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The Effect of Dysfunctional Organizational Culture on Burnout in Academic Libraries

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the high incidence of dysfunctional organizational cultures among academic libraries and how these cultures accelerate burnout among librarians, particularly newer librarians. Our data show that there are a variety of factors that lead to dysfunctional organizational cultures in libraries, including generational conflict, salary inequities, lack of representation of women and people of color in leadership positions, and poor leadership.

In combating dysfunction and burnout, we recognize the idea that individuals are responsible for managing their burnout through various means of self-care or saying "no." However, in this book chapter, we assert that it is both the organization's responsibility to nurture an environment that allows librarians to create productive working ecosystems and the individual's responsibility to proactively address workplace dysfunction by leaving or making needed changes within the organization.

Introduction

Any investigation of burnout would likely reveal that its causes are varied and its impact can significantly damage one's career, health, and sense of self-worth. Workplace morale researcher Kaetrena Davis Kendrick, 2019 ACRL Academic/Research Librarian of the Year and dean of Dacus Library and Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections at Winthrop University, asserted:

> When toxic/abusive behaviors (including neglectful & abusive leadership styles) are allowed to fester, consider these long-term outcomes: the talented employees who can leave, *will*; the talented people who can't leave are more likely to wither on the vine… to be bullied/subjugated by the people/systems who/that are abusive and neglectful either by direct acts/lack of action or learned behaviors (defense mechanism/trauma response or retention).

> Addendum: Don't worry about employee recruitment, and especially retention if you're not going to dismantle #EnablingSystems that promote abuse or definitively correct/discipline abusive/neglectful behaviors. And don't expect that formal leaders can do this by themselves. See Also, #LegacyToxicity (2021).

Davis Kendrick highlighted the idea that leaving a dysfunctional library culture is not always an option or solution; for those who stay, burnout and resentment are inevitable outcomes. While deep resentment appears to be a major effect of the shared experience of burnout, developing remedies for the toxicity that results requires that we identify the specific conditions and systems within academic libraries that contribute to this experience. While our study confirms that resentment is a significant effect of burnout, Davis Kendrick's guidance, which encourages dismantling systems and not relying solely on leadership to help solve the problem, complements our focus on identifying aspects of organizational culture that contribute significantly to the way this problem manifests within academic libraries.

Our study investigates the high incidence of dysfunctional organizational cultures among academic libraries and how these cultures accelerate burnout among librarians, particularly newer and midcareer librarians. We assert that there are a variety of causes that lead to dysfunctional organizational cultures in libraries, including generational conflict, salary inequities, lack of representation of women and people of color in leadership positions, and the perception of librarians as merely service providers. We recognize that individuals are responsible for managing their burnout through various means of self-care or saying "no," but assert that it is the organization's responsibility to nurture an environment that allows librarians to create productive working ecosystems that encourage connection and ongoing professional growth for all. These two remedies provide a foundation for combatting resentment and, thus, burnout.

Literature Review

Often identified as a helping profession (Swanson, 1992), librarianship is particularly susceptible to incidences of burnout among its practitioners due to its service-oriented nature. While the term *burnout* is fairly general and can be defined in various ways, for the purposes of this study, we are using the definition provided in the 11th revision of the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems* (*ICD-11*). It defines burnout as a syndrome

> resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by three dimensions: feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion; increased mental distance from one's job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job; and reduced professional efficacy. (World Health Organization, 2019)

In "When Does Burnout Begin? The Relationship Between Graduate School Employment and Burnout Amongst Librarians," Jade Geary and Brittany Hickey (2019) contended that incidences of burnout in librarianship are high (81.86%). In this article, Geary and Hickey specifically investigated the possible correlation between librarian burnout and if the librarian worked during their library school program. They concluded that a deeper investigation is needed to draw such conclusions, in part because of the ever-changing landscape of LIS graduate education and job market. However, the authors were adamant that their research reporting high incidences of librarian burnout across library settings is a wake-up call to leaders in the profession.

