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Librarians and Compensation Negotiation in the Library Workplace

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Librarians and Compensation Negotiation in the Library Workplace

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Findings - A total of 1,541 librarians completed the survey. More than half of survey respondents reported not negotiating for their current library position. The majority of those who did negotiate reported positive outcomes, including an increase in salary or total compensation package. Only a very small number of respondents reported threats to rescind or rescinded offers when negotiating for their current positions. Respondents cited prior salary and prior work experience and/or education as the top information sources informing negotiation strategy.

Originality/value - There is minimal discussion of salary and benefits negotiation by individuals in the library literature and prior surveys of librarians' experience with compensation negotiation do not exist. This is the first paper that tracks negotiating practices and outcomes of librarians in library workplaces of all types.

Keywords

wages, compensation, librarians, human resources, library profession, salary negotiation

Disciplines

Benefits and Compensation | Human Resources Management | Labor Relations | Library and Information Science

Comments

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Librarians and Compensation Negotiation in the Library Workplace

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Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to report on survey results from a study about librarians' experience with compensation (salary and benefits) negotiation in the library workplace in order to provide data that will inform professional discourse and practice.

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Paper type Research paper

Background

Although the topic of salary negotiation has been covered extensively in many academic disciplines and even the popular media, discussion within the library community has been markedly limited. The library literature is devoid of scholarly articles on the topic and sessions on negotiation are rarely found on conference agendas, with the exception of those sponsored by the American Library Association - Allied Professional Organization (ALA-APA) at ALA's annual conferences. ALA-APA, which works to promote the interests of library workers, also produces the freely available *Advocating for Better Salaries Toolkit* that focuses on individual and collective avenues for improving library worker compensation in the library workplace (Dorning *et al.*, 2014).

The authors have had extensive involvement with the ALA-APA's Salaries and Status of Library Workers committee, working together from 2011 to 2015, and serving consecutive years as chair in 2013-2015 and 2015-2016. During their tenure on the committee, they co-authored the fifth edition of the *Advocating for Better Salaries Toolkit* and facilitated well-attended negotiation programming at the ALA conference. Through this work, they identified the scarcity of research and data on the topic and observed the enthusiastic interest that the library community had for more information around salaries, compensation and negotiation. As a result, the authors decided to investigate librarians' experience with salary, compensation, and benefits negotiation in the library workplace.

To understand the similarities or differences in librarians' experience with negotiation and what information they find useful in learning to negotiate, the authors designed and distributed a survey across numerous sectors of the library profession, including various library

types, geographical regions, and community sizes. This paper reports on the top-level findings from the survey; it is the first part of a larger study exploring librarians and the negotiation of compensation. Through sharing these research findings, the authors hope to provide data to inform evidence-based professional discourse and practice.

Literature review

Salary negotiation propensity, practices, and outcomes have been extensively researched within a range of disciplines, including management/human resource (HR) studies, business, organizational and applied psychology, and economics, as well as by practitioner and professional communities tracking employment variables for constituent communities. While researchers have observed that salary negotiation generally leads to better compensation outcomes (Gerhart and Rynes, 1991; O'Shea and Bush, 2002; Marks and Harold, 2011), the many variables influencing the negotiation relationship and workplace contexts have been studied to generate a more nuanced picture of what happens when people negotiate.

Negotiation practices and outcomes studied within a lab context, as simulations, have facilitated findings on the impact of salary offered and employer behavior on the perceived attractiveness of a job (Porter *et al.*, 2004), how different training programs affect subsequent negotiation behavior (Stevens *et al.*, 1993), whether gender differences in negotiation practice could be connected to differences in how men and women are treated when negotiating (Bowles *et al.*, 2007), and gender differentials in negotiation behavior (Bowles *et al.*, 2007; Dittrich *et al.*, 2014), and pairing outcomes (Dittrich *et al.*, 2014). Survey and interview methodologies have also been deployed to study the reported experiences and outcomes of actual negotiations,

capturing negotiation frequency and strategy of women university administrators (Compton and Bierlein Palmer, 2009) and school psychology practitioners and faculty (Crothers *et al.*, 2010a, b), the impact of negotiation outcomes on later job attitudes and turnover intentions (Curhan *et al.*, 2009), assessing individual differences in negotiation behaviors and outcomes (Marks and Harold, 2011), and exploring the extent of negotiation and impact on starting salary (O'Shea and Bush, 2002).

The literature investigating gender differentials spans both methodological camps, documenting persistent differences in negotiation behaviors outcomes for men and women. Researchers have found that salary requests of male respondents were significantly higher and correlated with beliefs that differed from women respondents' (Barron, 2003), that female negotiators were penalized more for initiating negotiation than men (Bowles *et al.*, 2007), that women's negotiation outcomes were worse than men's when in the role of employee, but not as the employer (Dittrich *et al.*, 2014), that while school psychology faculty of all genders negotiated at comparable rates, women faculty reported more negative consequences as a result (Crothers *et al.*, 2010a, b), and that recent hires of all genders negotiate at similar rates, but women saw less gains (Marks and Harold, 2011). Findings were uniformly consistent across studies; O'Shea and Bush (2002) surveyed recent college graduates to determine extent of negotiation, including gender differentials, and impact on starting salary, observing an additional average of \$1,500 for those negotiating and similar propensity and success rates across gender. However, Stuhlmacher and Walters' (1999) meta-analysis of studies investigating gender differentials in salary negotiation outcome observed more positive outcomes for men than women, and call for further research into moderating factors to determine cause.

Studies of specific occupations (as opposed to general adult or student audiences) generally deploy surveys and interviews to capture the experience of specific groups of workers within more narrowly scoped work contexts and determine how findings deviate. Crothers *et al.*'s (2010a, b) national sample of school psychology university faculty found that successful negotiation attempts outweighed the failures, earnings of women faculty lagged behind those of their male colleagues despite experience, and that there were no gender differentials in participant willingness to negotiate. Compton and Bierlein Palmer's study (2009) of women administrators across four public universities in the Midwest revealed that respondents initially reported less negotiation due to socialization, job prioritization (job more important than money), and salary satisfaction reasons, but later reported, after some reflection, more extensive negotiation, often for non-salary compensation, as their career progressed.

In reviewing library and information science discourse on librarians and salary negotiation in the library hiring and promotion process, the authors observed a total gap in the scholarly literature, with published content almost uniformly advice oriented and directed to current/ future library workers (Adelman, 2004; Dalby, 2006; Galloway and Archuleta, 1978; Havens, 2013; Holcomb, 2007; Kessler, 2015; Kolb and Schaffner, 2001; Martin, 2004; Niemeier and Junghahn, 2011; Topper, 2004) or managers/administrators (Cottrell, 2011; White, 1991).

Advice is often couched within the gender dynamics of the library field, referring to research on gender differentials in salary and negotiation frequency and outcome to motivate readers to action (Adelman, 2004; Galloway and Archuleta, 1978; Kessler, 2015; Kolb and Schaffner, 2001). Community size served by libraries is perceived as a mitigating variable, and Martin (2004) reporting on Estabrook encourages early career librarians to be flexible and

recognize market and geographical practices, noting “In a small town, salaries may be hard to budge” and merit alternate negotiation strategies to navigate. Librarians are firmly told to align requests with market norms and to minimize expectations, with Adelman (2004) on Estabrook stating “[...] don’t expect a high salary in a market flooded by library school graduates.” A common trope is the librarian as a creature relatively unmotivated by money, with Dalby (2006) stating “in the library world, salaries are generally low. Most of us are here for the job, not the salary” before launching into a standard set of negotiation tips, and Kolb and Schaffner (2001) attributing low salaries to librarians’ low prioritization of money.

None surveyed librarians or library workers beyond individual anecdotes; however, a framework for analyzing negotiation outcomes in libraries could potentially be found in the few papers discussing libraries and collective bargaining. Feld (2000) discusses the correlation between union representation and higher pay for library workers, and the ways that unions can expand the scope of compensation possibilities through concerted action and bargaining. Mudge (1987) analyzes Canadian collective bargaining agreements by outcome variables including salary and pay structures, supplemental benefits, working conditions, and seniority and promotion to create a comprehensive picture of compensation and trends and inform negotiating unions.

In engaging deeply with the topic within practitioner communities, the authors’ observation of the research gap motivated the design of the study instrument discussed in this paper, in order to generate a benchmark body of literature and data on salary negotiation in library workplaces that can inform professional practice and discourse, as well as practical training and advice within the field.

Methodology

This study explores librarians' experience with and perspective on compensation and benefits negotiation in the library workplace.

The authors formulated the following research questions:

RQ1. What similarities or differences are there in librarians' experiences in negotiating workplace compensation in libraries?

RQ2. What information or resources inform librarians' negotiation strategy?

To answer these questions, the authors developed a primarily quantitative survey instrument consisting of 50 questions. Questions were a mix of open, closed, and multiple-choice, and focused on generating educational and employment information from participants: education level; years of experience working in libraries; current employment status; position type; type, status, and geographic location of library where they work; size of library community that they serve; representation by a labor union; negotiation experience (i.e. if they negotiated and whom with they negotiated); negotiation outcome; information used to negotiate; and demographics.

