4), increased work autonomy (3), performing wellness checks (2), encouraging and supporting professional development opportunities (2), and encouraging use of benefits such as free counseling (1).

**Table 5.** Manager actions taken to reduce the negative effects of burnout.

| Count | Manager actions to reduce negative effects of burnout            |
|-------|--|
| 21    | Increased communication  |
| 14    | Personal support   |
| 14    | Reduce other responsibilities/workload help                      |
| 12    | Schedule flexibility   |
| 11    | Highlight resources available through the institution            |
| 8     | Encourage employees to utilize their paid time off               |
| 8     | Training   |
| 7     | Prioritize projects/duties based on employee interests           |
| 6     | Advocacy to library admin for overloaded employees               |
| 5     | Flexible expectations/deadlines                                  |
| 5     | Validation of employee’s burnout feelings                        |
| 4     | Assist with the employee’s workload/duties                       |
| 4     | Promotion/raise advocacy   |
| 3     | Task prioritization help   |
| 3     | Help employee with job seeking                                   |
| 2     | Keep a positive attitude with my department                      |
| 2     | Intervene to help with difficult patrons (external and internal) |
| 2     | Increased autonomy   |
| 2     | Increased feedback   |
| 1     | Coaching   |
| 1     | Keep goals achievable  |
| 1     | Encourage teamwork among coworkers                               |
| 1     | Hire help  |
| 1     | Clearly define expectations                                      |
| 1     | Rotate duties within department                                  |
| 1     | Plan easy days of work   |
| 1     | Allow employees control over work environment                    |
| 1     | Personally absorb duties so employees do not get overloaded      |
| 1     | Advocate for help/new hires                                      |

## Communication

To gauge the level of direct communication about burnout and related constructs (e.g., work stress) between managers and employees, participants were asked if their direct reports talk with them about these topics. Conversations between managers and employees about issues such as burnout were reported by 87.3% of participants.

Participants were asked to identify communication-related management practices they engage in with both a standard set of practices and through providing additional practices. The following communication-related practices were reported: 93.65% involve employees in decision making, 91.27% place an emphasis on transparency with their staff and are transparent whenever feasible, 84.13% provide feedback once or twice per year during formal evaluations, 69.84% provide feedback more frequently than formal evaluations on regular and consistent intervals, 69.84% hold meaningful staff meetings, 55.56% provide social support to employees, 10.32% engage in other practices, and no participants reported not engaging in any of these practices. Other practices reported include community building/informal social events (4), emphasis on workload fairness and expectations (3), increased transparency with direct reports (2), active listening (1), non-traditional meeting formats (1), encouraging job skills training (1), use of one-on-one meetings (1), and communicating support for employees seeking better employment opportunities (1).

Participants were asked if their communication-related management practices change based on employee grouping (e.g., staff, librarians, etc.) with 18.25% answering affirmatively. Table 6 contains a list of the communication differences based on employee grouping.

### Providing Resources

Participants were asked to identify management practices related to providing resources for employees with both a standard set of practices and through providing additional practices. The following practices related to providing resources were reported: 84.13% provide trainings for employees to acquire new library skills, 77.78% model good behaviors and attitudes towards work and the workplace, 68.25% utilize workflow services to help with managing workload (e.g., shelf-ready services, cataloging services, etc.), 61.11% provide counseling and/or trainings for employees experiencing burnout or dealing with high work stress, 59.52% provide trainings for employees in stress management, 57.94% provide trainings for employees in time management, 53.18% mentor employees, 2.38% engage in other practices, and one participant reported not engaging in any of these practices. Other practices reported included actively referring employees to library/HR training

**Table 6.** Changes to communication-related practices based on employee grouping.

| Count | Communication-related change in practices based on employee grouping  |
|-------|---|
| 5     | Careful communications to librarians about tasks and projects to avoid limiting their autonomy  |
| 4     | Careful information sharing with unionized workers  |
| 4     | Increased information sharing with librarians   |
| 2     | Avoid any discussion of personnel with non-supervisors  |
| 1     | Provides tailored communication to each employee based on needs and with consideration to their job class                               |
| 1     | Uses formal and process-based communication with non-supervisors  |
| 1     | Communication about performance and evaluations is more structured and procedural when working with staff                               |
| 1     | Holds separate meetings for separate job classifications  |
| 1     | Staff are given more direct instructions  |
| 1     | Closer guidance and directions given to untenured faculty librarians  |
| 1     | Librarians may receive communication and instruction from library administration in addition to their direct supervisor                 |
| 1     | Professional staff are included in more meetings so that information is heard first-hand and doesn't need to be relayed by a supervisor |
| 1     | Librarians are given verbal directions and information as compared to staff who are given more written directions and information       |

and HR services such as an Employee Assistance Program (2) and active listening with employees to provide them with someone to talk with about their issues (1).

Participants were asked if their management practices related to providing resources change based on employee grouping (e.g., staff, librarians, etc.) with 38.1% answering affirmatively. Table 7 contains a list of these employee grouping differences.

A strong majority of participants (87.3%) reported their institution provides professional development funds to pay for training or courses for both general and job-specific skill acquisition.

### Job Roles and Characteristics of the Job

Participants were asked to identify management practices related to job roles and characteristics of the job with both a standard set of practices and through providing additional practices. The following practices related to job roles and characteristics of the job were reported: 87.3% give employees autonomy, 79.37% allow flexible scheduling, 74.6% clearly define roles and responsibilities to new hires or existing employees absorbing new duties, 61.11% actively

**Table 7.** Changes to providing resources practices based on employee grouping.

| Count | Providing resources change in practices based on employee grouping                           |
|-------|--|
| 28    | Librarians provided more professional development funds                                      |
| 10    | Professional development funds for staff may be unavailable or requests may be denied        |
| 8     | Librarians have guaranteed professional development funds                                    |
| 8     | Librarians are allowed to travel farther (including out-of-state)                            |
| 2     | Librarians provided with official mentors  |
| 2     | Exempt employees have expanded professional development opportunities                        |
| 1     | Staff are allowed release time for professional development but not funding                  |
| 1     | Librarians provided with professional development, but staff are not                         |
| 1     | Librarians receive a stipend for professional development travel                             |
| 1     | Training for staff is conducted within the library or broader institution                    |
| 1     | Staff required to receive union and library approval for professional development travel     |
| 1     | Librarians have more scheduling autonomy to work around professional development             |
| 1     | Librarians' memberships to professional associations are paid by library                     |
| 1     | Union staff have their professional development formally tracked via contract rules          |
| 1     | Paraprofessionals can apply for small grants and one-time funds for professional development |

find and intervene in job role related issues such as employees facing workload issues, 57.14% adopt practices which provide healthy work-life balance, 36.51% allow work-from-home arrangements, 1.59% reported they engage in other practices, and one participant reported not engaging in any of these practices. Other practices reported included reducing library hours to prevent employee overload (1) and making reorganization plans a collaborative effort (1).

Participants were asked if their management practices related to job roles and characteristics of the job change based on employee grouping (e.g., staff, librarians, etc.) with 13.49% answering affirmatively. Table 8 contains a list of these employee grouping differences.

Participants were asked additional questions about job roles within technical services. About half (48.41%) of participants reported supervising employees working in technical services roles who were not originally hired for technical services work. Further, 81.75% of participants reported supervising employees who have taken on new or

**Table 8.** Changes to job roles and characteristics of the job practices based on employee grouping.

| Count | Job roles and job characteristics change in practices based on employee grouping   |
|-------|--|
| 5     | Staff cannot be asked to work outside of their job description   |
| 4     | Librarians given more autonomy within job role   |
| 2     | Librarians given freedom to craft their job role   |
| 2     | Librarians expected to expand workload as needed   |
| 2     | Institutional policy allows librarians to work-from-home, but staff must be on site  |
| 1     | Exempt staff provided more scheduling autonomy   |
| 1     | Staff scheduling flexibility limited by timeclock procedures   |
| 1     | Staff provided scheduling autonomy to try to match librarian autonomy  |
| 1     | Librarians cannot be asked to do work outside their job description  |
| 1     | Unionized staff are managed more closely   |
| 1     | Non-exempt employees are actively discouraged from working more than 40 hours a week, working on weekends, and doing things like checking email while on vacation time |

**Table 9.** Reported management practices to support employees with job role changes.

| Count | Management efforts to support employees with changing or expanded job roles |
|-------|---|
| 73    | Provide training and professional development opportunities                 |
| 26    | Increase support (general)  |
| 18    | Increased communication   |
| 9     | Help manage a realistic workload and reduce responsibilities as needed      |
| 3     | Provide schedule flexibility  |
| 3     | Provide pay increases or stipends   |
| 2     | Manager assists with workload and covering responsibilities                 |
| 1     | Advocacy for promotion and/or raises for the employee                       |
| 1     | Protection of employees from forced role changes                            |

different technical services duties for which they were not originally hired. Supervising technical services employees who have taken on non-technical services library roles due to workforce reductions (e.g., public services duties) was reported by 29.37% of participants. Most participants (76.98%) indicated they have taken steps to assist employees whose role has changed. Table 9 contains a list of manager efforts to support employees with job role changes.