In "You Too, Can Prevent Librarian Burnout," Jennifer Bartlett (2018) tackled the topic of librarian burnout from the perspective of library management. She provided several different suggestions for preventing burnout of library employees from a variety of resources. These suggestions included developing a robust employee orientation program, providing continual learning opportunities, the art of saying no, realistic goal setting, networking within the profession, team building and social activities in the workplace,

and mindfulness or meditation training. Bartlett contended that it is library management's role to provide these types of resources for employees.

In "The State of Academic Liaison Librarian Burnout in ARL Libraries in the United States," Jennifer Nardine (2019) looked specifically at incidences of burnout in liaisons and subject librarians in ARL libraries. Nardine's narrow focus allowed for an in-depth analysis of burnout among a particular segment of academic librarians. Like Geary and Hickey (2019), Nardine concluded that more study is needed on librarian burnout. Since the problem presents itself so pervasively in the profession, more information is needed to address it. Nardine noted, wisely, that preventing burnout it not just humane, but that it is also crucial to organizational success, noting that burnout can deeply affect job performance, health-care costs, and workplace culture (Nardine, 2019).

Our chapter seeks to determine if there are connections between dysfunctional organizational cultures and librarian burnout. In the article "Dysfunctional Culture, Dysfunctional Organization: Capturing the Behavioral Norms That Form Organizational Culture and Drive Performance," Balthazard, Cooke, and Potter (2006) contended that dysfunctional organizational styles can be traced back to individual behaviors within the organization. They asserted that these individual behaviors drive the dysfunction, and that dysfunction hampers organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

In "Mobbing in the Library Workplace: What It Is and How to Prevent It," Reba Leiding (2010) identified a specific type of bullying behavior that can occur in academic libraries (mobbing) and how that behavior can lead to overall dysfunction in the workplace. Leiding defined mobbing as "a type of workplace pathology in which employees target a co-worker and engage in an ongoing campaign of disrespectful, and even hostile, behavior" (p. 364). Within the article, Leiding noted that although mobbing is not an above-board, authorized behavior condoned by the organization, it is clear that other existing organizational dysfunctions allow and even encourage it to happen. Leiding asserted that organizations with a clear mission, well-defined and supported roles for employees, and an active and impartial management can help prevent mobbing behaviors—behaviors that can be extremely detrimental over time.

As the literature shows, burnout is a complex condition that is impacted by many factors, perhaps most significantly by organizational dysfunction. However, while the literature makes these connections via studies on low morale, there is a gap in researching dysfunction and burnout in academic libraries. Our research examines the relationship between organizational dysfunction and burnout and situates the problem of burnout within academic libraries that exhibit toxic cultures.

Methodology

We used a mixed-methods approach to our research: a survey and semi-structured interviews. We created a survey in Qualtrics to collect opinions from academic librarians on their workplace culture. The sensitive nature of workplace culture led us to create an anonymous and confidential survey. We brainstormed an initial set of questions and then sought feedback from four academic librarians at external institutions. Upon review

of the comments from colleagues, we revised the survey and decided to invite survey respondents for an optional follow-up interview. In order to conduct research with human subjects, we completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program available through our institution. After finalizing our survey instrument and interview questions, we applied for and received approval from the institutional review board.

We created two instruments to collect data: an online survey and an interview questionnaire. The online survey has 17 questions to collect quantitative and qualitative data about participants. We used display logic. Therefore, depending on how participants answered questions, some may not have seen all 17 questions. All questions in the survey were optional, so participants could skip questions they did not want to answer. This design choice explains the variation in the sample size for each question in the results; N varies from 157 to 393. We chose this strategy to make the survey questions relevant to the participants and encourage them to complete the survey.

We began distributing the survey on February 24, 2021, and closed the survey on March 31, 2021. We conducted 30-minute interviews with participants throughout April 2021. We posted an anonymous survey link on our social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter) and on several professional e-mail distribution lists asking for participation and for the survey to be shared. The survey begins with informed consent, so participants were aware of the nature of the research, the benefits, and risks to help them decide to participate or not. For the interviews, we wrote six questions to guide our interviews and collect qualitative data. See Appendices A and B for the survey questions and for the interview questions.