The survey was administered via Qualtrics Survey Software. In order to recruit qualified participants, the authors chose to share survey invitations through multiple listservs and social media channels representing a range of library types and sub-disciplines (e.g. PUBLIB for public librarians; Archives & Archivists for archivists, BUSLIB-L for business librarians). Table I illustrates the full list of survey distribution channels. Participants were also asked to share the

survey widely so it may have been shared in additional channels unknown to the authors. The survey was posted twice; once in mid-November 2015 and again two weeks later. The survey was open for one month from the first posting date.

The survey was explicitly addressed to librarians for participation; the e-mail invitation to the survey stated that it applied “to all librarians, regardless of position type, who have been employed in a library of any type.” No formal definition of “librarian” or specific credentials was included beyond the above statement.

All survey questions were required, but the number of questions viewed and answered by participants depended on responses to qualifying questions about current and prior library employment. Participants who did not indicate current or prior employment in a library were routed out of the survey, as the library workplace experience is central to the study’s objective. The survey did not route out respondents according to education or credentials, recognizing that myriad educational backgrounds are represented within the librarian occupation. The data were analyzed in Qualtrics to determine if there were any broad trends in the top-level findings.

Measures were taken to ensure participants’ anonymity and no personally identifying information was captured. This procedure was approved by the UMN Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in research on October 29, 2015 and the Cornell University Institutional Review Board for human participants on November 9, 2015.

Insert Table I Here

Discussion of findings

In total, 1,541 respondents participated in the survey. Based on US Bureau of Labor Statistics' (BLS) (2015a) current population survey estimate of 166,000 librarians, the total number of survey respondents represents less than 1 percent of librarians in the USA[1].

Education and experience

Highest educational-level attained. The majority of respondents (57 percent) indicated a Master of Library/Information Science (MLS) (or similar library-related master's degree) as the highest level of education attained, with 27 percent indicating a second master's degree in addition to the MLS. In total, 8 percent of respondents indicated a PhD/Doctorate, and 4 percent recorded a bachelor's. A non-LIS master's degree accounted for 2 percent of respondents, and both associate and non-degreed garnered 1 percent of responses, respectively.

Combining the data from those who indicated having an MLS and those who indicated having a second master's degree in addition to the MLS illustrates that at least 84 percent of this population have a MLS degree. This is not surprising as many librarian positions explicitly require MLS degrees and the MLS is the terminal degree for the library field. Those who stated having a PhD/Doctorate degree may also have an MLS degree, but the survey question did not make this distinction, and therefore, no assumptions can be made from the data.

Years of experience working in libraries. In total, 28 percent of respondents reported five to ten years of experience working in libraries, while those with 10-20 years, zero to five years, and 20+ years equaled 26, 25, and 20 percent of responses, respectively. Respondents were

roughly evenly split across the four categories, although categories differed widely in the number of years represented (see Figure 1). Combining the first two ranges illustrates that the majority of participants have ten or fewer years of experience in libraries (53 percent) and that mid-career librarians (10-20 years) and seasoned librarians (20+ years) are less well-represented.

Insert Figure 1 Here

Employment

Current employment in a library. Those reporting full-time, permanent employment in a library constituted 86 percent of respondents. In total, 5 percent reported permanent, part-time employment in a library. Respondents indicating temporary employment, full and part time, were 4 and 1 percent of the total, respectively. Respondents not currently employed in a library totaled 4 percent of respondents (see Figure 2).

In all, 90 percent of all respondents are full-time employees, and 6 percent part time (see Figure 3). Temporary employees account for 5 percent of respondents, and 4 percent are not currently employed by a library (see Figure 4). Overall, a wide majority of respondents are currently employed by a library on a full-time, permanent basis.

Insert Figure 2 Here

Insert Figure 3 Here

It is challenging to benchmark responses or assert study findings as representative of the entire librarian community. There is limited data on employment and unemployment rates amongst librarians (as opposed to total counts of the employed), as well as contingent employment in the profession [2].

Prior employment. In total, 82 percent of 1,481 respondents were previously employed by a library. Those reporting prior full-time, permanent employment in a library constituted 57, and 11 percent reported being employed on a permanent, part-time basis. Respondents indicating past contract or temporary library employment, full and part time, were 5 and 9 percent of the total, respectively (see Figure 5). In total, 18 percent of respondents had not been previously employed by a library.

Insert Figure 4 Here

Insert Figure 5 Here

Geographical location

In all, 3 percent of respondents currently work in a library located outside of the USA. Of respondents that work in libraries located in US states, those represented with more than 5

percent of responses were New York (9 percent, location of co-author), California (8 percent), Minnesota (6 percent, location of co-author), and Illinois (6 percent). All other states garnered 5 percent or fewer responses, with no respondents in Delaware and one respondent each located in Puerto Rico, South Dakota, and Vermont.

The authors compared distribution with the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015b) occupational employment statistics estimates for May 2015 for librarians, identifying some correspondence between the top 10 states in shares of respondents and employment (see Table I). Significant variations were observed for Minnesota (+6 percent), Oregon (+5 percent), and Texas (-3 percent). All other deviations fell within the +2/-2 range. The prominence of Minnesota can potentially be attributed to being the origin state of one of the authors, as can the ranking of New York. Significant collection and analysis of non-USA data were beyond the scope of the survey and study, designed within the framework of the US employment relations.

In total, 3 percent of respondents had previously worked in a library located outside of the USA. Of respondents that had worked in libraries located in the US states previously, those represented with more than 5 percent of responses were New York (9 percent), California (7 percent), Minnesota (6 percent), and Illinois (7 percent). All other states garnered 5 percent or fewer responses, with one respondent each formerly working in Delaware, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

Type of library employed

In total, 53 percent of respondents reported currently working for an academic (postsecondary) library, compared with 31 percent of respondents working for public libraries, 8

percent for school (K-12) libraries, and 3 percent for special libraries. In all, 5 percent of respondents (75 people) reported “Other.” Of the 71 free-text responses, 15 could be categorized into the pre-existing responses (11 academic (postsecondary) libraries, one school (K-12) library, and three special libraries), which moved the academic library percentage up to 54 percent and the “Other” percentage down to 4 percent. Many responses were related to law libraries or medical libraries. If the respondent indicated a “law firm” library or “hospital” library, this was considered a special library. If the respondent wrote “academic law library” or “medical school” library, this was considered an academic library. However, seven responses simply stated “Law library” and three stated “Medical library” and it was unclear if these were academic libraries or special libraries. The rest of the responses were coded into six new categories: government ($n = 20$), consortium ($n = 7$), correctional facility ($n = 2$), museum/archives ($n = 1$), vendor ($n = 1$), and those who reported having two jobs ($n = 2$).

The BLS does not provide completely analogous categories of distribution of employment across the types of libraries that are provided here. As of May 2015, US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015b) lists over 100 different industries that employ librarians. The industries with the highest employment are: elementary and secondary schools (38 percent), local government (not including hospitals or schools) (30 percent), colleges, universities and professional schools (15 percent), junior colleges (4 percent), and “other information services” (5 percent). Based on these designations, both the “colleges, universities, and professional schools” and “junior colleges” would be combined into academic libraries, “elementary and secondary schools” would comprise the school (K-12) library category, and public libraries would fall under the “local government” designation. Based on BLS statistics, special libraries would fall into many different industries. Therefore, comparing to the BLS data, academic libraries were

overrepresented in the results of this survey (see Table II). This discrepancy can possibly be attributed to the authors' both working in academic library settings. School libraries were underrepresented in these results. Although efforts were made to ensure a wide distribution of the survey, it is possible that the methods of distribution of this survey did not reach people employed in these kinds of libraries.

In total, 51 percent of respondents reported previously working for an academic library, and 29 percent for a public library. In all, 11 percent reported being employed by a special library, and 5 percent for a school library. Totally, 4 percent (50 people) indicated "Other." Of the 50 free-text responses, 20 could be coded into the pre-existing categories (one public library, nine academic library, ten special library), moving the academic library response percentage up to 52 percent and the special library percentage up to 12 percent (see Figure 6). The rest of the responses were coded into the four new categories: government ($n = 16$), museum/archives ($n = 4$), two jobs ($n = 3$), and not enough information ($n = 7$).

Size of community served

Of public library respondents, 33 percent currently work for a library serving a medium-sized community (population of 25-99,999), 31 percent serve large communities (100,000-999,999), and 17 percent serve small communities (10,000-25,000). Respondents serving very large (one million or more) and very small (less than 10,000) communities numbered 8 and 10 percent, respectively. Reports of prior employment were similar; of former public library respondents, 28 percent each worked for a library serving a medium-sized and large

communities, and 20 percent served small communities. Respondents who served very large and very small communities numbered 13 and 11 percent, respectively.

