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Article abstract

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perceptions of librarians as researchers according to academic librarians and
faculty using semi-structured interviews. Conducting research is a regular part
of the academic librarian role, but one that often faces challenges to its
undertaking, and one that is not always recognized. Exploring perceptions of
librarian research helps to understand the current state of librarian research,
the barriers faced by librarian researchers, and the value of librarian
research. Fifteen librarians and seven faculty members were interviewed
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ABSTRACT

Following on the results of an earlier survey, this study uses semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions of librarians as researchers according to academic librarians and faculty. Conducting research is a regular part of the academic librarian role, but this fact is not widely known, and librarians often face challenges to their ability to conduct research. Exploring perceptions of librarian research helps to paint a larger picture of the current state of librarian research, the barriers faced by librarian researchers, and the value of librarian research. Fifteen librarians and seven faculty members were interviewed from eight Canadian universities. The interviews were coded and analyzed to identify major themes. Librarian research was found to be sometimes unsupported and therefore difficult to conduct, but valuable to librarians and the discipline of librarianship. Additionally, librarian research was found to improve relations between librarians and faculty and, more broadly, was found to create a more collegial academic climate.

Keywords: academic librarians · academic librarianship · academic libraries · librarian-faculty interactions · librarian research · librarians as researchers · library research · perceptions of librarians

RÉSUMÉ

Suite aux résultats d'une enquête antérieure, cette étude utilise des entretiens semi-dirigés pour explorer les perceptions des bibliothécaires en tant que chercheuses.eurs selon les bibliothécaires universitaires et les professeur.e.s. La recherche fait régulièrement partie du rôle de bibliothécaire universitaire, mais ce fait n'est pas largement connu, et les bibliothécaires sont souvent confronté.e.s à des défis quant à leur capacité à mener la recherche. L'exploration des perceptions de la recherche menée par les bibliothécaires permet de brosser un tableau plus complet de l'état actuel de la recherche par les bibliothécaires, des obstacles auxquels se heurtent les bibliothécaires chercheuses. eurs et la valeur accordée à la recherche menée par les bibliothécaires. Quinze bibliothécaires et sept membres du corps professoral de huit universités canadiennes ont été interrogé.e.s. Les entrevues ont été codées et analysées pour identifier les principaux thèmes. Il s'avère que la recherche par

les bibliothécaires est faite souvent sans soutien et donc difficile à mener ; elle est néanmoins précieuse pour les bibliothécaires et la discipline de la bibliothéconomie. De plus, la recherche par les bibliothécaires permet d'améliorer les relations entre les bibliothécaires et le corps professoral et, plus largement, de créer un climat académique plus collégial.

Mots-clés : *bibliothécaires en tant que chercheurs · bibliothécaires universitaires · bibliothéconomie universitaire · bibliothèques universitaires · interactions bibliothécaires-professeurs · perceptions des bibliothécaires · recherche bibliothécaire · recherche sur les bibliothèques*

Rᴇsᴇᴀʀᴄʜ is a regular and expected part of academic librarianship, often an explicit job aspect required for promotion or tenure in Canada (Berg, Jacobs, and Cornwall 2013; Whitmell 2017). As such, academic librarians regularly conduct research, present at conferences, and publish in academic journals (Hildreth and Aytac 2007; Kennedy and Brancolini 2018). Despite this, librarians can face challenges to their ability to conduct research, including a lack of time and a lack of administrative support (Sorensen and Delong 2016; Fox 2007; Hoffmann, Berg, and Koufogiannakis 2014; Kennedy and Brancolini 2018). Research in librarianship can be perceived as a threat towards the service aspects of the profession, and challenged on that perception (Silva, Galbraith, and Groesbeck 2017). As well, the fact that librarians conduct research is not widely known beyond the library community (Cooke et al. 2011; Kotter 1999; Divay, Ducas, and Michaud-Oystryk 1987; Fagan 2003), though this may be changing as a recent study indicated that faculty were aware that librarians sometimes or frequently published Library and information Studies (LIS) research (Fagan et al. 2020). The role and perception of librarians as researchers can have far-reaching impacts on the professional or academic status of librarians and the relationships between (academic) librarians and faculty ("faculty" here being used as a shorthand for non-librarian faculty), and can lead to a lack of support available for librarians to conduct research (Stewart 2009; MAUT (McGill Association of University Teachers) 2012; Fagan et al. 2021). Ultimately, inaccurate perceptions of librarians' abilities can make it more difficult for their professional skillsets to be recognized and valued (Hicks 2014).