We sought librarians who considered leaving their library for interviews. Due to our use of display logic in Qualtrics, only the 289 participants who answered "yes" to question 16, "Have you considered leaving a library because of dysfunctional aspects of its culture?" then saw question 17 displayed: "If you would be willing to confidentially share your experience in a dysfunctional work culture, please provide your email address below." Of those 289 respondents, only 95 chose to answer question 17; 35 gave personal e-mail addresses, 38 gave e-mail addresses affiliated with an educational institution, and 15 people stated no (three expressing fear of participating). Seven respondents left comments describing their experiences in a dysfunctional culture that mentioned poor leadership, lack of support from the institution, interpersonal conflict, and lack of flexibility with remote work. Due to time constraints, we focused on the 38 .edu e-mail addresses. After inviting individuals, we ultimately scheduled and recorded 17 confidential Zoom interviews.

Results

The data we collected in our survey are presented in the Tables 9.1–9.6.

Table 9.1 shows most respondents were White, midcareer, and female, which corresponds with demographics in the profession (Rosa & Henke, 2017, pp. 1–2). Respondents could choose one answer for age and gender, but were allowed multiple answers for race and/or ethnicity, which explains why the choice totals (407) differ from the sample size (N = 393).

TABLE 9.1

Respondent Demographics (N = 395)

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age range		
20–29	24	6.08%
30–39	114	28.86%
40–49	132	33.42%
50–59	77	19.49%
60–69	42	10.63%
70–79	3	0.76%
80 or above	0	0.00%
Prefer not to say	3	0.76%
Race and/or ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0.00%
Asian	7	1.77%
Black or African American	7	1.77%
Hispanic or Latino	9	2.28%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	1	0.25%
Not Hispanic or Latino	5	1.27%
Prefer not to say	13	3.29%
White	365	92.41%
Gender identification		
Female	322	81.52%
Male	57	14.43%
Non-binary/third gender	5	1.27%
Prefer not to say	9	2.28%
Prefer to self-describe	2	0.51%

Table 9.2 shows that most respondents in our sample had over six years of experience in librarianship as a first career and feel confident in their abilities to fulfill their work responsibilities. Due to display logic, only the 157 respondents who answered "no" to librarianship being a first career saw the next question about the number of previous careers. A majority of those respondents had only one previous career before librarianship.

TABLE 9.2

Respondent Work History (N Varies: 157–394)

	Number	Percentage
Years as professional librarian		
0–2	27	6.87%
3–5	51	12.98%
6–10	92	23.41%
11–15	98	24.94%
16+	125	31.81%
Is librarianship first career?		
Yes	236	60.05%
No	157	39.95%
No. previous careers		
1	100	63.69%
2	39	24.84%
3 or more	18	11.46%
Confidence in abilities		
Very confident	241	61.17%
Somewhat confident	133	33.76%
Neutral	9	2.28%
Less confident	11	2.79%
Not at all confident	0	0.00%

Table 9.3 shows that library leadership is supporting work–life balance for respondents in the areas of remote work, flexible hours, and wellness during the workday. Nearly 15% of respondents felt there were no options to support work–life balance. While many libraries are allowing for remote work, 14 respondents indicated in "other" that this is only because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample size for this question is 394, and this differs from the choice totals of 805 because respondents were allowed multiple answers. Additionally, the 63 respondents who chose "other" shared that unclear and/or unfair expectations hinder librarians' ability to maintain a healthy work–life balance: for example, no clear understanding of the expectation to respond to e-mail on evenings and weekends. This table also shows leadership is supporting the professional growth of librarians by providing funding for attendance at conferences, in-house professional development opportunities, and to go to school. Of the 61 respondents who chose "other," 25 listed the budget/lack of funding as a major barrier to support professional development, and 11 stated specifically this was due to COVID-19. The sample size for this question is 393, and this differs from the choice totals of 774 because respondents were allowed multiple answers.