Of academic librarian respondents, 46 percent currently work for a library serving large (15,000 students or more) academic communities, 31 percent serve small academic communities (5,000 or less) and 22 percent serve medium-sized communities (5,000-15,000 students). Prior employment responses were comparable; of former academic library respondents, 44 percent worked for a library serving large academic communities, 32 percent served small academic communities and 24 percent served medium-sized communities.

Insert Table II Here

Insert Figure 6 Here

Of school library respondents, 44 percent currently work for a library serving a small K-12 community (300-699 students), 16 percent each serve very large (2,000 or more students) and medium (700-1,199 students) school communities, 14 percent serve very small schools (less than 300 students), and 10 percent work in large (1,200-1,999 students) school communities. Of former school library respondents, 39 percent worked for a library serving a small K-12 community, 23 percent worked in medium school communities, and 20 percent served very small schools, while those that worked in large and very large schools equaled 11 and 7 percent, respectively. Compared to current employment responses, more librarians were working in small

and very small school libraries and fewer librarians were working in very large school libraries in their previous positions.

In both the public and academic sectors, most of the survey respondents were currently from larger communities and libraries; only 27 percent of public librarians were from “small” and “very small” communities, and only 31 percent of academic librarians were from small academic communities. With school librarians, the results were shifted; the majority of respondents (58 percent) were from small or very small communities. The relationship between community size and salaries is emphasized in library advice literature in discussing salary expectations, with smaller libraries and communities having less accessible funds that allow for significant gains by negotiation (Martin, 2004). Further analysis of survey data that breaks down negotiation outcome by library type and community size is essential in order to fully determine the impact of library size on negotiation outcomes.

Library status

In total, 69 percent of respondents reported current employment by a public institution, while 25 percent reported employment by a private, non-profit library, and 6 percent by a private, for-profit library. Therefore, the majority of participants fell into the public employment category. Anecdotally, there seems to be an impression that those in public institutions have less ability to negotiate compensation and it is interesting that so many respondents were from the public sector.

In all, 67 percent of respondents reported prior employment by a public institution, while 24 percent were previously employed by a private, non-profit library, and 9 percent by a private, for-profit library. These percentages are very similar to those reported for current employment.

Labor union membership/representation

In total, 74 percent of respondents are not members of, or represented by, a labor union, compared to 24 percent that are. Totally, 2 percent noted that they did not know or were not sure. This largely corresponds with 2015 data demonstrating 20.5 percent of librarians as union members, with 23.6 percent represented by a union overall.

In all, 77 percent had not been a member of, or represented by, a labor union in their previous library employment, while 20 percent had been union members. Totally, 3 percent were unsure or did not know.

Position type

Summary analysis revealed that the wide majority - over three quarters - of respondents are currently employed in a librarian position, with almost half (47 percent) in a nonsupervisory librarian/archivist position type, and 29 percent in supervisory librarian/ archivist positions. In total, 14 percent of respondents indicated that they are currently in administrative positions, with support staff/paraprofessional positions (non-supervisory and supervisory) reported by 6 and 4 percent of respondents, respectively (see Figure 7). Slightly over half of respondents have no supervisory or administrative authority.

The authors provided options of selecting between supervisory, non-supervisory, and administrative positions in order to account for and contextualize potential differences in responses, expectations, negotiation processes, and point of negotiation according to position authority.

Insert Figure 7 Here

In total, 40 percent of respondents had been previously employed in non-supervisory librarian/ archivist position types, while 24 percent had been employed as non-supervisory support staff or paraprofessional positions. Totally, 22 percent had prior supervisory librarian/archivist positions, and 6 percent in supervisory support staff/paraprofessional positions. In all, 8 percent reported prior administrative positions (see Figure 8). Further analysis indicated that prior support staff/paraprofessional positions (non-supervisory and supervisory) constituted 30 percent of respondents, 20 percent more than respondents currently in support staff positions. Over 60 percent of respondents did not have prior supervisory or administrative authority, 10 percent less than reported current supervisory status.

Insert Figure 8 Here

Negotiation of salary/compensation

Of 1,466 respondents, 46 percent (674) negotiated salary or compensation for their most recent position, while 54 percent did not negotiate salary or compensation (see Figure 9). This finding is significant given that there is no other existing data that capture the rate or magnitude of salary negotiation in libraries or by librarians. The authors received a number of direct correspondence during the data collection phase of the study from frustrated librarians claiming that it was impossible to negotiate. While anecdotal discussions might implicitly assume that librarians do not negotiate, and scholarly and popular authors alike noting that “women don’t ask,” almost half of survey respondents reported negotiating for their most recent position.

Insert Figure 9 Here

Of 1,194 responses, 72 percent (857) had not negotiated salary or compensation for their prior library position, while 28 percent (337) had negotiated (see Figure 10). This is a significant departure from those reporting negotiating for current positions: 18 percent fewer had negotiated for a past position.

Elements negotiated

Respondents were provided the option of selecting all applicable answers: salary, step or rank, benefits for self or family, housing or relocation assistance, scheduling, time off or leave, professional development, “I don’t remember” or “Other.”

Of the 656 respondents that indicated that they negotiated salary or compensation in their current position and answered follow up questions, 92 percent (604) stated they negotiated for salary. In total, 24 percent negotiated for professional development support (examples include time off or funding for conference attendance or coursework, or subsidy of professional membership), 23 percent negotiated for housing or relocation assistance, and 21 percent negotiated position step or rank. Totally, 14 percent negotiated for time off or leave, while 11 percent negotiated scheduling (examples include flexible scheduling, a specific schedule, or telecommuting). In all, 5 percent negotiated for benefits (examples include medical/dental coverage, retirement contributions, disability or life insurance, flexible or health spending accounts), while two people indicated “I don’t remember.” In total, 6 percent (42 people) selected “Other.” Of the 41 free-text responses, 17 could be categorized into the pre-existing responses (three salary, three benefits for self or family, one housing or relocation assistance, six scheduling, three time off or leave, and one professional development), moving the salary percentage up to 93 percent, the benefits for self or family up to 6 percent, and the scheduling percentage up to 12 percent. New categories were created for “startup package” (15 responses, including issues related to project funds, technology, and additional staff positions) and “elements of position” (five responses, related to job description or title and promotion guidelines). Four responses in the free-text indicated that they did not negotiate.

Insert Figure 10 Here

Of the 334 respondents that indicated that they negotiated salary or compensation for their prior library position and answered follow up questions, 89 percent (298) negotiated for

salary. In total, 21 percent negotiated for housing or relocation assistance, 18 percent negotiated position step or rank, and 16 percent had negotiated for professional development support. In all, 12 percent negotiated scheduling, and 10 percent for time off or leave. Totally, 8 percent negotiated for benefits, while 1 percent indicated “I can’t remember.” In total, 4 percent (12 people) selected “Other.” As above, the majority of these responses could be coded into the pre-existing categories (one salary, one step or rank, two benefits for self or family, one scheduling, one professional development), which moved the salary percentage up to 90 percent and the professional development percentage up to 17 percent. A few responses were placed into the new themes (five startup package, two elements of position) (see Table III). One of these responses overlapped two categories.

Negotiating parties

In their current position, 42 percent of respondents (276) negotiated with the head of library or library director, 21 percent negotiated with a HRs representative, 15 percent negotiated with a non-director supervisor, and 4 percent negotiated with a search committee chair. Answers “Peer or future colleague” and “I don’t remember” garnered two respondents (technically 0 percent), respectively. In total, 17 percent (110 people) selected “Other.” Of the 110 free-text responses, three could be coded into pre-existing categories (three HRs representative), which did not change the original percentage. The rest of the responses were sorted into eight new categories: board president or member ($n = 17$), corporate leader ($n = 5$), dean/provost/academic administrator ($n = 48$), government official ($n = 9$), library administrator (non-director) ($n = 5$), organizational leader, undefined ($n = 4$), recruiter or agency ($n = 2$), and university

librarian/associate university librarian (n = 9). Six people listed more than one type of person (coded as “two people”) that they negotiated with while two responses did not provide enough information to adequately code (not enough information).

Insert Table III Here

In their previous position, 42 percent of respondents (141) negotiated with the head of the library or library director, those that negotiated with a HRs representative or negotiated with a non-director supervisor both garnered 19 percent, and 4 percent negotiated with a search committee chair. The answers “Peer or future colleague” and “I don’t remember” garnered 0 percent (n = 1) and 2 percent (n = 6), respectively. In total, 45 people (13 percent) selected “Other.” The 45 free-text responses were coded into seven new categories: board (president or members) (n = 6), corporate leader (n = 3), dean/provost/academic administrator (n = 21), government official (n = 3), library administrator (non-director) (n = 4), recruiter or agency (n = 4), and university librarian/associate university librarian (n = 2). Two respondents stated they negotiated with more than one person (coded as “two people”). When compared to the current employment data, the proportions within the various categories remained fairly close, despite having almost half as many responses for this question (see Table IV).

Negotiation outcome

Respondents were provided the option of selecting all applicable answers. Of respondents that negotiated salary or compensation for their most recent position, 62 percent (405) reported

an increase in the initial salary offered, and 36 percent reported an increase or improvement in the total package offered. In total, 19 percent reported no change in the initial offer. Ten respondents (2 percent) reported threats to rescind the offer, while one respondent reported that the offer was rescinded (see Figure 11).