Building on a survey of perceptions of librarians as researchers from the perspectives of librarians and faculty (Babb 2019), this study sought to explore those perceptions in greater depth via detailed interviews with participants. The results of this study help to paint a more detailed picture of librarian research, and how it is perceived in the academic community. This picture can in turn help identify and articulate the value of librarian research and the critical role it plays in facilitating a

healthy academic community. As librarian research is often misunderstood or under varying degrees of threat, this knowledge is critical for librarian researchers and library administrators alike at academic institutions.

This study was conducted as a component of a Library and Information Studies Master's thesis at the University of Alberta (Babb 2017). Ethics approval for this study was granted by the University of Alberta.

Methodology

A previous survey of the librarian and faculty perceptions of librarian research had been conducted in 2013 (Babb 2019). The results of that survey were used to develop questions and areas of focus for the current study, which consisted of a series of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were employed as they permit flexibility within an otherwise structured interview, allowing for the opportunity to probe more deeply into the topic under discussion (Harrell and Bradley 2009). There were two parallel interview schedules developed—one adapted for faculty and one for librarians, though each fundamentally addressed the same questions. Themes were identified in the interviews using conventional content analysis (Attride-Stirling 2001; Creswell 1998; Hsieh and Shannon 2005; Rich 2012). The interview structure and processes were piloted with the participation of two academic librarians. Some questions were adapted and clarified as a result of these pilot interviews.

Interview invitations were sent to faculty and librarians at eight Canadian universities (the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the University of Regina, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Winnipeg, the University of Manitoba, McMaster University, and McGill University) with email lists gathered from departmental websites. Invitations were sent to all librarians at target institutions, while faculty invitations were targeted to the disciplines of Biology, Anthropology, and Classics, representing the Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities, respectively. These areas were targeted because contacting every faculty member at the target universities was unfeasible, and, since I have significant background in these areas, I would not need to ask for clarification about their subject or research areas if they came up during the interviews, as I suspected they might. In total, invitations were sent to 189 librarians and 698 faculty members (356 from Biology, 170 from Anthropology, and 172 from Classics). An upper limit of 24 interviews was set given the scale of the project as of a Master's thesis. Interested parties were asked to email me, and I then contacted them to set up an interview time. Twenty-seven individuals contacted me expressing interest in the project, and so only one invitation email was sent out, with no reminders. Ultimately, however, four individuals did not respond to attempts to arrange interviews, and one individual was not able to be interviewed

due to unavailability within the interview window. Interviews were scheduled for one hour in length, and were conducted in a location of the participant's choosing or over the phone. Interviews took place between February 1st and February 12th, 2016. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher in MS Word. Once transcribed, participants were assigned a pseudonym and the data was anonymized. The earliest interviews conducted in each category (librarian and faculty) were open-coded and used to develop a flexible coding framework that was then employed to code the subsequent interviews (Rich 2012). Development of the framework and coding was completed manually in MS Word. Once the interviews had been coded, thematic analysis was performed to identify larger concepts articulated by participants. Librarian and faculty interviews were coded and thematically analyzed separately, resulting in two sets of themes. Themes were compiled and considered together to create a cohesive picture of the perception of librarian research across participant groups. As this project was completed as part of a Master's thesis, all coding and analysis was conducted by the researcher.

Results

A total of 22 participants were interviewed, seven faculty and 15 librarians. Completed interview lengths ranged between 10 and 40 minutes. Of the faculty participants, six were from Classics, zero were from Anthropology and one was from Biology, which is not proportionally reflective of the number of invitations sent to each discipline. Data saturation appears to have been reached in the interviews conducted. Seven themes were identified in the librarian interviews, and eight in the faculty data.