TABLE 9.3

Leadership Support for Respondents (N Varies: 393–394)

	Number	Percentage
Work–life balance		
Allow for remote work	267	67.77%
Bringing children to work	28	7.11%
Flexible hours	233	59.14%
No options	59	14.97%
Other	63	15.99%
Wellness during workday	155	39.34%
Professional growth		
Funds for conferences	334	84.99%
Funds for school	104	26.46%
In-house professional development	170	43.26%
No support	29	7.38%
Opportunities for advancement	76	19.34%
Other	61	15.52%

Table 9.4 identifies how libraries encourage new career librarians, most commonly by providing leadership opportunities. The sample size for this question is 387, and this differs from the choice totals of 814 because respondents were allowed multiple answers. Of the 31 respondents who answered "other," 4 mentioned that mentoring was available but that it lacked equity (not all experiences are positive, for example). Two respondents expressed concern that the library culture supports favoritism, and that encouragement is not equitable. In contrast, librarians also noted how they are discouraged within their organizations. The sample size for this question is 188, and this differs from the choice totals of 371 because respondents were allowed multiple answers. This question, like all the others in the survey, was optional, which explains why the sample size was smaller. Respondents shared the actions that discourage new career librarians, such as dismissing expertise, silencing new career voices in meetings, and indirect or direct threats to promotion and tenure (or advancement). Respondents noted the following when selecting "other": bullying, lack of mentorship (4 respondents), and lack of leadership opportunities.

TABLE 9.4

Respondent Opinions on New Career Librarians (N Varies: 188–387)

	Number	Percentage
Encourage new career librarians (*N* = 387)		
Acknowledgment of expertise not dependent on number of years in profession	157	40.57%
Amplifying new career voices in meetings or other public settings	78	20.16%
Encouraging academic freedom	135	34.88%
None of the above	104	26.87%
Other	30	7.75%
Positive mentorship for promotion and tenure (or advancement)	139	35.92%
Providing leadership opportunities	171	44.19%
Discourage new career librarians (*N* = 188)		
Dismissing expertise based on number of years in profession	96	51.06%
Indirect or direct threats to promotion and tenure (or advancement)	68	36.17%
Other	51	27.13%
Refusing leadership opportunities	51	27.13%
Restricting academic freedom	31	16.49%
Silencing new career voices in meetings and other public settings	74	39.36%

Table 9.5 shows that 67% of respondents are aware of salary inequities in their libraries. Due to display logic, only the 267 respondents who answered "yes" to awareness of salary inequities saw the next question about how their university and/or library was addressing the issue. Of the 267, only 243 went on to answer the next question, where the choice totals were 297. While many respondents chose equity/salary compression studies as their answer, 50% selected "other." Of these 122 respondents, 85 (35% of all respondents to this question) said their university and/or library was doing nothing to address salary inequities and 10 mentioned that a union would be addressing the issue in contract negotiations. It is striking that only 13% of respondents work at institutions where solutions to salary inequity have already been initiated and that a far greater number of respondents work at institutions where no meaningful action has been taken.

TABLE 9.5

Respondent Knowledge of Salary Inequities (N Varies: 243–393)

	Number	Percentage
Aware of salary inequities (*N* = 393)		
Yes	267	67.94%
No	126	32.06%
Library/university solution for salary inequities (*N* = 243)		
Equity studies	61	25.10%
Increase for additional education	33	13.58%
Other	122	50.21%
Salary compression studies	81	33.33%

Table 9.6 shows that most respondents (61.99%) feel their library has a dysfunctional culture. Due to display logic, only the 243 respondents who answered "yes" to their library having a dysfunctional culture saw the next question about factors contributing to the culture. The data show that many factors are at play, the most significant being obstructionist individuals and/or culture, fixed mindsets, and hierarchy. All 243 respondents went on to answer the question, and the choice totals are 844 because respondents could choose multiple answers. Additionally, of the 74 respondents who chose "other," many cited poor leadership in their qualitative comments. Not surprisingly, 73.54% of respondents expressed considering leaving a library because of its dysfunctional culture. These respondents cited inadequate leadership as the most common cause of dysfunctional organizational culture. Leadership deficiencies included salary inequities, chronic understaffing, limited opportunities for promotion and growth, lack of transparency and communication, favoritism, micromanagement, or, conversely, lack of formal training or professional development.