Insert Table IV Here

Insert Figure 11 Here

Of respondents that negotiated salary or compensation for their prior position, 63 percent (210) reported an increase in the initial salary offered, and 28 percent reported an increase or improvement in the total package offered. In total, 21 percent reported no change in the initial offer. Four respondents (1 percent) reported threats to rescind the offer, while two respondents (1 percent) reported that the offer was rescinded (see Figure 12). Response proportions did not significantly diverge from negotiation outcomes for current employment, with the exception of those reporting an increase in total package offered (36 vs 28 percent).

Respondent findings for current and prior positions largely correspond with researchers' findings that salary negotiation leads to improved compensation outcomes (Gerhart and Rynes, 1991; O'Shea and Bush, 2002; Marks and Harold, 2011).

Information that informed negotiation strategy

Respondents were provided the option of selecting all applicable answers. For 58 percent of respondents, prior work experience or education informed their negotiation strategy for their current position, while 54 percent indicated their previous salary. In total, 41 percent consulted salary data, 32 percent relied on advice from a mentor, colleague, or supervisor, and 30 percent relied on negotiation advice or literature. In total, 7 percent indicated that negotiation training had informed their negotiation strategy, while 3 percent responded “I’m not sure.” In all, 16 percent (103 people) selected “Other.” Of the 103 free-text responses, 30 could be coded into pre-existing categories (six previous salary or compensation, three previous work experience or education, 14 salary data, seven mentor, colleague, or supervisor advice), moving the previous salary or compensation percentage up to 55 percent, the previous work experience or education percentage up to 59 percent, the salary data percentage up to 43 percent, and the mentor, colleague, or supervisor advice percentage up to 33 percent. The rest of the responses were sorted into seven new categories: competing offer (n = 16), cost of living data (n = 15), firm number or need (n = 10), information about position (n = 2), information or advice from inside of the new organization (n = 9), and ethics, principle, or sense that “should” negotiate (n = 6). Eight responses did not provide enough information to code (no ready theme) (see Figure 13).

Insert Figure 12 Here

Insert Figure 13 Here

Response proportions regarding negotiation for prior employment did not significantly diverge from negotiation strategies for current employment. For 58 percent of respondents, prior work experience or education informed their negotiation strategy, while 47 percent indicated their previous salary. In total, 35 percent consulted salary data, 24 percent relied on negotiation advice or literature, and 22 percent relied on advice from a mentor, colleague, or supervisor. In total, 7 percent indicated that negotiation training had informed their negotiation strategy, while 4 percent responded “I’m not sure.” In all, 11 percent (38 people) selected “Other.” Of the 38 free-text responses, ten could be coded into pre-existing categories (two previous salary or compensation, two previous work experience or education, four salary data, one negotiation training, and one mentor, colleague, or supervisor advice), moving the previous salary or compensation percentage up to 48 percent, the salary data percentage up to 37 percent, and the mentor, colleague, or supervisor advice percentage up to 23 percent. The rest of the responses were coded into the new categories described above: competing offer (n = 6), cost of living data (n = 5), firm number or need (n = 1), and information or advice from inside of the new organization (n = 7). Six responses did not provide enough information to adequately code (no ready theme) (see Figure 14).

In reviewing responses on negotiation for current and past positions, respondents reported using prior salary and education/work experience to inform their negotiation strategy. More than a third reported using salary data, while advice from a mentor/ colleague/supervisor/colleague and negotiation advice or literature were cited by less than a third of respondents, respectively.

New employee or position.

For their current position, 75 percent of negotiating respondents ($n = 656$) were new employees of the library, while 25 percent were negotiating for a new job or position with the same employer.

For their previous position, 81 percent were new employees of their prior library when negotiating, while 19 percent were negotiating for a new job or position with the same employer.

Demographics

Gender identity. Of 1,444 respondents, 82 percent selected “Woman” as their gender identity, 16 percent selected “Man,” four respondents selected “Trans man,” zero selected “Trans woman,” and 12 (1 percent) selected “Gender identity not listed.” Of the 12 free-text responses, one could be recategorized into a pre-existing category (Man), while the rest were sorted into two new categories: genderqueer ($n = 4$) and decline to state ($n = 3$). Two of the responses did not provide enough information to adequately code (see Figure 15).

Current population survey data from 2015 reveal that women constitute 83 percent of librarians, corresponding to survey findings (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015a). Gender identity categorization beyond the binary are not yet tracked by the BLS, prohibiting further comparison with survey findings.

Insert Figure 14 Here

Total annual wage. In the wage brackets listed, 22 percent earned \$50-59,000 a year, followed by 19 percent who earned \$40-49,000, and 16 percent who earned \$60-69,000. In total, 15 percent earned less than \$40,000, 57 percent of respondents earned between \$40,000 and 69,000 annually, and 27 percent earned \$70,000 or higher annually (see Figure 16). The US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015b) estimates median librarian annual wages as \$56,880, with \$44,580-71,620 representing the 25-75 percentiles.

Insert Figure 15 Here

Insert Figure 16 Here

Conclusion

The top-level initial findings of the first phase of the study provide the first glimpse of library-specific data on librarians and salary negotiation in the library workplace. More than half of survey respondents reported not negotiating for their current library position. Of those who did negotiate, more than three-quarters reported positive outcomes (increase in salary or total compensation package). A very small percentage of respondents reported rescinded offers, or threats to rescind, when negotiating. Those reporting negotiating for past positions constituted about a quarter of respondents, but showed a comparable rate of positive negotiation outcomes. Preferred information sources informing negotiation strategy for current and prior positions were individuals' prior salary and prior education and experience.

The authors share these initial findings with the desire to inform professional discourse and practice by expanding the scope of librarians' understanding of occupational and sectoral negotiation practices and outcomes, and shift information reliance from anecdote and personal experience toward an accessible portfolio of evidence-based resources that include salary data, literature, and formal training.

Further analysis of this data will allow us to examine responses by library and position type, as well as other survey variables. A planned second phase of the study includes the collection of qualitative data from survey respondents to augment the initial data set, and will provide a more comprehensive picture of librarian perceptions and experiences in order to inform an expanded narrative of salary negotiation in the library hiring process.

Notes

1. BLS current population survey estimates include self-reported occupations, as well as librarians working outside of library workplaces, and do not explicitly confirm employment, so the measure is not necessarily an appropriate benchmark given stated participant parameters (to all librarians, regardless of position type, who have been employed in a library of any type). Similar comparisons to alternative BLS measures like the Labor Force Survey (counting the employed in the specific occupation) or American Library Association metrics (Master of Library/Information Science degree recipients) do not fully correspond with participant scope.
2. Employment of recent MLS graduates is tracked by Library Journal's Salaries and Placements Survey, while estimates of self-defined librarians and employed librarians are available through the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Current Population Survey and Labor Force Survey. Attempts to define "contingent" employment are somewhat contentious, but according to the US Government Accounting Office, the category constituted an estimated 7.9 percent of the labor force in 2010.

Table I

Geographical distribution of respondents			BLS geographical distribution of librarian employment		
State	Count	% of total	State	Count	% of total
New York	117	9	New York	11,400	9
California	111	8	Texas	10,420	8
Minnesota	83	6	California	9,540	7
Illinois	81	6	Florida	5,840	4
Oregon	73	6	Illinois	5,740	4
Texas	65	5	New Jersey	4,800	4
Ohio	53	4	Massachusetts	4,770	4
Michigan	44	3	North Carolina	4,720	4
Massachusetts	38	3	Pennsylvania	5,450	4
North Carolina	36	3	Ohio	4,430	3

Table I.
Geographical
distribution of
respondents and
library employment
(BLS May 2015 data):
top 10 states

Table II

Library types	Survey data (%)	BLS data (%)
Public library	31	29
Academic library (postsecondary)	54	19
School library (K-12)	3	38
Special library	8	—*
Other	4	na

Note: *No single corresponding industry code

Table II.
 Comparison between
 BLS May 2015
 employment data by
 library type and
 representation of
 library type from
 survey data

Table III

Elements negotiated	Examples	Current count	Current %	Previous count	Previous %
Salary	Recurring salary or stipend	607	93	299	90
Professional development	Time off or funding for conference attendance or classes/coursework, subsidy of professional memberships	156	24	56	17
Housing or relocation assistance	Moving expenses	154	23	70	21
Step or rank	Placement into higher job classification rank	135	21	60	18
Time off or leave	Vacation, family leave or paid time off	92	14	32	10
Scheduling	Flexible scheduling, a specific schedule, or telecommuting	79	12	40	12
Benefits for self or family	Medical/dental coverage, retirement contributions, disability or life insurance, flexible or health spending accounts	38	6	28	8
Startup package	Funds for new project, technology (laptop, tablet, etc.), signing bonus	15	2	5	1
Elements of position	Job description, title or promotion guidelines	5	1	2	1
I do not remember	na	2	0	2	1