Analysis: Librarian Interviews

The themes identified in the data highlight how librarian research is conceptualized, understood, and valued. Each theme is discussed in greater detail below. The seven themes identified in the librarian interviews were:

1. Doing Research and the Desire to do Research
2. Research as a Duty and a Responsibility
3. Research as Extra
4. Support and Challenges
5. Freedom to Research
6. Beneficial on Multiple Axes
7. Faculty Relations

Doing Research and the Desire to do Research

> I'd love to be doing research full time because I love it. (Trish, Librarian participant)

> I don't think that a lot of librarians are prepared to do research properly. (Jeri, Librarian Participant)

Librarian participants reported conducting research regularly, both in LIS and in other disciplines. Applied research was acknowledged as the most common form of research conducted. Participants also expressed a desire to do research, sometimes more research than they were currently able to do, and believed that, in general, most academic librarians felt the same way. They believed librarian research to be valuable but expressed concern and frustration that not all librarians had the available supports or educational background necessary to conduct research effectively. While participants described passion on a personal level for conducting research, they also acknowledged that there were some academic librarians who did not want to engage in research.

Research as a Duty and a Responsibility

> I think as academic librarians, if we want to keep the academic status, [we] should be thinking more deeply about what we do, what our practices are, and that type of thing. A part of our work, […] is adding to the literature. (Peggy, Librarian Participant)

Participants believed research to be a responsibility of academic librarians, regardless of the specifics of any given librarian job description, and further believed that research must be done in order to support and advance the discipline of librarianship—it was considered a duty. Librarians who conducted research were viewed as being more informed and more capable. Research was considered essential to the discipline, and librarians had a responsibility to the discipline to conduct it. Participants also issued a cautionary note that positioning research as a duty of librarianship not bound to job description meant that it could become an unspoken requirement of librarian jobs that did not formally require or support research.

Research as Extra

> From a manager's point of view […] if we give academic librarians more time for research, it means that there's less time for the performance of their functions, and these days, with tough budget situations, I think we'd be hard-pressed to do what we need to do if more people were away doing research. (Maria, Librarian Participant)

> I consider research to be an important part of what I do, but I do not consider research part of my position in a technical sense. (Angie, Librarian Participant)

Despite research being considered a duty and a responsibility of librarianship, research was flagged as something that was often considered to be separate from the other duties of librarians outlined in their specific job descriptions—that is, even where research was formally required, it was still somehow considered to be "outside" of the job, rather than part of it. Participants spoke of the conflict between the expectation that they should conduct research and the lack of protection of it in the workplace; research was often sacrificed to accommodate other job duties. Indeed, participants indicated that research could sometimes be viewed as interfering with other aspects of the job. There was concern that if that attitude persisted the research component of academic librarianship could be pushed out altogether.

Support and Challenges

> There's not necessarily a lot of actual support and guidance from the library as a whole, institutionally, to support us, so most of us […] have to find our own way. (Peter, Librarian Participant)

> 15% [of time is set aside for research] on paper […] but in reality often you get interrupted and if you're a conscientious librarian it's hard to ignore the emails from our users, from our faculty and students who need help and need it right away. (Natasha, Librarian Participant)

Participants observed that successfully conducting research required the existence of certain supports and the navigation of many barriers. A major difficulty was finding large blocks of time in which to conduct research, especially given the on-call nature of much of librarian work. Finding sufficient time for research was the single greatest challenge to librarian research identified by participants. Dedicated research days were applauded for their ability to help combat this. Supervisor attitudes also greatly affected librarians' ability to conduct research, and to inform the type of research that they were able to conduct. Supervisors that were actively hostile to librarian research were a particular challenge. Formal support from institutions was appreciated, but was often identified as lacking. Library organizations such as the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) could also help facilitate librarian research through their programming, especially with regard to correcting educational deficiencies. Peer support for research and a culture of research within the library were highly valued, and could be seen to make up for deficiencies in institutional and other formal supports for research. A lack of that same peer support made research especially difficult. This was often related to a lack of institutional support, as librarians at understaffed libraries might experience resentment from peers that were required to cover their workload while they took research leave. A lack of clarity in collective agreements regarding librarian research could be considered either a barrier or a facilitator of research depending on how the collective

agreement language was wielded and by whom. Barriers to research were frustrating to participants, who viewed research as valuable and important, and they resented being hampered in their ability to conduct it due to lack of support and available time.

Freedom to Research

> I think librarians should be able to undertake any research that they wish. That is what academic freedom is about. So it's either we have academic freedom or we don't have academic freedom. (Wanda, Librarian Participant)

Participants considered academic freedom and the freedom to engage in the research of their choice as essential. Troublingly, however, some participants reported that their academic freedom would not be supported if they chose to explore certain subjects in their research. Some participants related witnessing or experiencing challenges to proposed areas of research from supervisors who tried or succeeded in curtailing that research. While concerning, it should be noted that such direct challenges to academic freedom were only mentioned by a small minority of participants.