**Table 10.** Participants' attitudes towards work stressors.

| Statement   | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree  | Strongly Agree |
|---|-------------------|----------|---------|--------|----------------|
| As the manager, it is my responsibility to help reduce burnout by intervening to solve problems and implement changes in the workplace.   | 0.80%             | 2.38%    | 3.17%   | 52.38% | 41.27%         |
| The need for technical services employees to stay on the cutting edge by constantly adapting to new technologies, software, evolving systems, etc., is a significant work stressor. | 0%                | 11.11%   | 13.49%  | 46.03% | 29.37%         |
| Technical services employees often face increased job expectations.   | 0%                | 7.94%    | 5.56%   | 39.68% | 46.82%         |

### Work Stressors

Participants were asked to identify management practices related to work stressors with both a standard set of practices and through providing additional practices. The following practices related to work stressors were reported: 91.27% remain flexible with employees so work stressors (e.g., deadlines) can be modified to accommodate employee's personal life needs, 88.1% provide trainings to help employees with adopting new technology, software, etc., 79.37% make accommodations to address overloaded employees (e.g., reducing responsibilities or providing additional time to meet job demands), 76.98% intervene to resolve stressors related to the work environment (e.g., climate, new furniture, etc.), 3.17% reported they engage in other practices, and one participant reported not engaging in any of these practices. Other practices reported included cross training employees for backup coverage (1), conducting post-project debriefs to determine ways to improve future projects (1), eliminating a policy that required 24-hour turnaround of new materials to the shelves (1), and directly assisting employees with time management and prioritization of workload (1).

Participants were asked if their management practices related to work stressors change based on employee grouping (e.g., staff, librarians, etc.) with 3.97% answering affirmatively. All of these participants responded with answers indicating solutions to work stressors varied based on differences in university or employment rules between exempt and non-exempt employees, especially when dealing with working hours and scheduling issues.

Participants' attitudes towards work stressors were evaluated by responses to three statements using a five point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The responses to these statements can be found in table 10.

### Discussion

One of the primary goals of this study is to better understand the incidence of work-related burnout in academic

library technical services workers from the perspective of managers. Burnout appears to be a widespread problem within technical services with a staggering 73.02% of managers reporting they have observed burnout in direct reports. The high incidence of burnout observations in this study is certainly concerning for technical services but matches recent findings of high burnout within academic librarians in general.<sup>28</sup> The high incidence of burnout observed by managers in this study is strengthened by their considerable experience as academic librarians ( $\bar{x}$  = 18.34 years) and in their current role as a technical services manager ( $\bar{x}$  = 8.17 years).

Technical services managers' beliefs about causes of burnout generally match findings in the burnout literature. Over two-thirds of participants pointed to low pay, loss of positions within the library, and institutional bureaucracy as causes of burnout.<sup>29</sup> Further, over half of participants believe burnout is caused by budget cuts, lack of advancement opportunities, and shifting departmental priorities.<sup>30</sup> Additional causes of burnout provided by participants included issues with library administration, increased workload, and lack of acknowledgement for technical services' contribution to the library. Workload issues are a common theme across the entire study and are likely symptomatic of both the changing nature of technical services work and the loss of positions that many institutions are experiencing.

Another important goal of this study is to understand the negative outcomes burnout has on technical services workers. Managers observed several negative outcomes that can be found in table 2. Disengagement, performance declines, and frustration are the three most common observations. These outcomes are both intuitive and match findings in the work stress and burnout literature.<sup>31</sup> Burnout also appears to have an impact on the health of workers as the fourth highest observation was physical health manifestations or illness. These negative outcomes also have the potential to interact with each other and exacerbate the situation (e.g., illness leading to performance decline leading to increased stress and so on).

The impact of burnout on several employment-related issues is observed or mentioned as an area of concern by

managers. These outcomes included absenteeism, job seeking behaviors, and actual turnover. At the same time, technical services managers in this study reported significant issues with workforce attrition. The majority of managers expressed some doubt about filling vacant positions with 38.1% stating they definitely cannot fill vacant positions. High burnout incidence and workforce attrition is a dangerous combination for technical services departments where the job duties of vacant or eliminated positions often need absorbed rather than abandoned. This reality creates more undesirable outcomes such as high workload or overload for remaining employees. This overload can lead to burnout and eventually the turnover of more employees who cannot be replaced. Technical services managers should be aware of harmful cycles like these and intervene when possible.

Understanding the typical practices of academic library technical services managers provides important insights about the role managers have in impacting work-related burnout in their employees. While some variables may fall outside of a manager's ability to influence, managers can impact burnout in several broad areas including communication, providing resources, addressing job role and related issues with the job, and assisting employees with managing work stressors. Documenting these management practices also provides pragmatic data for managers curious about the practices of their contemporaries around the country.

Nearly all managers who reported observing burnout in their direct reports also indicated actively working to mitigate the negative impacts of burnout. The most often mentioned management practice for mitigating burnout was increasing communication. Other common responses included increasing personal support, reducing workload, providing scheduling flexibility, reminding employees to take advantage of institutional resources (e.g., employee assistance programs), and encouraging the use of paid time off. Similar practices are reported with respect to protecting hardworking and highly productive employees. Managers should be mindful that these employees may be particularly susceptible to workload issues due to their hardworking nature. It should be noted that all of these practices are directly within the control of managers and do not require any new resources from outside of the department. Overall, technical services managers appear to be leveraging the variables within their control to try and create positive change for the burned-out employee.

Lack of communication and feedback appears in the literature as a cause of work stress and burnout as well as a symptom of burnout when the employee becomes uncommunicative.<sup>32</sup> Participants in this study reported high levels of communication strategies with their employees. Every manager indicated they deploy at least one communication practice. Almost all participants (93.65%) reported involving employees in decision making. This practice

should help mitigate burnout as a lack of employee input in decision making is a causal factor in burnout.<sup>33</sup> Another widely adopted communication practice used by technical services managers is placing an emphasis on transparency with employees. Nearly 70% of participants indicated they provide frequent and consistent feedback to employees outside of formal evaluation processes. While not the focus of this study, the benefits of manager feedback, and increased feedback frequency, are well documented in management research.<sup>34</sup> Most participants (87.3%) also indicated that they talk with their employees about work stressors. This is a positive highlight in data that indicates many employees are struggling.

Job demands and work stressors are the primary constructs that come to mind when thinking about work-related burnout. The availability of job resources plays an important role in managing these demands and stressors. Managers reported providing several resources that can help with workload and time-related stress including providing training for new library skill acquisition (84.13%), utilizing workflow services such as shelf-ready books (68.25%), and providing trainings on time management (57.94%). These practices result in acquisition of skills employees need to complete expanding duties, actual task reduction support, and skills to manage overload-related time pressures. Providing resources that assist with high workload and time-related stress is a practice that should be continued as both constructs have been linked to causing job stress and burnout.<sup>35</sup> It is noteworthy that 87.3% of managers reported providing professional development funds to their employees since skill acquisition and other trainings are a large aspect of the job resources provided by technical services managers. Library managers should consider protecting these funds, even in the face of budget cuts, as they may have additional benefits to employees outside of simple skill acquisition. Social support, especially from supervisors, is another key job resource for preventing burnout.<sup>36</sup> Two major social support practices were reported by managers including modeling good behavior and attitudes towards work (77.78%) and mentoring employees (53.18%).

Changing job roles, often expanding and resulting in an increased workload, are a common reality for academic library technical services workers. This is evidenced by a majority of managers (81.75%) indicating they supervise employees whose job role within technical services has expanded in comparison to their role when hired. Some managers (29.37%) reported the expanded job role for technical services workers also includes covering duties in other library departments. Nearly half of managers (48.41%) reported supervising technical services employees who weren't originally hired to work in technical services at all. Overall, managers in this study seem to be aware of the expanding job role issue for technical services workers.

Some practices used to help in this area included clearly defining roles to new hires and employees with expanding roles (74.6%) and actively intervening in job role issues such as excessive workload (61.11%). Managers also reported several variations of “increasing support” and increasing communication levels with employees experiencing role expansion. These practices should be continued as they can actively impact issues linked to burnout including role clarity and overload.<sup>37</sup>

Autonomy is an important characteristic of day-to-day work life that is directly influenced by management practices. Most managers (87.3%) reported allowing employees to have autonomy. Technical services managers should continue to take advantage of their ability to influence this area as low levels of autonomy have been linked to burnout.<sup>38</sup> Autonomy may play an even larger role for workers in technical services as individuals are required to engage in creative problem solving, adapt to unique special projects, and prioritize a high volume of tasks. Managers reported engaging in practices that provide some scheduling autonomy for employees including permitting flexible scheduling (79.37%) and adopting practices that allow for a healthy work-life balance (57.14%). These practices directly help to reduce work stress for employees and contribute to a healthy relationship with the organization. Practices around scheduling autonomy and work-life balance should help prevent burnout but also seem well positioned to aid employees suffering from negative burnout outcomes including disengagement and absenteeism. While only 36.51% of managers reported allowing work-from-home arrangements, that number seems poised to increase after the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Work-from-home arrangements are an emerging trend that may help reduce burnout within the profession as they are often very popular among employees seeking better work-life balance.