TABLE 9.6

Respondent Opinions of Dysfunctional Organizational Culture (N Varies: 243–393)

	Number	Percentage
Library has dysfunctional culture		
Yes	243	61.99%
No	149	38.01%
Dysfunctional culture factors		
Excessive competitiveness and/or professional jealousy	93	38.27%
Fixed mindsets	183	75.31%
Hierarchy	152	62.55%

TABLE 9.6

Respondent Opinions of Dysfunctional Organizational Culture (N Varies: 243–393)

	Number	Percentage
Inequities, salary or opportunities	135	55.56%
Obstructionist individuals and/or culture	207	85.19%
Other	74	30.45%
Considered leaving a library		
Yes	289	73.54%
No	104	26.46%

Of the 392 respondents that answered the question "Have you considered leaving a library because of dysfunctional aspects of its culture?" 289 (73%) responded "Yes." Those that responded "Yes" were given the option to follow up with a confidential interview. The themes of those interviews are discussed in the next section. In the interest of protecting the anonymity of our respondents, any quotes included in the following section are a composite of similar responses.

Interview Themes

The most prevalent themes that arose during the anonymous interviews concerned the perceived causes and effects of dysfunctional work culture as they relate to leadership. While the notion that all libraries are dysfunctional was frequently expressed, cited causes included ineffective or uneven leadership, poor strategic visioning and strategies for communicating shared goals across the organization, bullying from supervisors or between librarians of different rank and tenure, generational conflict arising from perceptions that leadership values newer initiatives over traditional library functions, the absence of helpful feedback, lack of transparency in decision making, gaslighting, and poor or nonexistent conflict resolution. One anonymous interviewee noted, "Ineffective leadership contributes to poor communication and lack of trust within the organization." Participants also noted the existence of dysfunction within the institution, with emphasis on the role institutional dysfunction plays in adversely affecting academic libraries.

Interviewees cited many of the effects of dysfunctional work culture, which included feelings of resentment about being stuck in a toxic environment. In addition, concerns were expressed about finding employment elsewhere due to geographic constraints, mid- or late-career salary concerns, or difficulty finding middle-management opportunities. As one anonymous interviewee stated, "My confidence is so low, I don't know if I could get a job at another library. I've probably given up the will to leave." Interviewees detailed experiencing low morale, apathy, inability to effectively prioritize their work, and struggles with mental health issues. The mental health toll of toxic work environments was frequently emphasized by interviewees. "I've focused too much on work and am not present enough

for my personal life and the people in it," noted one anonymous interviewee. Another stated, "Once you're burned out, it's hard to crawl out of that or find any joy outside of work." In terms of personal and professional impacts of workplace dysfunctional culture, interviewees shared that they questioned whether they should leave the profession, and several shared that they had sought counseling or felt the need to find meaning outside of work via hobbies, family, and so on. Many interviewees cited lack of confidence and doubt in their skills and abilities as a major effect of the workplace dysfunction. One anonymous interviewee flatly stated, "I'm not sure I belong working in libraries."

When asked to describe a work culture in which they would thrive, common responses were good leadership, a collaborative workplace, diversity, and regular and constructive feedback. One anonymous respondent provided insight about the importance of collaboration at all levels of the organization, stating "New solutions don't generally come from the top down, they come from the people doing the work, or those in middle management." The need for greater diversity within libraries was prevalent in most of the interviewees' responses, with one anonymous participant in particular noting, "People within the organization need to recognize there is a lack of diversity and be open to the cultural flexibility needed to change the work environment." Many also expressed a desire to engage in meaningful work and needing help with understanding the impact of their work. An anonymous interviewee noted that a positive work environment would be one where all individuals "feel like they're connected to the strategic initiatives that are happening." They also expressed the need for more effective communication, consistent mentoring, and transparency in the workplace. One anonymous respondent noted that the ideal workplace would be one that "encourages people to work together, focuses on employee growth and development, and shows generous concern for employee well-being."

Discussion

In both the quantitative and qualitative data, we noted a relationship between organizations that are toxic or poorly managed and people or librarians staying in positions for their entire careers. This combination encourages greater dysfunction for both the organizations and individuals involved. They fuel each other. The survey data indicate a combination of factors contribute to dysfunctional culture: excessive competitiveness or professional jealousy, fixed mindsets, hierarchy, inequities, salary or opportunities, obstructionist individuals or culture. The interviews demonstrate that even if those factors are improved under new leadership, individuals will not immediately recover from feelings of dissatisfaction, resentment, and demoralization. It was clear from our interviews that recovery from dysfunction takes time. Interviews reflected that the number of years someone stays in a position negatively affects their ability to move out of burnout. This raises the question: Can burnout become a part of someone's identity? It is clear from our results that people want to be seen and seek external validation through their workplaces. Dysfunction, and the resulting burnout, only impedes professional validation.