Beneficial on Multiple Axes

> Well, I just think that as librarians, we need to be doing research to improve our practice, and so, through doing research, we're learning more about what we do, and we're able to contribute back to the knowledge base for other librarians, professionals in our field, in order to make our practice and our profession better. (Trish, Librarian Participant)

> There's the credibility issue as well; how can they see me as a support in this area if I am not a researcher and don't understand their issues? (Natasha, Librarian Participant)

> [...] if we're talking about life-long learning as librarians, as most of us do and should, then we need to be doing [research] ourselves. And that's for our own benefit, and again for the library, the university, and society as a whole. (Wanda, Librarian Participant)

Participants identified librarian research as beneficial in a number of regards, including contributing to disciplinary knowledge, improving librarian practice, improving academic communication, increasing librarian confidence and competence, improving the reputation of the university, and influencing and informing policy changes within the library—applied research was of particular value for this last item. Participants felt engaging in research rendered them better librarians, even in ways not directly related to the subject of their research, such as improving interactions with patrons seeking help with their own research or improving their instruction on research-adjacent topics, as they were more familiar and comfortable with the research process.

Faculty Relations

> Most faculty I talk to tend to be surprised at first that we're academic staff. They're surprised that we publish our own papers in most cases. (Peter, Librarian Participant)

> We haven't done a good job of informing [faculty] about the research that we can do, and because not every librarian does research. (Claire, Librarian Participant)

Participants believed faculty were generally unaware of the existence of librarian research, and typically did not think of librarians as researchers or scholars, often thinking of librarians exclusively as a research support service. Given that librarians do conduct research, participants felt this view to be unjustified. However, no participants faulted faculty for holding this perception, believing instead that librarians needed to put more effort into educating faulty about their research role. Participants highlighted the formation of close relationships with faculty or working with faculty more regularly, as well as promoting librarian research more broadly, as mechanisms by which faculty could be educated about librarian research. Participants believed that faculty awareness of librarian research led to increased respect for librarians, with a majority of participants describing specific instances of relationships with faculty becoming far more collegial after the faculty were made aware of their research. Participants were particularly interested in engaging with collaborative research with faculty, noting they possessed skillsets as librarians that would be beneficial to research across disciplines.

Analysis: Faculty Interviews

Interviews with faculty yielded eight themes related to librarian research:

1. Awareness of Librarian Roles
2. Collaboration
3. Research Facilitation
4. Applications of Librarian Research
5. Value of Librarian Research
6. Librarians Outside of the Academic Community
7. Librarians as Part of the Academic Community
8. Suggestion that Librarians Should be Researchers (But it's Hard)

Awareness of Librarian Roles

> It's just an accident I know what [name of librarian] does, because he's a personal friend and we used to talk about his work. (Clint, Faculty Participant)

Faculty participants expressed a lack of awareness regarding librarian roles and librarian research, and several refused to answer certain interview questions at all, citing their ignorance of the subject. Faculty with knowledge of librarian research attributed that knowledge to personal friendships with librarians. Four participants also suggested that they likely had closer ties with the library and librarians than many of their faculty peers, so they believed they represented a more informed perspective than their peers might. They did, however, suggest that their views were likely to be indicative of what their peers would think about librarian roles and librarian research if their peers ever thought about the subject, which they suggested they probably didn't. Faculty felt generally uninformed about librarian roles and librarian research.

Collaboration

> [...] so I would say to date I haven't [engaged in collaborative research with a librarian], but it's not out of the question that I would in the future and that I have had these conversations about trying to do something. (Reed, Faculty Participant)

Faculty reported personally engaging in collaborative work with librarians on a regular basis, but not collaborative research. They noted awareness of such research collaborations occurring elsewhere and viewed those collaborations as extremely beneficial. Faculty expressed openness and interest in engaging in research collaborations with librarians in the future.