High workloads surfaced as an issue throughout this study and must be considered one of the main work stressors for technical services workers. High workload or overload features heavily in the research as a stressor that leads to burnout.<sup>39</sup> Among other practices previously discussed, most managers (79.37%) reported making general accommodations to try and reduce the work stress of overloaded employees. Other efforts to address work stressors included flexibility to accommodate the employee's personal life needs (91.27%) and intervening to resolve stressors related to the work environment (76.98%). Simple gestures like allowing an employee to have flexible time to accommodate childcare needs or making sure a cataloger has a nice ergonomic desk chair, can make a real difference for the individual employee's stress level.

The nature of technical services may lead to unique work stressors as well. Most managers (75.4%) agreed that a significant work stressor is the need for technical services

employees to stay on the cutting edge by constantly adapting to new technologies, software, evolving systems, etc. This stance is mirrored in management practice as 88.1% of managers reported providing trainings to help employees adopt new software and technology. Like many other previously discussed issues, managers seem to be turning to training as a solution. The use of training to address the constantly changing technological needs in technical services is certainly meant to be supportive but may be compounding stress by adding more work to an already overloaded employee. The acquisition of new skills is obviously important, but the overloaded employee still faces significant work stress to complete their duties within a reasonable work week.

Another goal of this study was to capture any differences in burnout incidence and management practices based on employee groupings. Academic libraries contain many different employee types, unions, statuses, and classifications that managers must balance. In terms of burnout incidence, the most common observation in this study is that older employees experience burnout more than younger employees. This observation is contrary to recent academic librarian studies, and the overall work-related burnout literature, which suggests younger workers experience more burnout than older workers.<sup>40</sup> One explanation for the incongruence between research findings and observations in this study is that the nature of technical services work places unique stressors on older workers such as constant new technology adoptions, fast-paced changes, work overload, and the repetitive nature of tasks over long careers. Future studies could investigate the resilience and adaptability of technical services workers, with attention to generational differences, to better understand this issue. Contrary to what would be a reasonable assumption based on the overall demographics of library workers, this sample of managers reported no burnout differences based on gender and only two managers reported a higher burnout incidence for people of color. Further investigation of these issues is necessary.

Communication practices seem to be relatively uniform with only 18.25% of managers indicating changes based on employee grouping. The most commonly reported communication change was being careful while communicating with librarians to avoid limiting their autonomy. A conscious effort to protect the autonomy of professional librarians is a smart practice due to the previously discussed relationship between autonomy and burnout. Another reported difference in communication practices is changes in information sharing based on union status. However, these reports were very low. This low response level could be because not all managers work in a faculty or unionized environment.

When it comes to providing resources to employees, 38.1% of managers reported differences based on employee grouping. These differences primarily centered around



professional development funds. The most common difference reported is that librarians are provided with more professional development funds than other employee groups. Another common response is librarians have their professional development funds guaranteed and are able to do more with their funds such as travel out-of-state. These practices for librarians stand in contrast to the second most reported difference which is professional development funds for staff may be made unavailable or denied. This seems to be problematic for non-librarians as managers in this study often cited training and skill acquisition as a large part of their management practices. Managers should consider how certain departments and employee groups may be impacted by the denial or lack of professional development funds. This problem could be especially relevant in technical services if staff are not provided with the means to acquire skills needed to adjust to changing standards and technological advances. These employees may face increased work stressors (e.g., technostress) that could lead to burnout.

Management practices related to job roles and characteristics of the job were relatively stable across employee groupings with only 13.49% of managers reporting differences. The two most common responses included staff having strictly defined job descriptions and librarians have more autonomy. Changes related to practices dealing with work stressors were noted by even fewer managers (3.97%). All of these responses point to limitations put on the manager based on university or employment rules.

It is easy to view burnout as an issue that belongs to the person experiencing it. However, this is a shortsighted conclusion. Technical services managers in this study appear to understand this. A strong majority of managers (92.86%) agreed that employees experience burnout due to organizational characteristics and problems. Managers have also indicated several negative outcomes for the organization when employees experience burnout. This study illuminates several work stress and burnout inducing variables that managers can influence to effect positive change for employees and the overall health of the organization. Prioritizing and adopting these practices is a win-win situation for all involved. In terms of organizational benefits, Nardine points out that “given the negative effects that burnout has on job performance, attendance, personal and professional relationships, and healthcare costs, it would be to organizations’ advantage to implement burnout mitigation plans.”<sup>41</sup> Simply put, managers owning the problem and working to improve conditions for employees is good library management.

## Limitations and Future Directions

Participants were instructed to answer questions about their typical management practices. Although this instruction was clearly given, it cannot be ignored that data was collected during the COVID-19 pandemic. These circumstances could have affected participant answers and/or increased the reported burnout incidence and observations. This study made no distinction between faculty status of librarians. There may be implications for burnout based on librarian faculty status that went unobserved in the present study.

The future research directions on academic library worker burnout are vast. Managers in the present study often reported increased communication and providing training to prevent or reduce burnout. Future studies should look to evaluate whether these practices actually impact burnout in technical services workers. Similarly, a review of the existing literature, coupled with the present findings, shows a need for an updated quantitative study on work-related burnout of academic library technical services workers. Feedback from participants often pointed to their personal level of burnout as an issue. Understanding the burnout of library managers, and how it impacts their ability to support direct reports who may also be suffering from burnout, is an interesting prospect for understanding the overall toll of burnout in academic libraries.

## Conclusion

Academic library technical services managers reported a high incidence of work-related burnout in the employees they supervise. These managers observed several detrimental effects of burnout for the organization (e.g., disengagement and performance declines) and for the employee (e.g., frustration and health consequences). Other worrying trends for technical services departments were reported by managers including overload, expanding job roles, and workforce attrition. These factors contribute to current levels of burnout and shape a worsening future for technical services workers. Overall, managers are deploying thoughtful and research supported practices (e.g., increased autonomy, strong communication, and workload management) to mitigate burnout and other work stressors. These practices may need to expand and become even more intentional should the current trends of budget cuts and decreasing workforces persist.

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# More Inclusive Collection Development

## Considering the Information Needs of Researchers from Outside the Subject Area of Communication

Lisa Romero

*When conducting collection development, it can be assumed that librarians consider the research needs of scholars within their respective disciplines. How systematically librarians consider the needs of scholars outside the discipline, however, has not been established. This study investigates whether resources scholars from outside a discipline use differ from the resources that scholars within a specific discipline use and offers a model for evaluating engagement with core journals outside of the discipline. Focusing on the subject area of communication, the data provided in this study demonstrate the importance of assessing the information needs of researchers from outside the discipline to build a more useful and inclusive journal collection and provide communication librarians with data to guide their collection decisions. Up to twenty years of journal citation data from the Web of Science database were collected and analyzed for thirty-nine communication journals. The author identifies the most and least cited communication journals by researchers outside the discipline to support collection development decisions that meet the needs of all researchers.*

Collection development is an involved process that presents numerous challenges for librarians. To name a few: budgets may be insufficient to meet demands of users within the discipline, librarians may struggle to keep up with changes and developments within disciplines, and librarians may find it difficult to know which resources are the most relevant. The goal of collection development should be to develop and maintain resources that meet current and future information needs, whether the researchers using the collection are within or outside the specific discipline. Collection development can be an even bigger challenge in multidisciplinary subject areas like communication where researchers from within and outside the discipline rely on the resources. To make informed collection development decisions, librarians that manage these collections require information that represents the needs of all researchers.

Focusing on the subject area of communication, the goal of this study is to (1) assess the interdisciplinarity of the subject area, specifically, the degree to which researchers outside the field rely on the communication journals; (2) identify those communication journals that are cited more by journals outside the discipline of communication studies to consider the implications for collection

development; (3) discuss any relevant trends of citation patterns; and (4) address the importance of recognizing the information needs of researchers outside the discipline when managing a scholarly journal collection. The author will assess the relevance of the subject area “communication” to research in other fields using the Web of Science (WoS) database. The data from this study will help inform the collection development decisions of librarians managing communication journal collections.

For this study, the author defines “communication studies” as the broad discipline that includes the subject areas of advertising, communication, journalism, media, and public relations. This study focuses on the subject area “communication.” The National Communication Association defines communication as a process that “focuses on how people use messages to generate meanings within and across various contexts, and is the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media, and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific and aesthetic inquiry.”<sup>1</sup> Areas of specialization include, but are not limited to: health communication, mass communication, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, political communication, public speaking and visual communication.<sup>2</sup> Scholars and teachers throughout academia acknowledge the value and relevance of the subject area across all aspects of public and private life and advocate for including communication education in numerous disciplines.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Association of American Colleges and Universities advocates for communication instruction to be a part of the general education curricula.<sup>4</sup>

## Related Research and Background

According to Braun and Schubert, interdisciplinary thinking is rapidly becoming an integral feature of research worldwide as the result of four factors: the inherent complexity of society, the desire to explore problems outside the discipline, the need to solve societal problems, and the power of new technologies.<sup>5</sup> By examining citations in the WoS database, they found that there has been exponential growth in multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in the sciences and social sciences from 1975 to 2006. Relating to the social sciences, Gingras and Larivière examined 25 million WoS papers published between 1900 and 2008 for the broad areas—medical, natural sciences and engineering, social sciences, and arts and humanities—and found that interdisciplinarity increases in all areas since the 1990s.<sup>6</sup> Relating more specifically to the social sciences, Levitt, Thelwall, and Oppenheim evaluated interdisciplinarity in specific subjects within the social sciences. They found that interdisciplinarity rose sharply between 1990 and 2000 “on the average” in the social sciences.<sup>7</sup> While

both studies affirm an increase in interdisciplinarity in the social sciences, neither addressed interdisciplinarity within the subject area of communication.