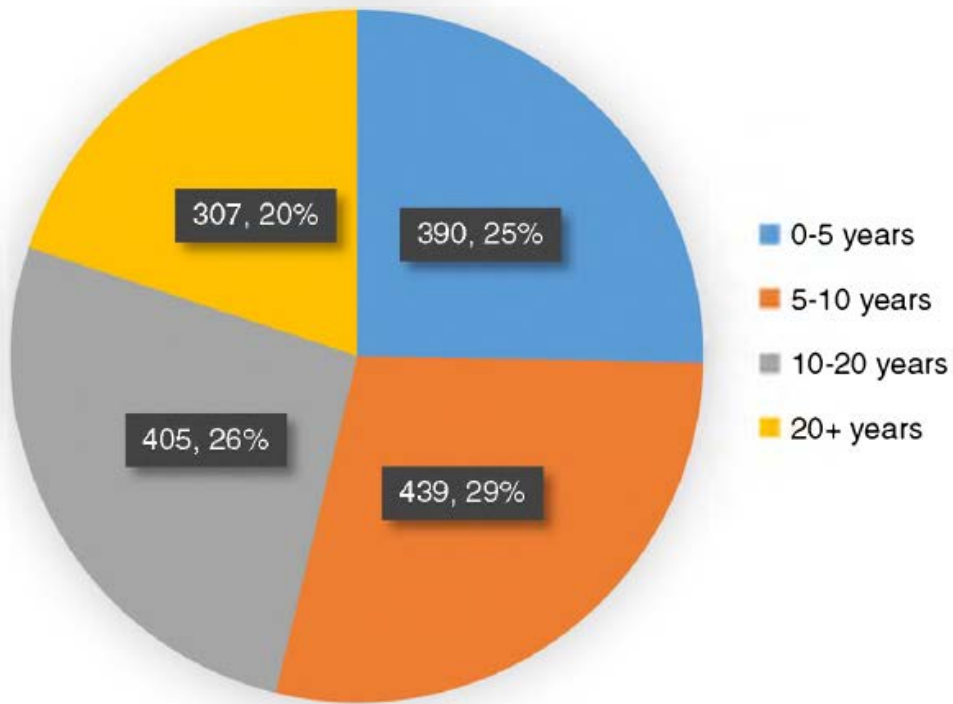
Table III. Elements negotiated by survey respondents for their current (*n* = 656) and prior positions (*n* = 334)

Table IV

Negotiated with	Current count	Current %	Previous count	Previous %
Head of library or library director	276	42	141	42
Human resources (HR) representative	141	21	64	19
Supervisor (non-director)	99	15	65	19
Dean/Provost/Academic administrator	48	7	21	6
Search committee chair	28	4	12	4
Board president or member	17	3	6	2
Government official	9	1	3	1
University librarian/associate university librarian	9	1	2	1
Two people	6	1	2	1
Corporate leader	5	1	3	1
Library administrator (non-director)	5	1	4	1
Organizational leader, undefined	4	1	–	–
Peer or future colleague	2	0	1	0
Recruiter or agency	2	0	4	1
I do not remember	2	0	6	2
Not enough information	2	0	–	–

Table IV.
Who respondents negotiated with for their current (*n* = 656) and previous positions (*n* = 334)

Figure 1



Note: As percent of total; $n=1,541$

Figure 1.
Respondents' number
of years of experience
working in libraries

Figure 2

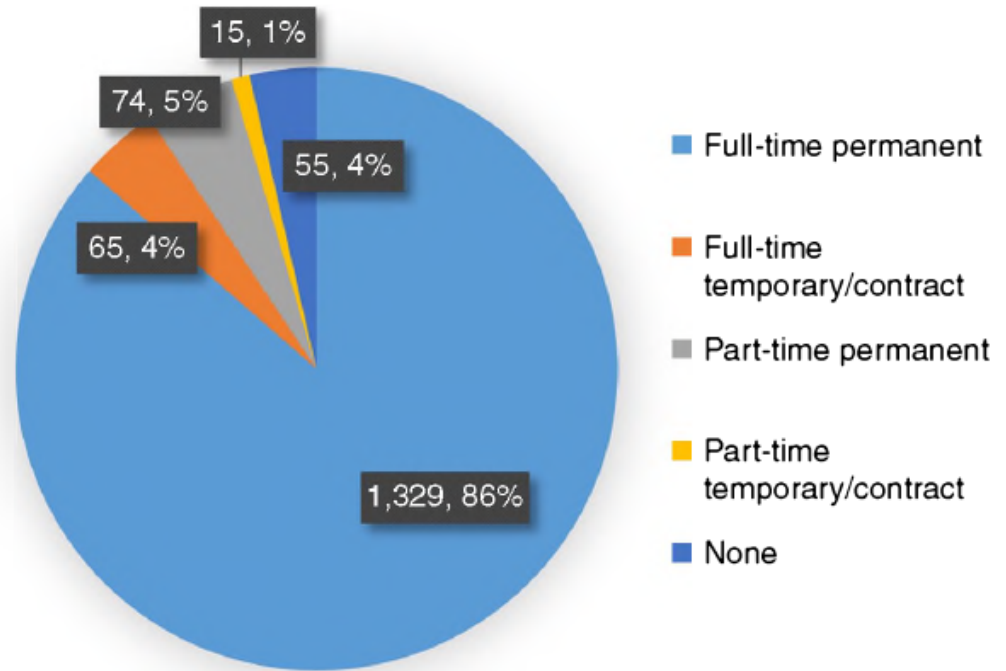


Figure 2.
Respondents'
current employment
in a library

Note: As percent of total; $n=1,538$

Figure 3

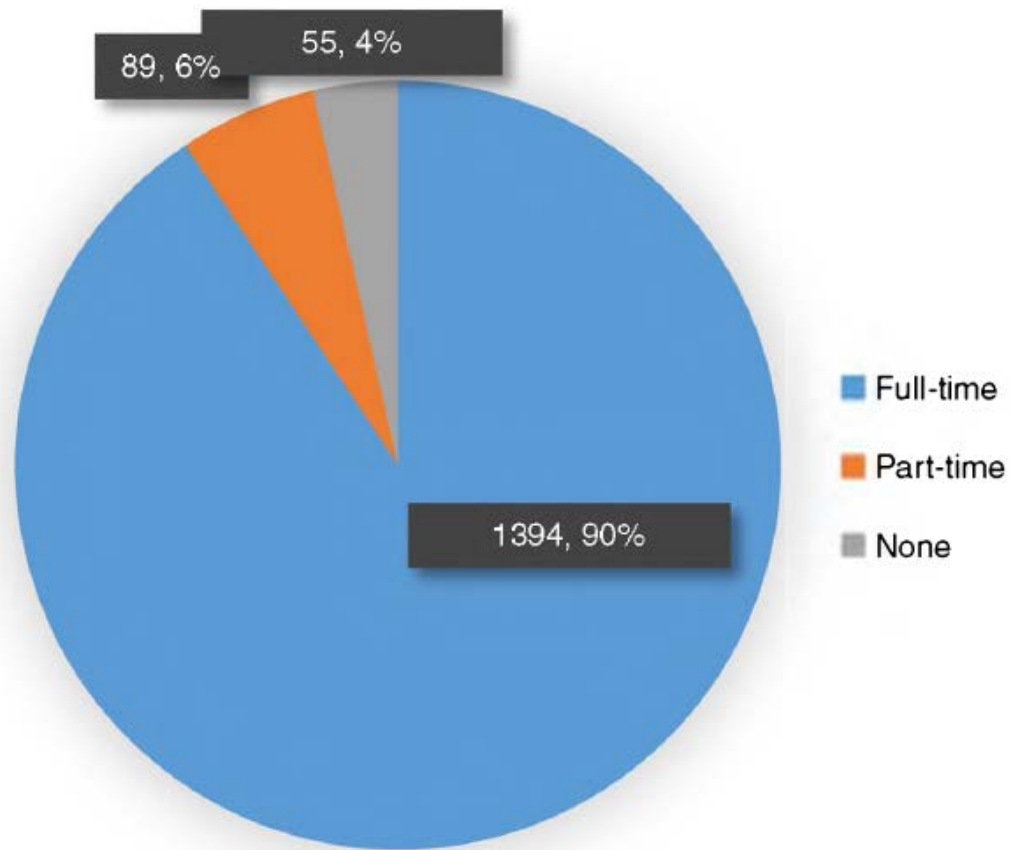
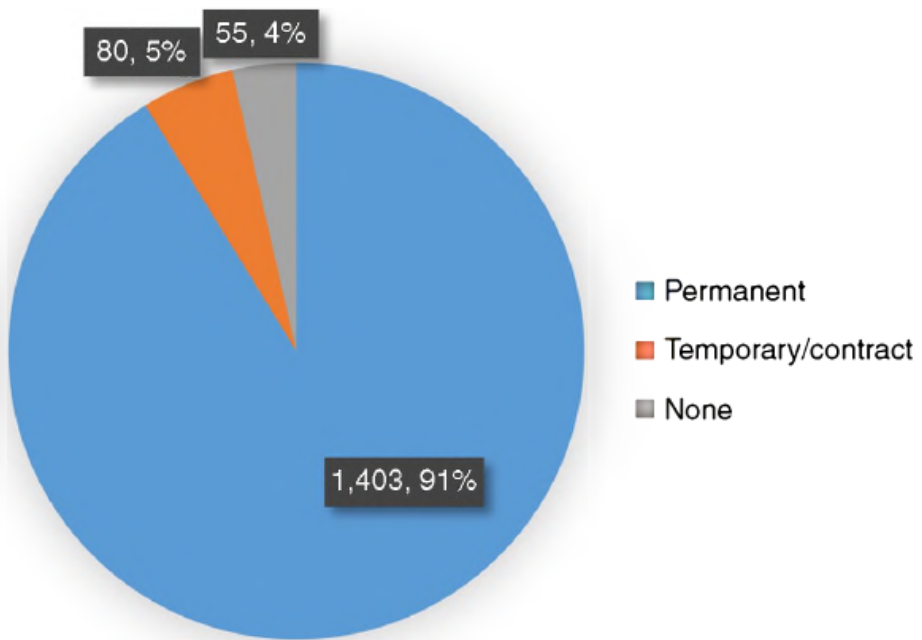