Research Facilitation

> I find that [librarians are] really, really, REALLY good with graduate students, with Master's students, with young PhD students who are still getting the research process down. (Foggy, Faculty Participant)

> But, so yes, I collaborate with [librarians] in the sense that I work with them to facilitate my own research. (Tony, Faculty Participant)

Librarians were viewed as helpful in facilitating the research conducted by faculty via collection development, obtaining difficult-to-find research materials, and advanced search skills. Faculty viewed librarians and the library as a key part of the research process, especially with regard to providing instruction in research tools and setting graduate students and early career researchers on the correct path for conducting research effectively. Faculty noted that librarians required academic freedom to play these valuable roles in facilitating the research process.

Applications of Librarian Research

> [...] I think research on libraries, therefore, and how libraries function, and the role of libraries in the 21st century, I think that's extremely important, and I think that's

something that librarians are in a unique position to undertake. (Foggy, Faculty Participant)

Faculty identified applied research, especially that which was directly related to improving services and access at their local university libraries, as being particularly important. Faculty expressed interest in librarians conducting a great deal more research of an applied nature. Research on collections, especially special collections, was highly prized by faculty participants; there was a strong perception that a library should be a place of active research and scholarship, not simply a repository for resources. It was believed that applied librarian research could meaningfully improve the library, and it was expected that such research be done.

Value of Librarian Research

If [librarians] don't [conduct research] they will simply become civil servants and the library itself, it would not be a place of research, it would just be a holding ground. (Tony, Faculty Participant)

If [librarians are] working on research themselves, they'd be more sympathetic to understanding the needs and concerns of other researchers so, if someone is actually an active researcher, I feel like I can talk to them more easily and they'll understand some of my concerns or issues. (Reed, Faculty Participant)

Faculty believed that librarians conducting research, both basic and applied, in LIS or in other subjects, was desirable and would only improve the field of librarianship and/or other fields. There was a strong belief that librarians must not be mere curators of information but must be engaged in the study of it. Faculty linked this need to study to the ability of librarians to provide quality information and information management, and they believed that barriers to librarian research would result in in poorer quality library services.

Faculty also identified researching librarians as research colleagues that were uniquely "safe"; they did not need to compete with librarians the way they might need to with departmental colleagues for funding, resources, or prestige. Functionally, this meant that faculty could discuss their research freely with librarians in a way that they may not be able to with their departmental colleagues. As such, they viewed the library as a collegial community that was very welcome in the face of collegiality being degraded within their own departments. In general, faculty felt that librarians engaging in research improved collegial relationships between librarians and faculty, and they believed researching librarians could better understand their needs as faculty.

Librarians Outside the Academic Community

> I have the impression sometimes that my colleagues often think of librarians as just assistants to them, and not as independent researchers on their own, or as independent colleagues. (Reed, Faculty Participant)

In some cases, librarians were perceived to fall outside of the academic community. Some participants suggested that while they themselves felt very much that librarians belonged in the academic community, they were cognizant that not all of their faculty colleagues felt the same way. Instead, they believed that some of their colleagues viewed librarians as assistants, rather than as academics or researchers in their own right. One participant suggested that any librarian that did not conduct research should not be considered part of the academic community. It was also suggested by one participant that applied research, i.e., the type of research most frequently conducted by librarians, did not count as true research. Participants who themselves suggested that librarians fell outside of the academic community linked this exclusion with lower confidence that librarians would be able to aid faculty in their own research and scholarship. This view was a minority opinion among participants, one which was directly opposed by another theme, discussed next.

Librarians as Part of the Academic Community

> I think research librarians are an invaluable resource. I think they're a major part of the functioning of any university, […] particularly in the humanities. (Foggy, Faculty Participant)

The majority of participants viewed librarians as an essential part of the academic community, regardless of whether or not they conducted research. However, faculty acknowledged that if librarians conducted research, certainly that enhanced the place of librarians within the academic community. Having librarians as part of the academic community was viewed as a key element in the maintenance of a healthy research environment at the university.

Librarians Should be Researchers (But it's Hard)

> I think it's a little self-evident that librarians should be researchers. (Dottie, Faculty Participant)

> I have seen some [librarian research], and—but I'm a little mystified that there's not more. (Matt, Faculty Participant)

Faculty participants were steadfast in their belief that librarians should be researchers and have the freedom to conduct research. While recognizing that librarians could face challenges in their ability to conduct research, faculty nonetheless felt it was crucial that librarians conduct research, with some

participants expressing outright disgust at the possibility that librarians might not be able to. Faculty believed librarian research was valuable on the whole, though the reasons they suggested for this view ranged from believing librarians needed to conduct it to earn their academic or faculty status, to believing the content of the research produced was important, to believing that the act of conducting research would improve the librarian, the library, and the overall academic community at the university. Faculty were, however, clear that research could not be the primary role of librarians, and that mandating librarians to conduct research was not desirable. Despite this, many faculty hoped not only that librarians would conduct research, but that they would conduct more research than they currently do.