If researchers are conducting more interdisciplinary research and the subject area communication is recognized within and outside of academia as vital, then library collections need to reflect both trends in the resources they provide. With respect to communication journal collections, is it adequate for collection development to look at the journals used by researchers within a discipline, or is it important to also look at the journals of a particular discipline that are cited by researchers from outside? This study addresses the theory that librarians with discipline- or subject-specific collection responsibilities also need to consider what resources would be of value to researchers outside the discipline. This issue is especially important for librarians managing communication collections. To meet the needs of academia and society, it is important that librarians responsible for these collections provide access to resources of value to researchers from all disciplines. To accomplish this goal, librarians who manage communication collections need information on the relevance of communication to other fields so that they may also address the information needs of researchers from outside the discipline.

Like many librarians responsible for collection development, librarians managing communication collections face numerous challenges. They must keep apprised of developments in their subject areas, be aware of the research interests of users so that their collections reflect the discipline and remain relevant to users, and ensure their purchasing decisions meet the diverse needs of their users while staying within the limits of available funding. While the collection development process considers several factors such as subject and scope, user needs, price, publisher reputation, format, and weakness or strength of current collection, the relevance of a subject area to other fields may create additional challenges. Articles by Dobson, Kushkowsky, and Gerhard and Crow and Dabars point out that interdisciplinary programs are increasingly prevalent in academia. As such, librarians must develop measures that address the nature of interdisciplinary fields.<sup>8</sup> Data pertinent to these factors can contribute to better collection development decisions and result in more relevant library collections, but oftentimes data that reflects users’ research needs and behavior varies in scope and purpose and sometimes difficult to obtain. COUNTER usage reports are vendor-generated statistics for online resources such as databases, journals, and e-books.<sup>9</sup> While COUNTER tracks downloads and page views it does not track citations of resources. As a result, many librarians have conducted citation analysis to assess data related to collection engagement.

Citation analysis is defined as a method of examining the frequency and patterns of citations in published

literature irrespective of format. In scholarly literature, it can establish connections to other works and researchers."<sup>10</sup> Citation analysis is based on the assumption that an author who cites an item has somehow used it in the preparation of their publication.<sup>11</sup> Since an important goal of collection development is to meet the research needs of users, citation data is an important tool in the collection development process because it provides librarians with insight into what resources researchers use. Librarians have several tools to perform citation analysis and provide them with citation counts of journal titles. WoS Journal Citation Reports (JCR) have been a major resource for citation data for journals in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences since 1975.<sup>12</sup> Alternatives to WoS include Scopus and Microsoft Academic.<sup>13</sup> Collecting citation data can be time consuming and is not without caveats. To assess journal use within a specific subject area, the researcher would need to identify journal titles that represent research in the specific subject area while also determining how many years' worth of data that needs to be collected.

Scholars have applied citation analysis in a variety of ways to assist with collection development efforts. Many studies focus on identifying the most cited journals within specific subject areas by examining citations from journals within the same subject area.<sup>14</sup> Studies such as these provide librarians with important data identifying resources used most by researchers within their respective subject area.

Relating to the broad discipline of communication studies, a 2018 study by Romero examined the citation patterns of journals in advertising and public relations, communication and media studies, and journalism over a thirty-year period to identify the most cited journals by researchers within these subject areas. The study found that most journals cited by communication studies researchers were to journals from outside the discipline. The study did not address the relevance of communication to other fields and citations to communication journals from journals outside the discipline.<sup>15</sup> A study conducted by So examined ten communication journals from 1983 to 1985 to assess several qualities including "affinity," or how attractive a journal is to other journals.<sup>16</sup> However, the study did not indicate whether the "other journals" were from within or outside the discipline. Gao examined University of Houston communication faculty publications from 2006 to 2014 to assess their faculty members' information use behavior.<sup>17</sup> Findings from the Gao, So, and Romero studies provide valuable data for collection development. While the existing studies do not address how researchers from outside the discipline of communication studies rely on or use communication journals, they do provide insight on methodology that may be applied to assess the use of communication journals from outside the discipline.

## Methodology

The author is responsible for selecting materials within the broad subject area of communication studies—more specifically, advertising, communication, journalism, and public relations—having recently been assigned responsibility for the subject area communication. To gain a better understanding of the relevance of communication to other fields for the purpose of evaluating their library's coverage of communication journals, the author decided to examine and ultimately focus this study on communication.

The task of collecting citation data for communication journals requires a list of communication journals that would ultimately represent communication scholarship and a method of collecting the citation data. As mentioned previously, collecting citation data can be time consuming. The author collected citation data from WoS for this study because it offers several advantages: it has been a major resource for citation data since 1975, users are able to download data into Microsoft Excel, it includes information regarding the source of the citation (journal title), it has a reputation for "exclusivity" focusing on core journals,<sup>18</sup> and it includes citation data for journals in the subject area of communication.

Since the author is familiar with using and downloading data from the WoS database and WoS includes journals in the category communication, journals were identified for the study using the WoS database. Fifty-two journal titles were identified within the category "communication." It is important to note that the WoS database erroneously includes seven journals considered advertising or public relations journals and four journals considered journalism journals within the category "communication." Because the goal of the current study was to examine citations for English-language communication journals, some titles were eliminated. The seven advertising journals and four journalism journals were eliminated because they fall outside of the scope of communication. Two communication titles were eliminated because WoS did not provide citation data after 2001 for the two journals. The thirty-nine journals in the subject area communication identified for this study are listed in the appendix. To avoid any confusion, the author may also refer to the thirty-nine communication journals as the "cited journals" since the study is examining citations to these journals. In addition, the author may refer to the journals from which citations were compiled as the "citing journals."

Microsoft Excel was used to store and organize the downloaded WoS citation data. An Excel file was created for each of the thirty-nine communication journal titles. Within each file, worksheets were created representing each year's worth of citation data within WoS from the citing journals. For example, if WoS included citation data

for communication journal X for the years 2000–2010, the author created eleven worksheets, one for each year. Each year's worksheet included the name of citing journal and the number of citations (to the cited journal). The data included the titles of the citing journals, number of citations per year, and the respective year cited. The entire dataset consisted of a total of 342,630 citations to the thirty-nine communication journals. Citation data represented citations for the cited communication journals beginning from the first year of inclusion within WoS through 2018, some as far back as 1997.

Because the goal of the study was to determine the number of citations from outside the discipline of communication studies, the author needed to “code” the citing journal titles. Using subject description information from the WoS database or the WorldCat database, the author assigned one of three codes to each citing journal within the worksheets: “In,” citing journal was from within the broad discipline of communication studies (advertising, public relations, communication, or journalism); “Out,” citing journal was from outside the communication studies discipline; or “Self,” self-citation from the respective journal. It is important to note that “In” citing journals and “Self” citing journals are all considered to be within communication studies. This “coding” information was used to further sort the data and determine if the communication journals were cited primarily from inside or outside the broad discipline of communication studies.

## Findings and Discussion

Citations for thirty-nine communication journals were examined. The majority of the cited journals (twenty-eight journals, or 72 percent) received most of their citations from journals from outside the discipline of communication studies (table 1). The remaining eleven cited communication journals (28 percent) had most of their citations from journals from within communication studies (table 1). None of the cited journals had a majority of self-citations.