Figure 3.
Respondents' current
employment in a
library, by schedule

Note: As percent of total; $n=1,538$

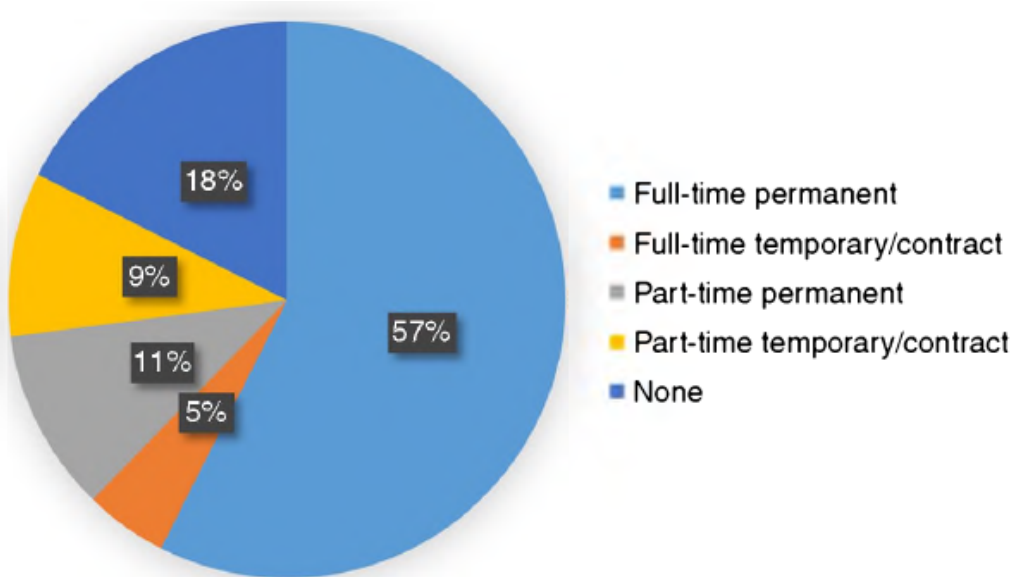
Figure 4



Note: As percent of total; n=1,538

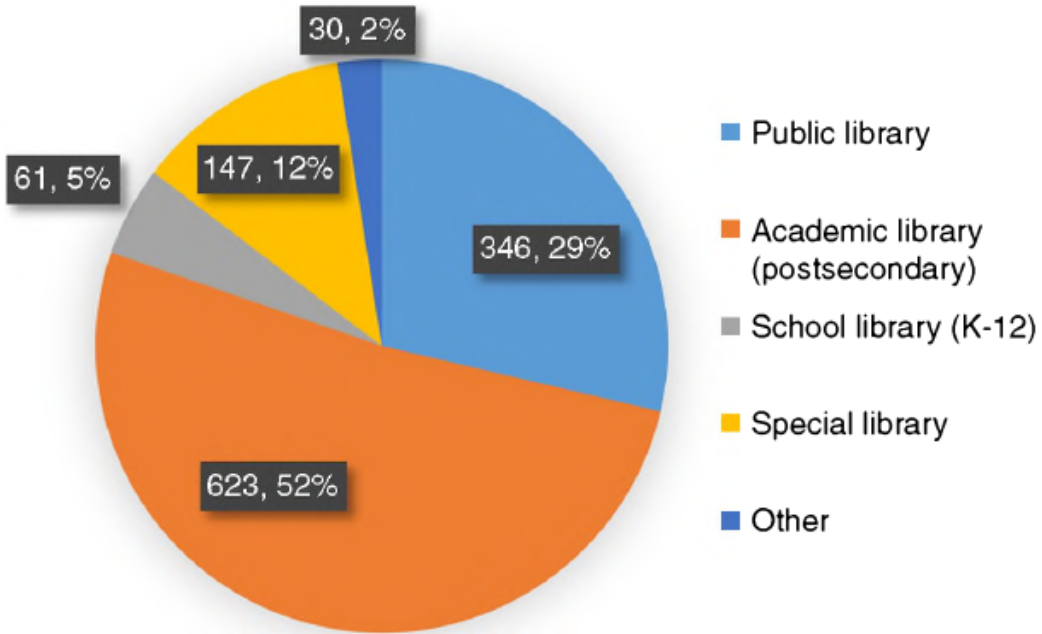
Figure 4.
Respondents' current
employment in a
library, by status