Another similarity between the quantitative and qualitative data was evidence of a leadership vacuum in many libraries. We found that when organizations are dysfunctional,

most look to leadership to determine the causes. Our respondents indicated that within academic libraries, there are few opportunities for advancement to middle management. As a result, the interviews highlighted that there is inadequate mentoring for emerging library leaders. This produces organizations that become increasingly dysfunctional over time, particularly if individuals do not feel empowered to pursue career advancement at other institutions. Research into the root causes of this leadership vacuum along with program development aimed at remedying this trend would both improve organizational morale and develop committed, passionate leaders who are able to more effectively lead and advocate for their libraries at the institutional level.

Work–life balance also played a prominent role in the qualitative and quantitative (Table 9.3) data. Respondents noted confusion about expectations for their job duties and productivity. With no clear understanding of how much they should work, academic librarians may follow the example of others who overwork. The lack of communication from leadership about expectations will lead to academic librarians guessing when, how, and where to work. This further complicates setting and enforcing boundaries needed to maintain a healthy work–life balance. This can spawn a culture of overwork, common on many campuses across the country.

A culture of overwork often stems from shrinking budgets. Additionally, one particularly damaging result of flat or diminishing budgets within academic libraries is contraction in staffing, as demonstrated in Table 9.5. Our study indicates that as staff and faculty retire, librarians are frequently asked to serve in multiple roles within the organization, sometimes without reasonable compensation. Over time, burnout occurs among those who have been overtaxed by these interim or indefinite hybrid roles. Unstable organizational arrangements such as this create added stress upon both midcareer and newer librarians, as little to no opportunity for mentoring impairs intergenerational professional communication. This lack of a mentoring structure can discourage and inhibit the growth of emerging leaders in libraries.

Returning to our idea of burnout as an identity, themes arising during the interviews indicated that the experience of burnout among academic librarians can be so overwhelming that individuals have difficulty establishing healthy boundaries between the dysfunctional work environment and their own abilities and identities as information science professionals. It seems that those who maintain this boundary elect to seek employment at other libraries. In contrast, those who choose to remain in a dysfunctional work environment experience a compounded level of burnout.

Conclusion

Returning to Kaetrena Davis Kendrick's (2021) description of librarians who cannot leave their toxic organization—"withering on the vine"—captures the results of this study, which confirm that many academic librarians are affected by negative emotions associated with their places of work. There also appears to be a correlation between dysfunctional workplace culture and burnout, with long-term burnout being associated with intensifying the experience of that dysfunction for those who choose to stay within the organization. These

two factors are in relationship to one another, amplifying both the stress experienced by employees and the organizational inefficiencies that coexist within negative workplaces.

Much like Davis Kendrick's recommendation to dismantle enabling systems of toxic and abusive culture to improve recruitment and retention, our study shows that reducing the degree of workplace dysfunction would help remedy the negative experiences associated with burnout. Additionally, our study shows that while many factors contribute to dysfunctional organizational culture, librarians may resent library leadership when the culture continues to exist. Library leaders can work to disrupt and correct the systems and behaviors contributing to the dysfunctional culture, but long-lasting changes requires a collaborative, multifaceted approach. Of the respondents interviewed, fewer than half chose to, or were able to, secure new positions and leave the dysfunctional workplace. In the cases where interviewees were able to leave, they reported that leaving had improved their experiences, particularly if the new organization did not suffer from similar issues.

Recommendations and Implications for the Profession

We recommend better preparation for library administration and middle management within library science curriculum coupled with ongoing leadership mentoring for individuals in those positions. In addition, succession planning in libraries or at the institutional level could help prevent leadership lapses.