### Relevance to Researchers Outside the Discipline

Table 1 provides a list of the thirty-nine communication journals and includes for each journal, the total number of citations for each journal broken down, into three columns, by from where citations to the journals originated: journals outside the discipline of communication studies, communication studies journals, or self-citations. Appearing first on the list are the twenty-eight communication journals with the majority of citations to them from journals outside the discipline of communication studies. At the end of the

list (separated by a line) are the eleven journals with the majority of citations to them from journals within the communication studies discipline. A large majority of the cited journals (twenty titles, or 71 percent) in table 1 had more than half of their citations from journals outside the discipline of communication studies. None of the titles had more than 28 percent of their citations as self-cited. The twenty-eight cited communication journals with most of their citations from journals outside the discipline of communication studies represent the gamut of subject areas within communication: discourse, media, human, health, political, visual, international, and interpersonal. This fact could indicate the relevance of the specific areas within communication (discourse, media, human, health, visual, international, and interpersonal) to researchers outside the discipline. The two information management journals (*International Journal of Information Management* and *Information Economics and Policy*) both had a very low percentage of citations from citing journals from within the discipline of communication studies (0 percent and 2 percent), one could assume that they are cited more from within the discipline of information management. All three journals whose scope is discourse studies as well as the two journals focusing on health communication are on the list. Their percentage of citations from journals from outside the discipline ranged from 54 to 76. Discourse analysis or studies is considered a “broad and cross-disciplinary field” that scholars describe as “too difficult to delimit.”<sup>19</sup> Discourse studies have surged not only with fields related to language use, but also in disciplines such as anthropology, history, psychology, literary studies, philosophy, and sociology. Health communication is an area of study that investigates the ways that human and mediated communication influence the outcomes of healthcare and health-promotion efforts. While it is a “relatively young area” of research and education, research and writing on the subject has grown tremendously since the early 1980s resulting in increasing numbers of important research findings and publications.<sup>20</sup>

It is useful to know which communication journals are cited more by researchers outside the discipline because it facilitates librarians' efforts to also meet these scholars' information needs. However, it might also be useful to know if any of these journals' citations from outside the discipline are increasing, especially with respect to areas of specialty within communication (health communication, mass communication, organizational communication, interpersonal communication, political communication, public speaking, and visual communication). Table 2 provides a list of the twenty-eight communication journals with most of their citations originating from journals outside the communication studies discipline. For each journal, it includes a column with the total number of citations originating from outside the discipline (from year 1, the first year the

**Table 1.** Communication Journals Ranked by Percentage of Citations from Journals from Outside the Discipline of Communication Studies

| Titles (dates of coverage)   | Citations from Citing Journals Outside the Communication Studies Discipline | Citations from Citing Journals Inside the Communication Studies Discipline | Citations from Within the Same Journal |
|--|---|--|--|
| <i>International Journal of Information Management</i> (1997–2018) | 16,176 (88%)  | 78 (0%)  | 2,084 (11%)                            |
| <i>Information Economics &amp; Policy</i> (2002–2018)              | 2,871 (87%)   | 59 (2%)  | 376 (11%)                              |
| <i>Written Communication</i> (1997–2018)                           | 5,057 (82%)   | 240 (4%)   | 851 (14%)                              |
| <i>Discourse Studies</i> (2005–2018)                               | 4,655 (76%)   | 856 (14%)  | 620 (10%)                              |
| <i>Journal of Health Communication</i> (1999–2018)                 | 16,641 (75%)  | 2,979 (13%)  | 2,637 (12%)                            |
| <i>Crime Media Culture</i> (2010–2018)                             | 926 (74%)   | 81 (6%)  | 246 (20%)                              |
| <i>Discourse &amp; Society</i> (1997–2018)                         | 8,254 (71%)   | 1,871 (16%)  | 1,477 (13%)                            |
| <i>Argumentation</i> (2011–2018)                                   | 1,118 (63%)   | 214 (12%)  | 433 (25%)                              |
| <i>Human Communication Research</i> (1997–2018)                    | 15,038 (61%)  | 8,240 (33%)  | 1,378 (6%)                             |
| <i>Information Communication &amp; Society</i> (2011–2018)         | 6,031 (61%)   | 2,819 (29%)  | 1,010 (10%)                            |
| <i>Text &amp; Talk</i> (2006–2018)                                 | 1,095 (60%)   | 614 (33%)  | 128 (7%)                               |
| <i>Visual Communication</i> (2010–2018)                            | 736 (58%)   | 337 (27%)  | 191 (15%)                              |
| <i>Discourse &amp; Communication</i> (2009–2018)                   | 626 (57%)   | 327 (30%)  | 145 (13%)                              |
| <i>New Media &amp; Society</i> (2003–2018)                         | 11,877 (57%)  | 6,504 (31%)  | 2,289 (11%)                            |
| <i>Media Psychology</i> (2002–2018)                                | 4,406 (56%)   | 2,821 (36%)  | 606 (8%)                               |
| <i>Communication Monographs</i> (1997–2018)                        | 9,788 (56%)   | 6,719 (38%)  | 979 (6%)                               |
| <i>Continuum</i> (2010–2018)                                       | 1,043 (55%)   | 643 (34%)  | 207 (11%)                              |
| <i>Health Communication</i> (1997–2018)                            | 5,295 (54%)   | 3,624 (37%)  | 954 (10%)                              |
| <i>Communication Research</i> (1997–2018)                          | 17,207 (53%)  | 13,161 (40%)   | 2,129 (7%)                             |
| <i>Journal of Communication</i> (1997–2018)                        | 23,963 (53%)  | 19,489 (43%)   | 2,168 (5%)                             |
| <i>Chinese Journal of Communication</i> (2011–2018)                | 258 (48%)   | 215 (40%)  | 64 (12%)                               |
| <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i> (1998–2018)       | 1,990 (48%)   | 1,577 (38%)  | 560 (14%)                              |
| <i>Political Communication</i> (1997–2018)                         | 6,729 (47%)   | 6,492 (46%)  | 1,033 (7%)                             |
| <i>Media Culture &amp; Society</i> (1997–2018)                     | 5,103 (46%)   | 4,805 (43%)  | 1,253 (11%)                            |
| <i>International Journal of Communication</i> (2011–2018)          | 2,404 (45%)   | 2,251 (42%)  | 725 (13%)                              |
| <i>Media International Australia</i> (2009–2018)                   | 544 (43%)   | 466 (37%)  | 257 (20%)                              |
| <i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i> (2010–2018)                      | 462 (39%)   | 418 (36%)  | 296 (25%)                              |
| <i>Journal of Media Economics</i> (1997–2018)                      | 802 (39%)   | 664 (33%)  | 566 (28%)                              |
| <i>Communication Theory</i> (1997–2018)                            | 5,043 (44%)   | 5,732 (50%)  | 706 (6%)                               |
| <i>Journal of Broadcasting &amp; Electronic Media</i> (1997–2018)  | 7,050 (41%)   | 8,074 (47%)  | 2,051 (12%)                            |
| <i>European Journal of Communication</i> (1997–2018)               | 2,469 (40%)   | 3,206 (52%)  | 484 (8%)                               |
| <i>Mass Communication and Society</i> (2010–2018)                  | 2,097 (40%)   | 2,575 (49%)  | 608 (12%)                              |
| <i>Asian Journal of Communication</i> (2010–2018)                  | 531 (37%)   | 679 (47%)  | 231 (16%)                              |
| <i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i> (1997–2018)                     | 2,462 (34%)   | 3,297 (46%)  | 1,418 (20%)                            |
| <i>Communications</i> (2011–2018)                                  | 430 (34%)   | 711 (57%)  | 109 (9%)                               |
| <i>Television &amp; New Media</i> (2010–2018)                      | 527 (31%)   | 926 (54%)  | 260 (15%)                              |
| <i>Javnost</i> (1998–2018)   | 456 (31%)   | 704 (48%)  | 302 (21%)                              |
| <i>Critical Studies in Media Communication</i> (2000–2018)         | 817 (30%)   | 1,491 (56%)  | 375 (14%)                              |
| <i>Journal of Mass Media Ethics</i> (2018–2018)                    | 251 (17%)   | 774 (52%)  | 463 (31%)                              |



**Table 2.** Journals with Majority of Citations from Outside the Discipline by % Increase from First Year in WoS (Year 1) to 2018