Figure 5



Note: As percent of total; *n* = 1,481

Figure 5.
Respondents'
prior employment
in a library

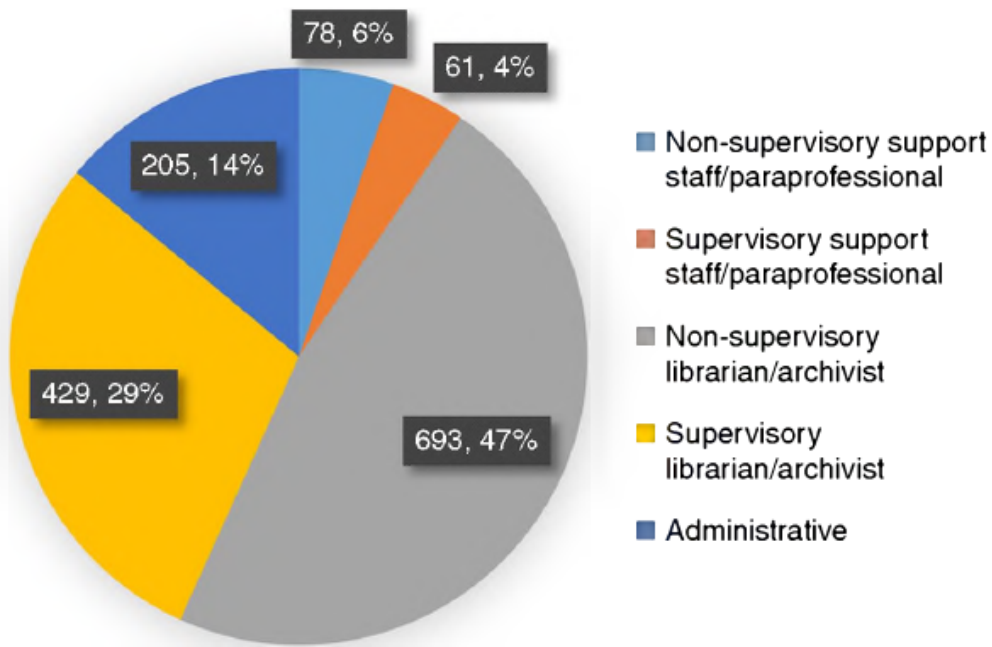


Note: n=1,207

Figure 6

Figure 6.
Type of library respondents were employed at in previous position

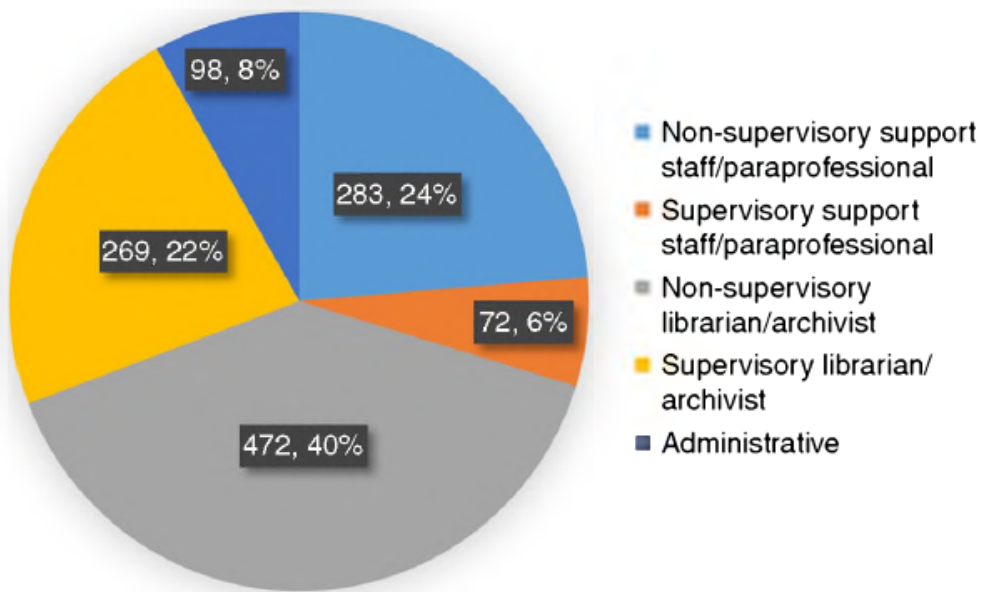
Figure 7



Note: As percent of total; $n = 1,466$

Figure 7.
Respondents' current position type, by supervisory status

Figure 8



Note: As percent of total; n=1,194

Figure 8.
Respondents' prior position type, by supervisory status

Figure 9

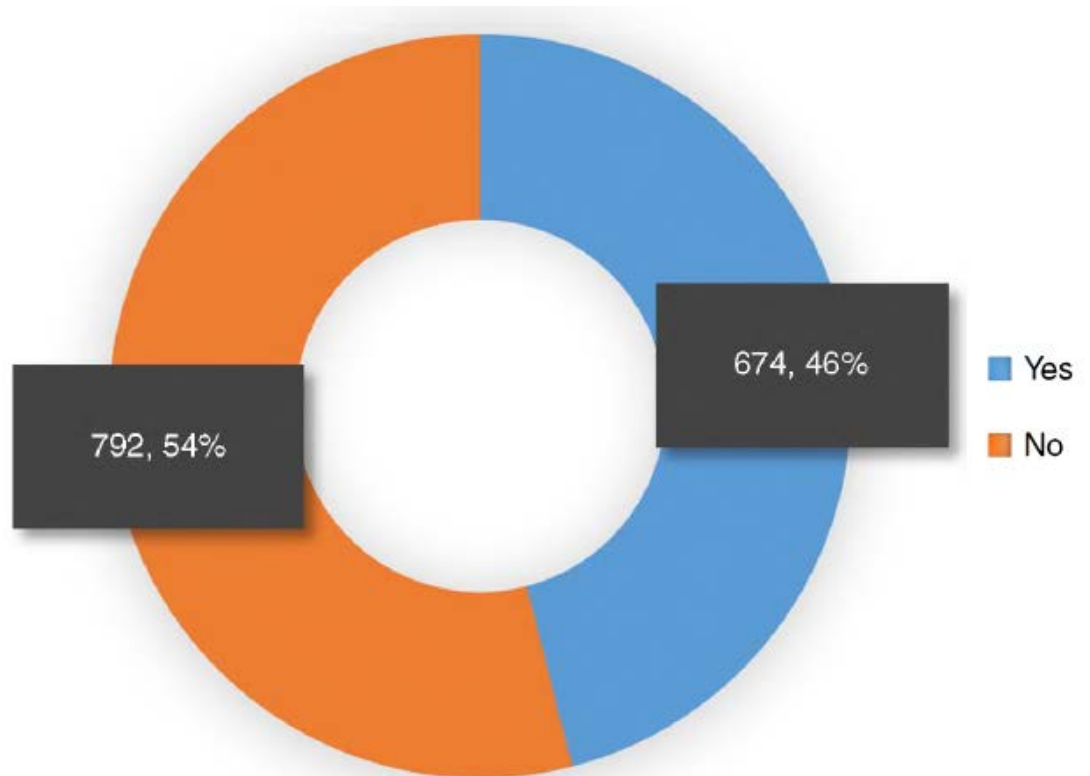
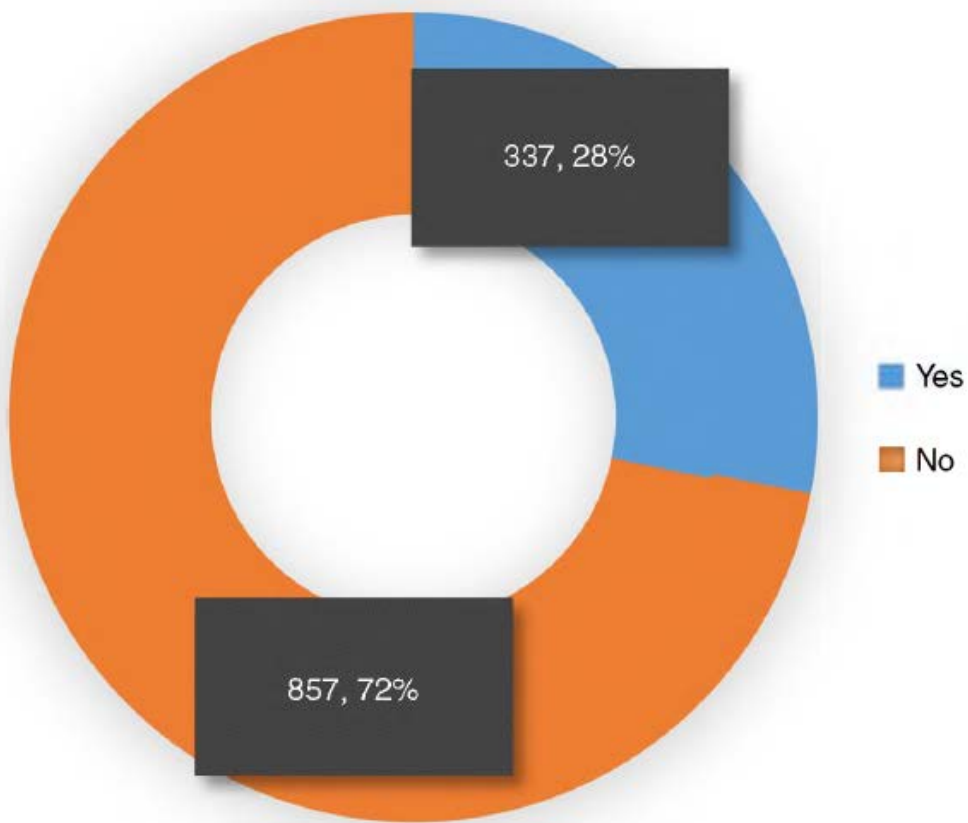