The results of this study suggest that healthy workplaces have the power to support the overall health of those who are working within them. Similarly, individuals affected by toxic work environments can increase the degree of dysfunction within an organization by evolving into obstructionist behavior over time, which can prevent growth, innovation, and positive professional modeling for incoming professionals. The phenomenon of burnout exists both because organizations are dysfunctional and because individuals become entrenched within that dysfunction over long periods of time. This entrenchment leads to deep resentment. These results are significant because long-term patterns of resentment can directly impede the goals and mission of the library and its institution.

Acknowledgments

APPENDIX A
The Effect of Dysfunctional Organizational Culture on Burnout in Academic Libraries Survey

Age:
- ○ 20–29
- ○ 30–39
- ○ 40–49
- ○ 50–59
- ○ 60–69
- ○ 70–79
- ○ 80 or above
- ○ Prefer not to say

Race and/or Ethnicity:*
- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Not Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Gender identification:*
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary/third gender
- ☐ Prefer to Self-Describe: _____
- ☐ Prefer not to say

How many years have you been in a professional librarian position?
- ○ 0–2
- ○ 3–5
- ○ 6–10
- ○ 11–15
- ○ 16+

Is librarianship your first career?
- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Display This Question:
How many previous careers did you have? (If Is librarianship your first career? = No, Display This Question.)

○ 1
○ 2
○ 3 or more

How confident are you in your ability to fulfill your work responsibilities?

○ Very Confident
○ Somewhat Confident
○ Neutral
○ Less Confident
○ Not at All Confident

In what ways does your library's leadership make it difficult or easy for you to maintain a good work–life balance?*

☐ Allow for remote work
☐ Flexible hours
☐ Bringing children to work
☐ Opportunities to incorporate wellness during workday
☐ There are no options to support work–life balance
☐ Other:_____

What support does your library administration offer for your professional growth?*

☐ Funds for conferences
☐ In-house professional development days
☐ Funds for going back to school
☐ Opportunities for advancement within the organization
☐ They don't support our professional development
☐ Other:_____

In what ways does your library encourage new career librarians to authentically expressing their thoughts and opinions? Pick one of [*sic*] more:*

☐ Amplifying new career voices in meetings or other public settings
☐ Acknowledgment of expertise not dependent on number of years in profession
☐ Providing leadership opportunities
☐ Encouraging academic freedom
☐ Positive mentorship for promotion and tenure (or advancement)
☐ None of the above
☐ Other:_____

In what ways does your library discourage new career librarians from authentically expressing their thoughts and opinions?*

☐ Restricting academic freedom
☐ Indirect or direct threats to promotion and tenure (or advancement)
☐ Refusing leadership opportunities
☐ Dismissing expertise based on number of years in profession
☐ Silencing new career voices in meetings and other public settings
☐ None of the above
☐ Other:_____

Are you aware of salary inequities in your library and/or institution?

○ Yes

○ No

Display This Question:

How does your library or institution address salary inequities? (If *Are you aware of salary inequities in your library and/or institution?* = Yes, Display This Question.)*

□ Salary compression studies

□ Equity studies

□ Increase salary for additional education and/or expertise

□ Other:_____

Do you believe your library has a dysfunctional culture?

○ Yes

○ No

What factors contribute to the dysfunctional culture? Select all that apply. (If *Do you believe your library has a dysfunctional culture?* = Yes, Display This Question.)*

□ Hierarchy

□ Obstructionist individuals and/or culture

□ Inequities, salary or opportunities

□ Fixed mindsets

□ Excessive competitiveness and/or professional jealousy

□ Other:_____

Have you considered leaving a library because of dysfunctional aspects of its culture?

○ Yes

○ No

If you would you be willing to confidentially share your experience in a dysfunctional work culture, please provide your email address below. (If *Have you considered leaving a library because of dysfunctional aspects of its culture?* = Yes, Display This Question.)

_____

*Participants could choose more than one answer for these questions.

APPENDIX B
Interview Questions

1. What type of academic library do you work at? (R1, ARL, etc)
2. Do you have tenure and/or faculty status?
3. You answered in our survey that you considered leaving a library because of dysfunctional aspects of its culture. Did you leave or stay? What made you leave or stay?
4. Describe your experience in a dysfunctional work culture.
5. Describe a workplace culture where you would thrive. What environment do you feel is necessary to retain valuable employees?
6. What effect did this dysfunctional work culture have on your personal life and professional identity?

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