| Title  | Total Citations from Outside: Year 1—2018 | Citations from Outside: Year 1 | Citations from Outside: 2018 | (Outside) Citation Increase: Year 1—2018 | % Change: Year 1—2018 |
|--|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| <i>Health Communication</i>                            | 5,295                                     | 10 (1998)                      | 1,634                        | 1,624                                    | 16,240                |
| <i>New Media &amp; Society</i>                         | 11,877                                    | 22 (2003)                      | 2,909                        | 2,887                                    | 13,123                |
| <i>Journal of Health Communication</i>                 | 16,641                                    | 23 (1999)                      | 2,903                        | 2,880                                    | 12,522                |
| <i>International Journal of Information Management</i> | 16,176                                    | 40 (1997)                      | 3,689                        | 3,649                                    | 9,123                 |
| <i>Text &amp; Talk</i>                                 | 1,095                                     | 2 (2006)                       | 177                          | 175                                      | 8,750                 |
| <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i>       | 1,990                                     | 7 (1998)                       | 360                          | 353                                      | 5,043                 |
| <i>Political Communication</i>                         | 6,729                                     | 28 (1997)                      | 1,199                        | 1,171                                    | 4,182                 |
| <i>Media Psychology</i>                                | 4,406                                     | 20 (2002)                      | 794                          | 774                                      | 3,870                 |
| <i>Information Economics &amp; Policy</i>              | 2,871                                     | 17 (2002)                      | 439                          | 422                                      | 2,482                 |
| <i>International Journal of Communication</i>          | 2,404                                     | 37 (2011)                      | 879                          | 842                                      | 2,276                 |
| <i>Discourse &amp; Society</i>                         | 8,254                                     | 46 (1997)                      | 1,065                        | 1,019                                    | 2,215                 |
| <i>Discourse Studies</i>                               | 4,655                                     | 47 (2005)                      | 807                          | 760                                      | 1,617                 |
| <i>Journal of Media Economics</i>                      | 802                                       | 5 (1998)                       | 78                           | 73                                       | 1,460                 |
| <i>Journal of Communication</i>                        | 23,963                                    | 249 (1997)                     | 3,778                        | 3,529                                    | 1,417                 |
| <i>Communication Research</i>                          | 17,207                                    | 151 (1997)                     | 2,016                        | 1,865                                    | 1,235                 |
| <i>Media Culture &amp; Society</i>                     | 5,103                                     | 67 (1997)                      | 843                          | 776                                      | 1,158                 |
| <i>Information Communication &amp; Society</i>         | 6,031                                     | 155 (2011)                     | 1,911                        | 1,756                                    | 1,133                 |
| <i>Chinese Journal of Communication</i>                | 258                                       | 7 (2011)                       | 62                           | 55                                       | 786                   |
| <i>Communication Monographs</i>                        | 9,788                                     | 144 (1997)                     | 1,255                        | 1,111                                    | 772                   |
| <i>Written Communication</i>                           | 5,057                                     | 77 (1997)                      | 660                          | 583                                      | 757                   |
| <i>Discourse &amp; Communication</i>                   | 626                                       | 20 (2009)                      | 158                          | 138                                      | 690                   |
| <i>Human Communication Research</i>                    | 15,038                                    | 239 (1997)                     | 1,708                        | 1,469                                    | 615                   |
| <i>Visual Communication</i>                            | 736                                       | 25 (2010)                      | 165                          | 140                                      | 560                   |
| <i>Continuum</i>                                       | 1,043                                     | 41 (2010)                      | 246                          | 205                                      | 500                   |
| <i>Argumentation</i>                                   | 1,118                                     | 76 (2011)                      | 313                          | 237                                      | 312                   |
| <i>Crime Media Culture</i>                             | 926                                       | 48 (2010)                      | 197                          | 149                                      | 310                   |
| <i>Media International Australia</i>                   | 544                                       | 32 (2009)                      | 99                           | 67                                       | 209                   |
| <i>Rhetoric Society Quarterly</i>                      | 462                                       | 35 (2010)                      | 98                           | 63                                       | 180                   |

journal was included in WoS, until 2018), a column with the number of citations (from outside the discipline) in year 1, a column with the number of citations (from outside the discipline) in 2018. The final two columns provide information on the increase in the number of citations (from outside) and the percentage increase in the number of citations (from outside) from the year 1 until 2018. The journal titles are listed according to their percentage increase from year 1 to 2018. The percentage change was calculated based on the increase in citations from year 1 until 2018.

Table 2 provides several insights related to collection development. First, the two health communication journals ranked first and third on the list for increase in citations

from outside the discipline. This finding could indicate the importance of this subject area and value of these journals for researchers outside communication studies and suggest to librarians the importance of also purchasing books in the area of health communication. Another explanation could be that journal articles in the sciences (including health sciences) tend to have more citations overall when compared to other disciplines. Stretching library funding and meeting users' information needs is a constant challenge. Table 2 provides valuable data in the effort to make informed collection development decisions. The data helps librarians justify funding for the journal titles on the list and informs collection development decisions for journal cancellations.

## Journals Cited by Journals from Within the Discipline of Communication Studies

Table 1 also includes the eleven cited communication journals with most of their citations from journals from within the discipline of communication studies. All eleven journals had 46 percent or more of their citations from within the discipline. It is important to note that while most of the citations for these journals were from within communication studies, seven of the titles on the list had more than 33 percent of their citations from outside the discipline (ranging from 34 percent to 44 percent). On the flip side, none of the journals on the list had more than 31 percent of their citations as self-cited. Percentages of self-citations ranged from 6 percent to 31 percent. Self-citing occurs across many subject areas. It might be interesting to know the percentage of self-citing within other subject areas and compare with what was found in the current study.

The author was also curious if and how any of the communication journals cited more from outside the subject area communication might compare with communication journals found to be highly cited by scholars from within the discipline of communication studies. In other words, are there communication journals that are highly cited by scholars within communication as well as scholars from outside the broader discipline of communication studies (for example, sociology, psychology, and political science)? To make this comparison, it would be necessary to have a list of communication journals highly cited by communication studies researchers. The author's 2018 article identified the most relevant or cited journals in communication and media, advertising and public relations, and journalism by researchers within the communication studies discipline. In this study, the author examined citations from 116 communication studies journals cited over a thirty-year period and identified the most relevant (by citations) journals in communication studies.<sup>21</sup> The citation data was organized or sorted according to specific subject area: advertising and public relations journals, journalism journals, and communication and media journals, resulting in lists of top fifty journals cited by researchers in these areas.

Using the data from the author's 2018 study for communication and media journals (examining citations from

**Table 3.** List of Communication Journals with Majority of Citations from Outside the Discipline (see table 1) and Cited most by Researchers within Communication Studies\*

| E-title  | Percentage of Citations from Outside the Discipline | Citations from Researchers Within the Discipline and Ranking on Top Fifty List |
|--|---|--|
| <i>Communication Monographs</i>                        | 56  | 912, #5  |
| <i>Communication Research</i>                          | 53  | 1,042, #4  |
| <i>Discourse &amp; Society</i>                         | 71  | 253, #22   |
| <i>Human Communication Research</i>                    | 61  | 1,089, #3  |
| <i>International Journal of Information Management</i> | 88  | 215, #25   |
| <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i>       | 48  | 185, #37   |
| <i>Journal of Communication</i>                        | 53  | 1,631, #1  |
| <i>Journal of Media Economics</i>                      | 39  | 177, #39   |
| <i>Media, Culture &amp; Society</i>                    | 46  | 387, #14   |
| <i>Media Psychology</i>                                | 56  | 176, #41   |
| <i>New Media &amp; Society</i>                         | 57  | 164, #50   |
| <i>Political Communication</i>                         | 47  | 371, #15   |

\* See Lisa Romero, "A Citation Analysis of Scholarly Journals in Communication Studies," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 18, no. 3 (July 2018): 505–34.

within communication studies) and the data from the current study (examining citations from outside communication studies), the author was able to identify journals that are highly cited within and outside the discipline of communication studies. To accomplish this, the author compared the journal titles included in table 1 (with the majority of their citations from citing journals from outside the discipline) with the list of the top fifty cited journals from within communication and media from the 2018 study. Table 3 is a list of the twelve communication journals that were found in the current study to be cited more by journals outside the discipline that were also in the top fifty most cited journals by researchers from within communication studies. The collection development process involves issues, decisions, and opportunities for librarians relating to format, dates of coverage, and purchasing versus interlibrary loan or other options for access. The fact that these twelve journals were highly cited by scholars outside and within communication studies contributes to librarians' collection development efforts in a variety of ways. It facilitates their goal to develop a more inclusive communication journal collection that meets the needs of all researchers. More specifically, with an understanding that these titles are well-used within and outside of the disciplines, online access to these titles should be made a priority to ensure that all researchers' needs are met. Because the current study examined citations from as far back as 1997 and the author's 2018 study examined thirty years' worth of data, communication librarians should also consider purchasing online backfiles of these twelve titles.

## Conclusion

It can be assumed that a universal goal for librarians managing communication collections would be to ensure that their library collections reflect the needs of all researchers. Citation analysis is one method of evaluating data to understand which resources are cited, or used most, by researchers. As the first study to investigate citations to communication journals from researchers outside of the discipline, this study represents a more inclusive picture of communication research and provides librarians with a model for making evidence-based decisions that support interdisciplinary researchers. By investigating what communication journal titles are cited by researchers outside the discipline, the author presents the other half of the collection development picture that should be considered when building collections that meet the needs of all researchers.

Using up to twenty years of WoS data, the author analyzed citations to thirty-nine communication journals cited by journals outside the discipline of communication studies. The data show that the preponderance of the citations to communication journals indexed in WoS are from outside the discipline, demonstrating the importance of considering the research needs of scholars outside the discipline and confirming the relevance of the subject area communication to areas outside communication studies. More specifically, the study provides librarians with a ranked list of journal titles cited most by scholars outside the discipline. This list may be consulted when making a variety of collection development decisions. Because the data in this study relied on citation data as far back as 1997, librarians could consult the list when purchasing backfiles of online journals. Titles that ranked high in table 2 are good candidates for online access to both current and older issues because these titles are used by researchers outside the discipline and because the number of citations from citing journals outside the discipline have increased.

Titles included in table 3 were found to be highly cited by researchers both outside the discipline (current study) and researchers within communication studies (the author's 2018 study); accordingly, these titles could be considered the beginning of a list of core journal titles in communication and titles whose subscriptions should be considered essential. For libraries whose respective universities do not have communication departments, the data in this study is very informative because it specifically addresses what communication journals are used more by researchers outside the discipline. It indicates more specifically what communication journals are used by (for example) researchers

in political science, sociology, psychology, business, and health. In addition to making decisions relating to journal collections, the data provided in table 2 might be used to inform purchasing decisions for monograph collections. Table 2 includes information on the increase of citations and could be helpful in identifying trends within communication, such as subject areas that are becoming more popular, and may inform collection development for journals and monographs alike.