Limitations

The nature of this project as a component of a master's thesis imposed time constraints that limited the number of interviews that I could realistically transcribe and analyze, and so the sample size is limited, though data saturation did appear to be reached among participants. Additionally, the faculty responses are heavily weighted in favour of the Classics/the Humanities, with no responses from Anthropology/the Social Sciences at all. As such, while the insights derived from this study are valuable, caution should be exercised in how broadly these findings can be applied, given the limited sample size and the limited perspectives of the faculty participants.

Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that librarians regularly conduct research, though this fact is not necessarily known to faculty, and librarians may find it difficult to conduct research, as their ability to do so can be somewhat unsupported, or even actively hampered. This aligns with the findings of previous studies (Sorensen and Delong 2016; Fox 2007; Hoffmann, Berg, and Koufogiannakis 2014; Kennedy and Brancolini 2018; Cooke et al. 2011; Kotter 1999; Divay, Ducas, and Michaud-Oystryk 1987; Fagan 2003). Despite this, librarian research was viewed positively by librarian and faculty participants alike, and both groups would like to see librarians more able to conduct research going forwards, though both groups acknowledged that research should never take priority over the aspects of librarian work that directly serve faculty and students and contribute to the running of the library. Librarian research was viewed by participants as able to improve the discipline in which the research was conducted, to directly influence and enhance the functioning of the library, and to improve the skillset of librarians with regard to research and therefore make them more capable in their ability to aid students and faculty in their own research.

An extant close relationship between faculty and librarians was often how faculty participants came to learn of librarian research, and increased awareness of librarian research led to improved collegiality and increased respect between the groups. Meanwhile, a lack of awareness of librarian research on the part of faculty appeared to hamper collegiality between groups, and to occasionally cause faculty to doubt that librarians possess adequate skills to aid them in their research-related questions or research processes. In certain cases, lack of awareness of librarian research appeared to cause some faculty to believe that librarians do not merit a place in the academic community, nor merit academic or faculty status. Results suggest that awareness of librarian research not only improved collegiality and respect between groups, but also helped to create the existence of an academic "safe space" where faculty could speak freely about their research, something not always available to them within their own departments.

Both librarians and faculty viewed librarian research as important, but secondary to other aspects of the librarian role. It may be this secondary status that led to librarian research often being un- or under-supported, or difficult to attend to under workload obligations or supervisory priorities, even when research was a duty expected or required of librarians. This positioning of librarian research as something extra, and the barriers faced by librarians in their ability to conduct research, were viewed as both frustrating and disturbing.

Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that librarian research has the potential to improve the scholarship of LIS and other disciplines, the libraries at which the librarians work, the skillsets of librarians, and collegiality in the academic community more broadly. However, despite these myriad benefits, this study also suggests that librarian research is often viewed as something extra and not always easy for librarians to complete. Positive opinions expressed in interviews suggest that librarian research may be seen as valuable not only to librarians, libraries, and the field of LIS, but to institutions and the academic community on a larger scale. A general lack of awareness about librarian research, however, can severely curtail these community benefits that librarian research produces, and in extreme cases can even create feelings of hostility between librarians and faculty and undermine collegiality and the academic community.

Given the positive perceptions of librarian research and the evident benefits that awareness of it can convey, it may be worthwhile for academic librarians to seek to raise awareness of librarian research within their institutions and the broader academic community. Likewise, it seems logical that librarian research should be

supported and encouraged, regarded as something that enhances the primary duties of a librarian, rather than as something that is in conflict with those duties. Librarian research is a reality; the results of this study suggest that promoting and supporting it will create a richer, more collegial academic community.