Figure 9.
Frequency of
negotiation of salary/
compensation

Note: As percent of total; $n=1,466$

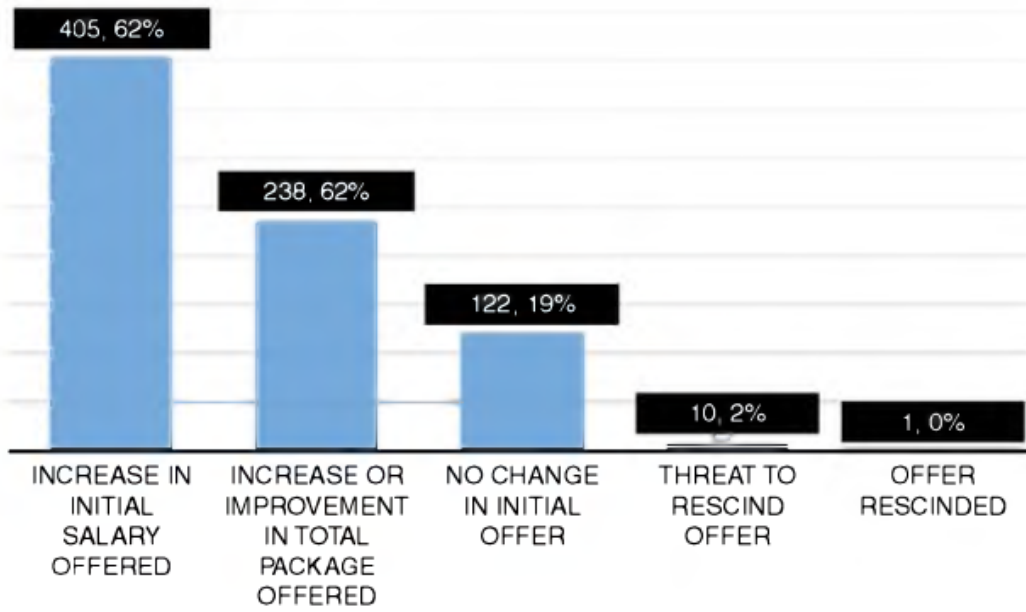
Figure 10



Note: As percent of total; $n=1,194$

Figure 10.
Frequency of
negotiation of salary/
compensation in
previous position

Figure 11



Note: n = 656

Figure 11.
Outcome of negotiation for respondents' in current position

Figure 12

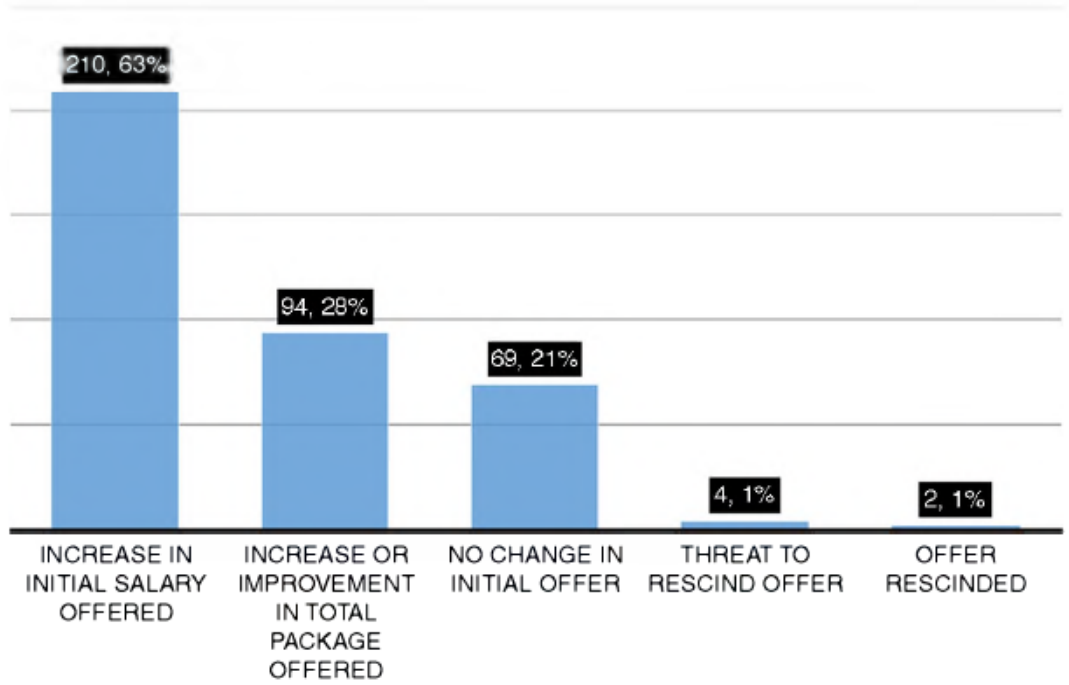
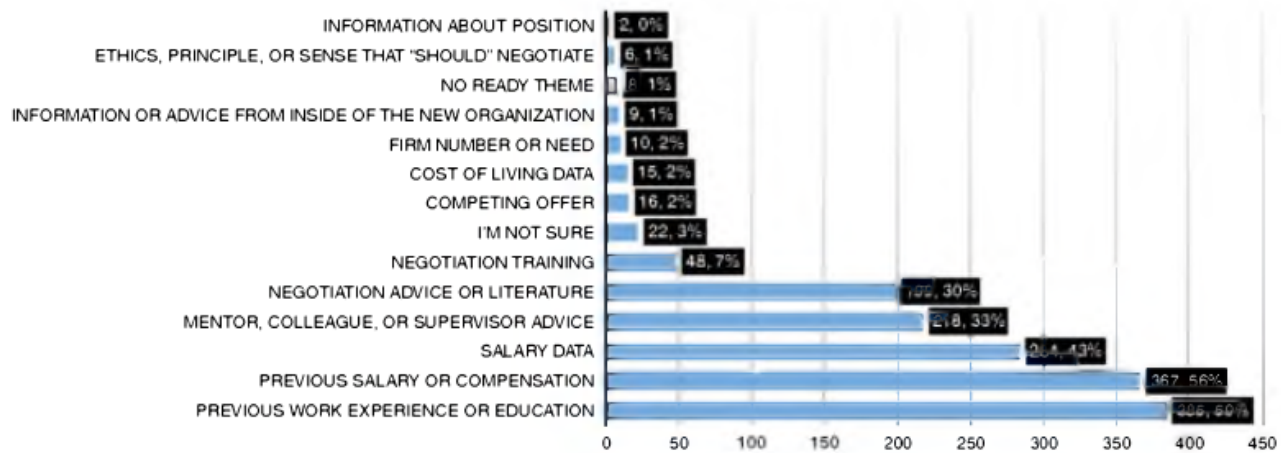


Figure 12. Outcome of negotiation for respondents' in prior position

Note: $n = 334$

Figure 13



Note: n = 656

Figure 13.
Information that
informed negotiation
strategy for
respondents in
current position

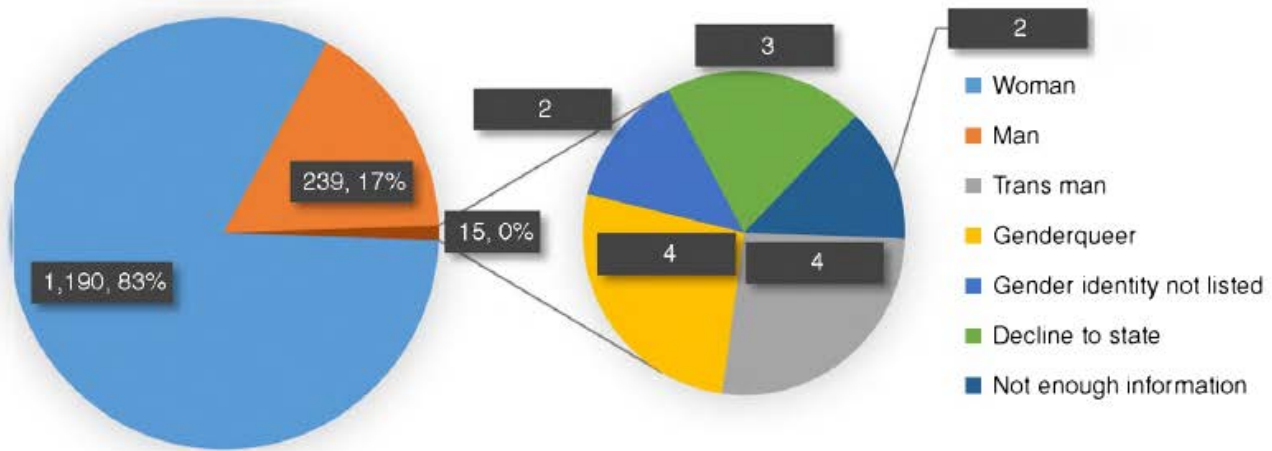
Figure 14



Note: n=334

Figure 14.
Information that informed negotiation strategy for respondents in prior position

Figure 15



Note: n=1,444

Figure 15.
Gender identity of
survey respondents

Figure 16

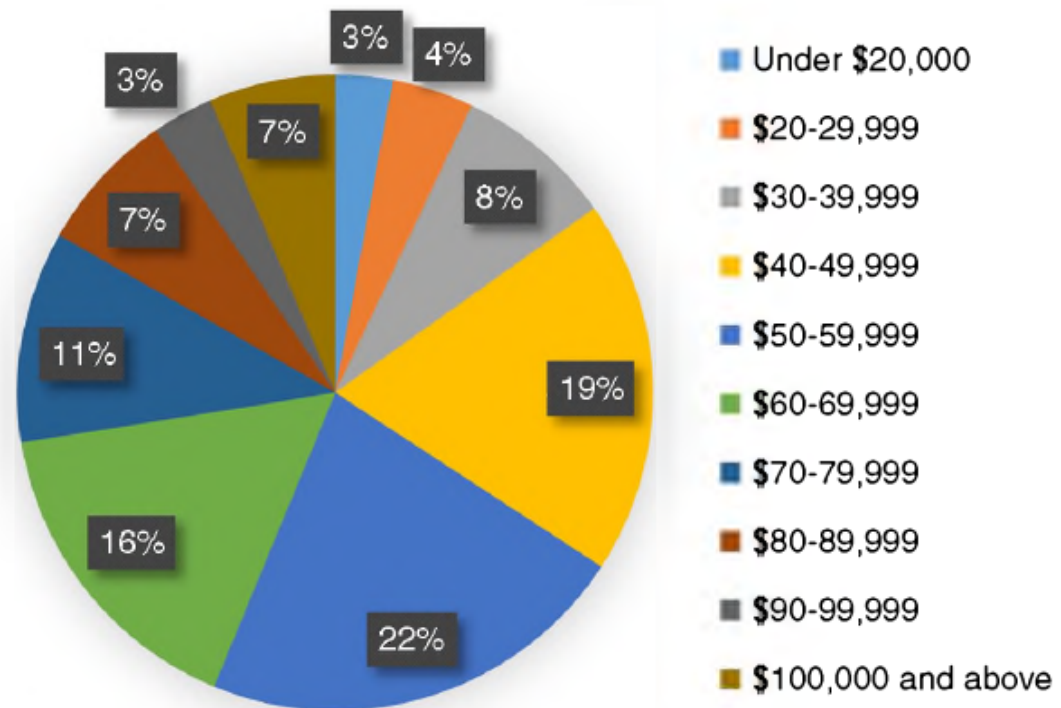


Figure 16.
Total annual wage of
survey respondents

Note: n=1,444

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