Possible limitations of the study include the fact that WoS does not include a more complete list of communication journals. For example, The National Communication Association, the prominent professional organization for communication scholars, currently publishes eleven scholarly journals. WoS provides citation data for only four of these titles. While this study brings librarians closer to developing a core list of communication journal titles, a topic for future research could be an analysis of the various sources of citation data (Scopus, Web of Science, etc.) to assess their inclusion of journals in the broader area of communication studies and establish a "core" list of journals in communication. This core list of journals might facilitate future and more regular efforts to conduct citation analyses for evidence-based collection development.

Academic institutions vary in the programs they offer. Many academic library collections mirror the focus of their respective institutions and departments. It may be helpful to provide communication librarians with specific information regarding the nature of the citations from outside the discipline. For example, instead of providing a general number of citations from outside or inside the discipline for each journal, it might be helpful to indicate the specific disciplines from which the citations originated. The data would then be more valuable to the specific goals and needs of communication collections at different institutions.

As mentioned previously, the level of interdisciplinarity is increasing within the social sciences. As such, librarians responsible for collection management in subject areas other than communication might also be interested in data relating to the relevance of their subject area to other subjects and how it might impact the use of their journal collections. The current study provides a model for assessing the use of journals by researchers from outside a particular subject area and enables evidence-based collection development. Making evidence-based decisions contributes to the process of effectively managing library collections and provides users with access to resources that more effectively meet their information needs.

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### Appendix. List of Journals Included (dates of coverage)

- Argumentation* (2011–2018)  
*Asian Journal of Communication* (2010–2018)  
*Chinese Journal of Communication* (2011–2018)  
*Communication Monographs* (1997–2018)  
*Communication Research* (1997–2018)  
*Communication Theory* (1997–2018)  
*Communications: European Journal of Communications Research* (2011–2018)  
*Continuum* (2010–2018)  
*Crime Media Culture* (2010–2018)  
*Critical Studies in Media Communication* (2000–2018)  
*Discourse & Communication* (2009–2018)  
*Discourse & Society* (1997–2018)  
*Discourse Studies* (2005–2018)  
*European Journal of Communication* (1997–2018)  
*Health Communication* (1997–2018)  
*Human Communication Research* (1997–2018)  
*Information Communication & Society* (2011–2018)  
*Information Economics & Policy* (2002–2018)  
*International Journal of Communication* (2011–2018)  
*International Journal of Information Management* (1997–2018)  
*Javnost* (1998–2018)  
*Journal of Applied Communication Research* (1998–2018)  
*Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (1997–2018)  
*Journal of Communication* (1997–2018)  
*Journal of Health Communication* (1999–2018)  
*Journal of Mass Media Ethics* (2010–2018)  
*Journal of Media Economics* (1997–2018)  
*Mass Communication and Society* (2010–2018)  
*Media Culture & Society* (1997–2018)  
*Media International Australia* (2009–2018)  
*Media Psychology* (2002–2018)  
*New Media & Society* (2003–2018)  
*Political Communication* (1997–2018)  
*Quarterly Journal of Speech* (1997–2018)  
*Rhetoric Society Quarterly* (2010–2018)  
*Television & New Media* (2010–2018)  
*Text & Talk* (2006–2018)  
*Visual Communication* (2010–2018)  
*Written Communication* (1997–2018)

# Book Reviews

Michael Fernandez

***Zines in Libraries: Selecting, Purchasing, and Processing.*** Eds. Lauren DeVoe and Sara Duff. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2022. 176 p. \$64.99 softcover (ISBN 978-0-8389-3804-1).

*Zines in Libraries: Selecting, Purchasing, and Processing* offers a useful overview on the challenges that zines bring to typical library workflows. Zinesters (i.e., those who create and publish zines) working in libraries have made resources like zinelibraries.info and zinecat.org available for some time and now that information has been organized nicely into this volume, written by some of the same professionals. The majority of the authors are zinesters themselves and their combined love and knowledge of zine production shines through this volume of practical advice.

Meg Metcalf's introductory chapter describes zines' inherent characteristics—their underground origins, emphasis on self-publication, creators' need for anonymity, and fraught relationship with copyright—and the thriving zinester community. In chapter 2, "The Importance of Acquiring Zines," Joan Jocson-Singh highlights Lehman College Library's experience with building a zine collection as an outgrowth of its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts and provides the reader with the benefits that the library reaped from developing this collection: "pedagogical and creative approaches to tactile learning in one-shot library instruction classes; a voice for marginalized students, staff, and faculty; building a community that is diverse and inclusive" (12). Katrin Abel delves into actionable advice in chapter 3, "Zine Collection Development: Policy, Selection, and Promotion," through the experience of building Austin Public Library's zine collection. Readers will gain many ideas for effective implementation of zine collection that eschews traditional shelving arrangements (e.g., Dewey Decimal, by author) and translate these ideas to fit their library.

The next three chapters showcase the relevancy of zines in multiple arenas and their usefulness for learners. Joshua Lupkin's chapter provides a case study of Latin American fanzines that function as "primary documents that can provide . . . an unmediated view of the aspirations and practices of young people who are engaging in political activism" (42). Mica Johnson's "Zines in School Libraries"

discusses zines' educational value for elementary and middle school aged children. Marta Chudolinska's "Zines Online" addresses that the internet has not hindered zine production, but in fact expanded their audiences by making them available widely, whether through e-zines or increasing visibility of acquiring print zines.

Zines' non-traditional nature presents complications for a library worker's day-to-day workflow. In chapter 7, "Zines and Acquisitions: Adventure and Conundrum," Lauren DeVoe discusses the challenges of acquiring non-traditional publications through traditional procedures; for example, zines being sold through e-commerce platforms (e.g., Etsy, Storenvy) that are prohibited as options for institutional purchases. Additionally, DeVoe describes how zine acquisitions present ethical challenges through their origins as publications that challenge the status quo and notes, "many zine creators don't want to have to sell their creations at the institutional level or get involved with a lot of the traditional means of capitalistic purchasing" (77).

The next two chapters address an oft-heard question in the professional zine library discourse: how shall these non-traditional publications be made discoverable, both on the shelves and in the catalog? In their respective chapters, "The Barnard Zine Library: The Controlled and the Wild," and "The Zine Union Catalog," Jenna Freedman and Lauren Kehoe explore answers. Barnard Zine Library has significant holdings in their circulating and non-circulating collections, so Freedman offers a dual perspective and provides useful flowcharts of Barnard's process for making zines available. Kehoe addresses access through describing the Zine Union Catalog's role in helping zine libraries share their holdings and metadata.

But how should libraries physically handle these underground publications that don't have a standard size or binding? Ziba Pérez's chapter, "Circulating Zines," offers insight and advice to the questions of whether zines should circulate or not, and when to repair zines versus replace them. In

chapter 11, “Zine Preservation,” Jeremy Brett addresses the ramifications of preserving zines and whether the library’s mission aligns with the creators’ original intentions. Some creators may not respond well to efforts to create enduring access for their creations, which certainly complicates efforts such as digitization. Respecting the creators’ wishes when developing a zine collection is clearly the ethical solution, as evidenced in this chapter and throughout the rest of the book.

In chapter 12, “Our Zine Futures: A Call for Accessible, Inclusive, and Diverse Zine Communities,” Ann Matsushima Chiu discusses the results of a survey specifically distributed to zinesters where they were asked their opinion

on the future of zines and calls upon zinesters to “challenge the elitist, racist, gatekeeping, patriarchal, capitalist and other oppressive forces” (150) as a critical component to ensuring a thriving zine community. Chiu writes, “zines are the platform for the underrepresented voice, so the future of zines must continue to be so” (150).

This call is an apt conclusion. With the appropriate support, zines are clearly a practicable option for libraries exploring how to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion in their collection in a tangible, effective way that is not a perfunctory virtue signal. And for those who decide “yes, let’s try zines”—this book is for you.—*Shay Beezley (sbeezley@uco.edu), University of Central Oklahoma*

**Compact Copyright: Quick Answers to Common Questions.** By Sara R. Benson. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2021. 163p. \$54.99 softcover (ISBN 978-0-8389-3756-3).

Anyone working in libraries, museums, or other similar organizations has more than likely encountered a scenario involving copyright. Knowing how to deal with these situations when they occur is key in today’s library landscape of electronic resources, emergency access to copyrighted materials, and online teaching and learning. This new publication provides a basic introduction to copyright in the United States to help address these questions.

Benson’s aim is to provide a foundational understanding of U.S. copyright law to make informed decisions. She has deep knowledge and expertise in copyright and holds both a JD and MSLIS. She has been a lecturer at the University of Illinois College of Law for ten years and has been actively involved in copyright conversations during that time. It is thanks to her expertise that she breaks down the legal jargon on copyright, providing an “easy-to-read” (ix) discussion on the laws.

Benson does this by similarly structuring each of the chapters, which can be read in or out of sequence. These sections are: the law, discussion of that law cited, common scenarios, and a final section on tools and resources. Her discussions explain and break down the law, while the common scenarios help to envision how to address day-to-day issues. She includes case studies and numerous illustrations to help readers better grasp concepts. Because copyright law and the questions we face are complex, the last section offers tools and resources to learn more about the law and where to find help. Lastly, Benson has included a checklist for fair use that can be used when faced with issues at work. As a result, this book is perfect for those with limited or no knowledge of copyright.