How these goals can be accomplished is unclear and may require additional study. However, some possibilities for raising awareness of librarian research include librarians actively discussing their research in collegial spaces shared with faculty, promoting their research on social media, drawing attention to it in institutional newsletters or similar venues, hosting libraries research symposia or librarian research talks and advertising them widely. Possibilities for supporting and encouraging research must likely come from librarians, library organizations, and library administration, and might involve actively fostering a community of research by talking openly about research, creating spaces where research is discussed and lauded, ensuring that there are adequate staffing levels to facilitate time for research, and ensuring that formal institutional supports for librarian research both exist and are adhered to. Research days and organizational research programming have been noted to be especially helpful by participants.

In addition to demonstrating that librarian research is valued, though sometimes precarious to conduct and often unknown to those outside of LIS, this study has raised questions that are worthy of further exploration. This study has suggested that conducting research enhances the skillset of librarians; studying this in more detail may allow a greater articulation of the benefits that librarian research has on librarian practice beyond simply using research to inform practice. Another interesting area that was raised in the study was the concept of researching librarians as "safe" colleagues for faculty to discuss their research with; the implication that such safe colleagues are necessary and indeed different from their fellow faculty colleagues, who may be unsafe to discuss research with, suggests that there may be an erosion of collegiality and an increase in competition within universities more broadly. This has potential implications for the cohesion of academic institutions and warrants further study, perhaps with an eye to how librarians might help counter such collegial erosion. Mechanisms by which librarians could raise awareness of the research component of their role could likewise be explored, as could ways that librarian research might be better supported within universities.

Nonetheless, this study represents a look at how librarian research and librarians as researchers are perceived by librarians and faculty alike. Despite concerns over the ability of librarians to do research and concerns over the extent to which the fact that librarians conduct research is known to faculty, the overall view of librarian research is positive, and the findings of this study assert that librarian research has benefits not only to libraries and librarians, but to the larger academic community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Appendix I: Interview Questions

Questions for Librarians

1. Can you give me a description of your position at this institution?

2. Do you conduct research as part of your duties as a -X- librarian?

NO - why not?

- would you prefer to be doing research as part of your position?

YES - what sort of research do you do?

- is research required as part of your position?

- do you consider research to be an important part of your position? Why/why not?

3. At your institution, do you feel that librarians are supported if they choose to engage in research? (Financially, structurally, socially)?

NO - Can you talk about the ways in which support is lacking?

YES - Can you talk about the sort of support you receive?

- Are there any areas in which support is better or worse than others?

4. The collective agreement at your institution grants librarians -X- status, and indicates that your time should be allotted in -X- ways, with -X- % of the time devoted to research or scholarly activities. Would you say that this is indicative of your reality at this institution?

5. (For institutions where librarians have academic or faculty status only). At your institution, librarians have -X- status, indicating that they should have academic freedom. Do you feel that librarians are afforded academic freedom in practice?

NO - Can you elaborate on how you feel you don't have academic freedom?

- Do you feel that this affects your ability to do your job as a librarian? How so/not?

YES - Can you elaborate on how academic freedom is valuable to your job?

6. What sorts of research, if any, do you think should be undertaken by librarians at your institution? Why?

7. What is the value (or lack of value) in allowing or encouraging librarians to do research?

- (probe on collaborative research between librarians and non-librarian faculty ONLY IF it is brought up by the participant.)

- How much of a librarian's time should be given over to research?

8. Do you think librarians are perceived by non-librarian faculty as researchers?

- How do you feel librarians *are* perceived by non-librarian faculty?

- Do you feel that knowing you do research would impact how faculty interacts with you?

- Do you feel librarians generally want to do research?

9. Is there anything you would like to add that we haven't touched upon already?

Questions for Non-Librarian Faculty

1. Can you describe your position at this institution?

2. Can you tell me about the ways you interact with librarians at your institution?

3. Librarians at your institution are granted academic freedom. Do you feel that having academic freedom is important for librarians? Why or why not?

4. To the best of your knowledge, do librarians at your institution conduct research?

5. Have you ever engaged in collaborative research with a librarian?

NO - Would you?

YES - How did it go? Would you collaborate with a librarian again?

6. What sorts of research, if any, do you think should be undertaken by librarians at your institution? Why?

7. What is the value (or lack of value) in allowing or encouraging librarians to engage in research?

8. Do you consider librarians researchers? Do you think research should be a part of the duties of librarians?

How do you feel other faculty perceive librarians?

9. Is there anything you would like to add that we haven't already addressed?