There are a number of engaging topics. This reviewer would like to highlight the following: legal advice, computer code and creative works, terms and duration of copyright

acts, fair use, meaning of commercial use and market impact, electronic reserves, controlled digital lending, open educational resources (OER), and Creative Commons licenses. With regard to legal advice, this reviewer appreciated Benson’s clarity that she is not providing legal advice. “This book focuses on United States copyright law [...]; however, nothing in this book constitutes legal advice. [...] as such the aim of this book is to help readers make decisions that are more informed, and hopefully, less fraught with stress and uncertainty” (x). In her discussions on the law, she frequently emphasizes the need to reach out to general counsel at one’s institution. What this book helps with is to better understand the issue at hand, to know how to frame it, who to talk to at your institution, and where to get more information, if necessary.

The question of computer code as a creative work was thought-provoking. Not only do library technology staff often contribute coding efforts, but research data librarians, metadata specialists, or institutional repository staff may code as well. And of course, many faculty members and information technology specialists in many types of institutions write computer code as creative endeavors. Benson is clear that “copyright is about creativity” with it following that “copyright law even views computer code as a type of literary work and, as such, protects the work of authors in writing code language as well” (5). In this, she anticipated this reviewer’s next question on how creativity as seen through the lens of copyright differs from facts, trademarks, or patents.

Trying to understand the terms and duration of copyright seems at times a byzantine task. Benson visually delineates the different copyright acts such as the Copyright Act of 1909 or the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act, distinguishing the beginning and end date of each

respective act as well as their overlapping terms. She adds information on how to understand copyright for unpublished works in relation to whether copyright was renewed or registered. At the end of chapter 3, she cites two sources to search copyright that are worth mentioning: the online Catalogue of Copyright Entries (CCE) and the Stanford Copyright Renewal Database (30).

In Benson's discussion on fair use, she clarifies the meaning of the heart of the work, market-value impact, and what constitutes commercial use. Her common scenarios deal predominately with questions around electronic reserves such as professors asking to make available copies of a section or an entire book, DVD, or other resource for their course. Benson includes a section on text mining and how we deal with it. She cites the HathiTrust Digital Library (HDL) case, where the Authors Guild sued HDL in 2012 because users could search words in copyrighted works. The audience might also remember when Google was sued for their snippet view, which Benson also mentions to underscore the concept of what makes a work transformative or not.

The explanation on controlled digital lending and Creative Commons licenses is worthwhile. Benson is clear that

both of these topics are not related to specific laws but stem from the laws on fair use, first sale, and contract law. For controlled digital lending, she uses the Emergency Temporary Access Services (ETAS) for copyrighted works in the HDL during COVID-19 as an example. Benson's visualization of Creative Commons licenses succinctly demonstrates how licenses differ in addition to whether those licenses are an OER. This is the first time that this reviewer has seen such a comparison and found it both timely and helpful.

This reviewer was able to gain a better understanding of U.S. copyright law and found the resources and tools practical. Though the section on the law itself can be difficult to read, Benson's discussions are much easier as she deconstructs legal jargon and adds ample examples of how to understand that law. The addition of footnotes and references throughout the guide provide ample opportunity to learn more and the ability to find help from diverse sources. Benson's guide will provide a foundation and a quick reference for anyone who encounters questions on copyright.—*Jennifer M. Eustis (jeustis@umass.edu), University of Massachusetts Amherst*

***Managing Grey Literature: Technical Services Perspectives.*** Eds. Michelle Leonard and Susan E. Thomas. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2022. 128 p. \$69.99 softcover (ISBN: 978-0-8389-4881-1).

Grey literature contains valuable resources often overlooked by libraries because of the ambiguity surrounding the management and cataloging of these document types. This book examines the topic of grey literature to highlight its importance and to provide a holistic approach to integrating these materials into a collection. Throughout the six chapters, experts demystify grey literature, both showing a need to incorporate and how to successfully manage it, as well as addressing issues related to selecting, cataloging, marketing, and sustaining these materials.

The opening chapter discusses the historical origins and the definition of grey literature, explaining that the ambiguity of what grey literature is makes it difficult to identify these documents and to reach a consensus on a single definition other than unpublished materials. There is no standardized list for grey literature document types, but one attempt to compile a list is GreyNet. Despite efforts for GreyNet to be complete, some materials, like scientific reports, do not appear on the list, while some types, such as articles, may or may not be published. These materials prove difficult to catalog because there are no standardized rules. Additionally, who authored the material is generally unknown, except for theses or dissertations, so the issuing organization is the primary way to find the resource when searching. The informational value of grey literature is high

because many scientific results within the reports or dissertations may never be published as detailed as in their original form. Digital technology provides quicker access to this information; however, copyright issues may arise when incorporating them into digital collections. The chapter identifies leading libraries and organizations that focus on grey literature to offer guidance in how they define and manage these materials. It concludes by iterating the importance of grey literature, briefly touching on the impact of the digital age on the supply and demand for content.

The middle four chapters provide case studies with key takeaways at the end of each chapter, offering ways to incorporate and manage grey literature within a library's collection. Chapter 2 details the decision-making process for the collection development of grey literature. It presents the challenges faced while collecting or selecting, creating access, monitoring usage, and weeding these materials. It provides details on data collection and its use for the collection maintenance of grey literature. The chapter highlights a case study on weeding government documents and concludes with the argument that data usage practices can provide necessary information for the selection and weeding of grey literature, allowing libraries to build rich collections.

Chapter 3 focuses on cataloging grey literature, specifically the Institute for Development Anthropology (IDA)



Project. It delves into a literature review to highlight the lack of metadata standardization for grey literature and the attempts to create identifier systems and specialized schema to supplement existing cataloging standards. The IDA Project demonstrates the development of a workflow and bibliographic template for cataloging grey literature to establish local standardization. Furthermore, it highlights digitizing the IDA collection and provides the workflow for creating the metadata needed to ensure consistency in cataloging. The chapter concludes by evaluating the IDA Project and encourages libraries to create their own local workflows and templates to make it easier to catalog grey literature.

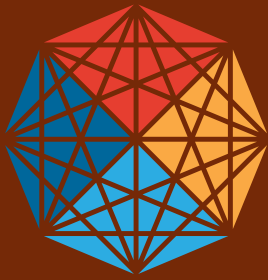
Chapter 4 discusses the value of persistent identifiers (PID) in promoting access to and improving the discovery of grey literature by focusing on two projects by GreyNet International, the AccessGrey Project and the PID Project. AccessGrey is a two-part project to establish if PIDs provided valuable incentives for authors to allow their material to be deposited in a digital repository. The project's findings identified a perceived high value to using PIDs, but there was no definitive incentive for authors to add their materials to a digital repository. As a follow-up to AccessGrey, the PID Project aims to create a PID graph and contribute to initiatives such as OpenAIRE to show how PIDs advance research in the field of grey literature. The chapter highlights the project's data workflow implementation identifying three main tasks, the problems encountered, and the PID graph created from the actionable PIDs compiled. It gives additional information on implementing a PID graph with examples of four different GreyNet graphs.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts (ASFA) and the endeavor of over sixty contributing institutions to market the grey literature within their ASFA database. ASFA partnered with external organizations such as WorldFish and the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center's Aquaculture Department to promote grey literature through outreach activities at each stage of the grey literature life cycle. Outreach activities include promotional materials, training sessions and

materials, and seminars. The chapter highlights the successful implementation of these activities, guides libraries in supporting authors uploading material to ASFA, and offers steps for libraries in creating their own strategy and outreach activities to promote grey literature.

Finally, chapter 6 addresses the impact of digital transformation (DX) on the management and sustainability of grey literature. Some of the impacts on grey literature by DX are increasing researcher awareness and growing access to resources because of new technology. The chapter applies the "Five V's model of big data" (variety, volume, veracity, velocity, and value of information) to the nature of grey literature. The chapter identifies the need and offers solutions for organizations to adapt to emerging new technologies because technology outpaces an organization's information management. This adaptation brings substantial change to the information management profession by changing the competencies and skills required to manage and sustain grey literature. The chapter concludes with the nature of grey literature as constantly changing, which requires it to be readily available, retrievable, usable, valuable, and sustainable for companies to remain competitive. It highlights the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for people working with technology to adapt quickly and acquire new skills and competencies for the digital transformation of grey literature to be successful.

*Managing Grey Literature* successfully encompasses the life cycle of technical services, from selecting and weeding materials, establishing local cataloging practices, making them discoverable, and managing and preserving them through digital means. This format makes it easy to navigate the process by which grey literature could become part of a library's collection. The usage of tables and graphics was generally helpful, except in one instance where the questions asked on the survey were on one page and tallied survey results were on the reverse, making it difficult to understand the results. This book is recommended for any organization wanting to incorporate grey literature within its collection.—*Cynthia A. Romanowski (cromanowski@govst.edu), Governors State University, University Park, Illinois*



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